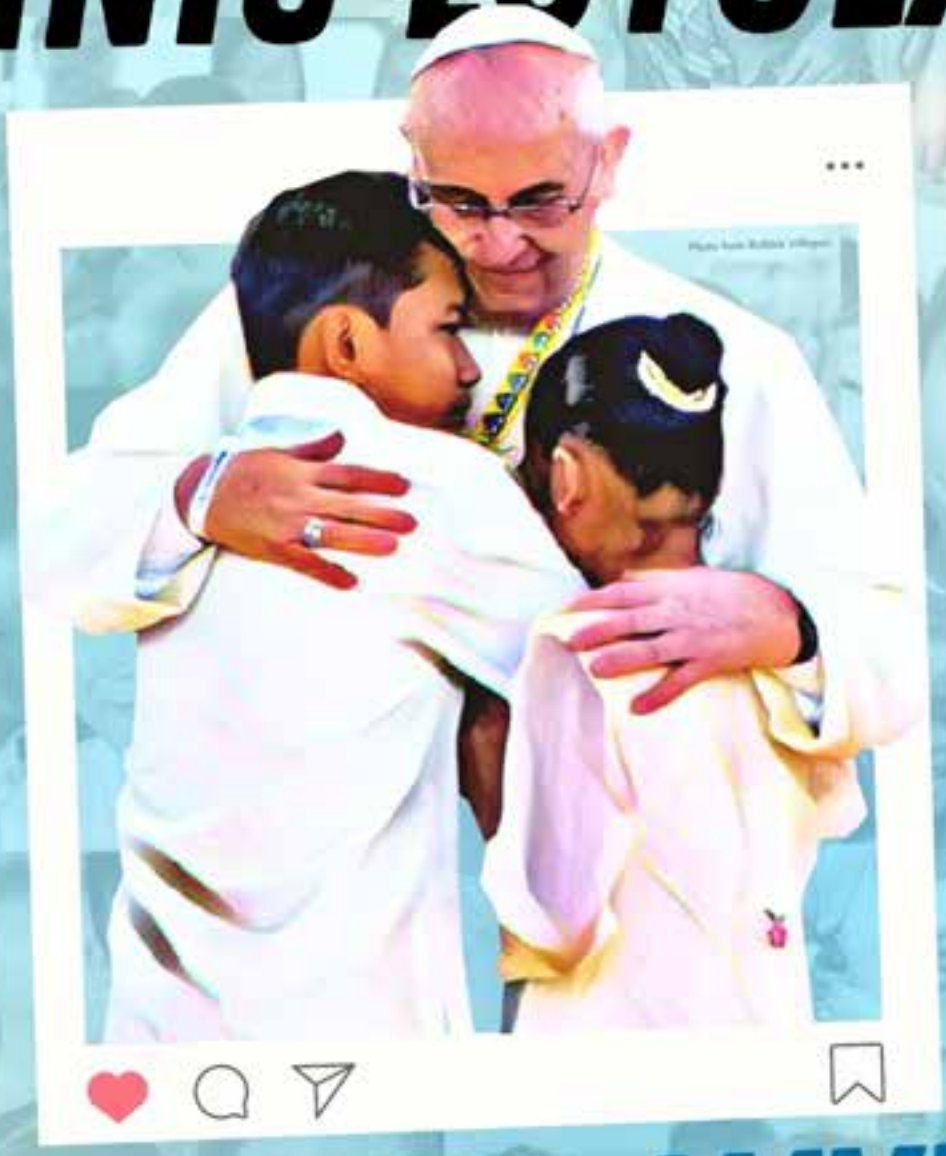
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TINIG LOYOLA



CHRIST IS ALIVE!

YOUNG PEOPLE AS THE 'NOW' OF GOD

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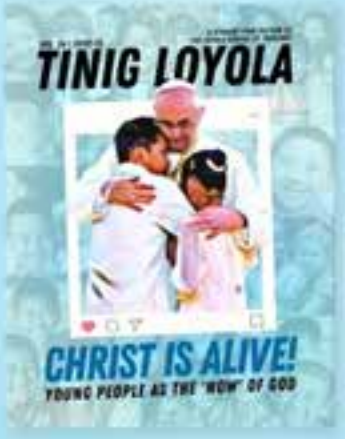
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TINIG LOYOLA 2022 - 2023

CHRIST IS ALIVE! YOUNG PEOPLE AS THE 'NOW' OF GOD

ABOUT THE COVER



Why does God allow children to suffer? This was Glyzelle Palomar's question to Pope Francis during a ceremony at the University of Sto. Tomas in 2015. Meanwhile, Glyzelle's companion, Jun Chura, shared with the Holy Father his struggle to survive without a home. Pope Francis responded to the two children by giving them a warm embrace. This is what is featured on this issue's cover. We desire to remember – with profound gratitude and joy – Pope Francis' tender and enlivening response to the reality of suffering, especially among children and young people.

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ABOUT THE ISSUE

CHRIST IS ALIVE! Thus begins Pope Francis' post-synodal apostolic exhortation to young people and the entire people of God. *Tinig Loyola*'s issue last year focused on fanning the flames of hope amidst the ongoing effects of the pandemic in our individual and collective lives. The same message of hope is carried onto and proclaimed in this year's issue. More specifically, however, this year's issue explicitly shows the rootedness and the perfection of this hope in Christ, our crucified and risen Lord, who desires each of us and all of us to be alive.

What does it mean to be alive in Christ who is alive? We place the spotlight on our dear young people whom Pope Francis considers "the now of God." Yes, the youth are the future, but they are at the same time the present. They influence, impact, and enrich the Church and the world today. Their views are filled with conviction, their questions strikingly real, and their experiences arresting and fresh. It is thus necessary, as the beloved disciple did toward Jesus, to draw close to the heart of the youth – of every young person, in fact – and to pay attention to all its joys and hurts, desires and longings, values and dreams. Only then can we genuinely begin to accompany young people toward being fully alive, as Christ ever so desires and enjoins us to do.

The present issue has been divided into three major parts. It opens with some foundations of youth accompaniment, presenting articles on the theoretical grounding of youth ministry, the context of young people vis-à-vis the Church, the oft-neglected human aspects of accompaniment, and the process of journeying with young people toward discerning their vocation. It ends with contemporary issues that confront the youth today, including self-identity, sexuality, poverty, ecology, social media, education, formation, and life direction, among many others. What is special in this last section is that these issues are confronted and made sense of by young people themselves, a number of whom are LST students, who have had opportunities to collaborate with their fellow youth. The middle section challenges the foundations in the first and arrests the perspectives in the third. But it also bridges and completes them nonetheless. Here we eagerly feature five young people from different origins, backgrounds, and states, who directly speak to the reader about themselves, their faith, their values, their weakness, and their deepest desire. Let these three distinct but interconnected parts, then, inform the lives and ministries of every reader, including LST's graduates and completers, whose pictures have also been integrated into this present issue.

Ultimately, this issue reminds us that youth accompaniment, like any ministry, is first of all Christ's. We are grateful to have been called to co-labor and we entrust that we do not become obstacles to a genuine encounter between Christ and the youth. Thus, we pray to be authentic heralds and witnesses of our crucified and risen Lord so that our companioning may become filled with Christ's newness and life, directing every young person to Christ who is alive.



The Editor (standing; second from left) does a 'heart react' with his fellow youth from the Ateneo Student Catholic Action, of which he is currently the spiritual moderator.

SCH. ROGELIO R. NATO, JR., SJ
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

PARTS









LST EVENTS 2022-2023

2022 SEPT 6

Mass of the Holy Spirit with Presider and Homilist Most Rev. Honesto F. Ongtioco DD, Bishop of Cubao, at the Oratory of St. Ignatius of Loyola. **Welcome Party** followed at the Richie Fernando Covered Court.

2022 SEPT 23





#NeverAgain: The Stories of Martial Law Survivors with Maureen B. Loste, Ron de Vera, and Edita Burgos as resource speakers at the Oratory of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

2022 SEPT 28

Eucharistic Celebration on the Season of Creation with Presider Fr. President Enrico Eusebio, Jr, SJ, and Homilist Fr. Jose Mari Manzano, SJ at the Oratory of St. Ignatius of Loyola, in collaboration with the LST Student Council, Sacred Springs, and the Loyola House of Studies Ecology Team.



2022 OCT 26

Blood Letting Drive by the LST Student Council/Social Involvement Committee, in collaboration with the University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital and the Loyola House of Studies Health Team. 64 bags of blood have been harvested for the PGH Blood Bank.

2022 DEC 9

Christmas Party at the Richie Fernando Covered Court.

2023 APR 6-8

Triduum Retreat at the Cardinal Sin Center with Moral Theology faculty Fr. Eric Marcelo O. Genilo, SJ as the retreat master.

2023 APR 13-15

International Conference on Youth Ministry: Journeying with the Youth by LST, in cooperation with the Don Bosco School of Theology, at the Henry Lee Irwin Theatre of the Ateneo de Manila Grade School and at the Loyola School of Theology, Quezon City, Philippines, with some 750 participants mostly from the Philippines and Southeast Asia.

The Conference responds to the call of the Society of Jesus in one of its Universal Apostolic Preferences that we journey with the youth:

> *Meeting Jesus, young people can find the path to deepest fulfillment. "I have come that you may have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10). The 2018 Synod on Youth and Vocational Discernment recognizes the importance of the perspectives of the young. We stand at their side. We glimpse the future with them. We walk with them in order to perceive and discern where the Spirit is leading our world and our Church.*
>
> *Young people have so many possibilities in this digital age which unites them as never before. We want to walk with them, discerning these possibilities and finding God in the depths of reality. Accompanying young people puts us on the path of conversion; it requires a new way of living in community, a way that is more coherent, more personal, more open, more evangelical.*
>
> *- from https://www.jesuits.global/uap-journeying-with-youth/*

These two and a half days were intended to be "study days" when attendees can learn the Church's principles, vision, and best practices of youth ministry that they can take away to enhance their own ministries. For this purpose, LST invited youth ministry specialists, both professors and graduates, of the Faculty of Theology (specialization in Youth Ministry) and the Faculty of the Science of Education (specialization in Catechetics and Pedagogy) of the Pontifical Salesian University in Rome. Morning sessions were devoted to plenary Keynote Addresses while the afternoon to Group Workshops on various youth ministry topics to be facilitated by youth ministry practitioners from the Philippines and abroad.

The Conference also featured cultural presentations from the Philippines, Korea, Myanmar, the Oceania, Indonesia, and Vietnam.



2023 MAY 2

Another **Blood Letting Drive** by the LST Student Council/Social Involvement Committee, in collaboration with the University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital and the Loyola House of Studies Health Team.

THEOLOGICAL HOUR

2022 OCT 27

Prognosis of the Future of the Catholic Church: Highlights and Lessons of the 500 Years of Christianity in the Philippines (Dr. Jose Mario Maximiano)

2022 NOV 18

Formula, Stories and Similes in Catechesis: Maiorica's Catechism and Its Initiatives of Inculturation (Fr. Nguyen Hai Tinh, SJ)

2023 JAN 25

Conversation on Asian Theologies and Cultures: Chinese Buddhism in Catholic Philippines (Fr. Aristotle Dy, SJ)

2023 FEB 9

The Art of Tentmaking: Reflections on the Synodal Process in the Philippines (Dr. Jessica Joy Candelario)

2023 MAR 3

How is God Relevant in the 21st Century? A Discussion on the Relationship between Science and Theology (Prof. Alister McGrath)

2023 MAR 14

People's Christianity: Theological Sense and Sociological Significance (Fr. Jose Mario Francisco, SJ and Dr. Jayeel Cornelio)

2023 MAY 3

Theology, Trinitarian Ontology, and Postmodernism (Arch. Rowan Williams, PC, FBA, FRSL, FLSW)

LST: THE MOST DIVERSE IN ASIA

The Ecclesiastical Faculty Loyola School of Theology is the second most international Jesuit theological institution in the world, next to the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.





CONGRATULATIONS!

FR. JOSE V.C. QUILONGQUILONG SJ



To former LST President, **Fr. Jose VC Quilongquilong, SJ** on his appointment by Pope Francis as Consultor of the Congregation for Catholic Education for a term of five years.

FR. JERIN CHANDY, CMI



To LST Student **Fr. Jerin Chandy, CMI** from India for winning the Ateneo de Manila University's Ramon C. Reyes Outstanding Dissertation Award for 2021-2022. Title: "Wombcat: A Unique Spiritual Pregnancy Companion for Catholic Families."

FR. OLIVER G. DY SJ



To LST Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, **Fr. Oliver G. Dy, SJ**, for the publication of his work in The Oxford Handbook of the Latin Bible by the Oxford University Press.

ST. JOSEPH JESUIT SCHOLASTICATE

To **St. Joseph Jesuit Scholasticate** (SJJS) and the Vietnamese Province of the Society of Jesus for SJJS's establishment as an Ecclesiastical Higher Educational Institution of the Holy See, with canonical public juridic personality under Church law. SJJS is affiliated with LST, so students of SJJS who successfully complete their theological program are granted the ecclesiastical degree, Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology (STB), by LST.



In Asia, LST has the most diverse composition of international students, a vibrant academic community with an enrollment in the Second Semester of the Academic Year 2022-2023 of 496 seminarians, priests, lay, and religious students (298 Filipinos or 60.08% and 198 international students or 39.92%) representing 33 countries, 77 religious congregations, and 40 dioceses around the world.

LST is one of the seven English-speaking faculties of theology in the world administered by the Society of Jesus and is the only one in the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON YOUTH MINISTRY

Apr 13-15

Journeying with the Youth

Features



Three "Study Days" of learning the Church's vision, principles, and best practices of youth ministry.



Cultural presentations showcasing the richness and diversity of cultures in Asia and the Pacific.



Youth ministry specialists and practitioners from the Philippines, Indonesia, India, Vietnam, USA, France, Croatia, and Italy.



6 Keynote Addresses in the plenary and 20 workshop breakout groups on various youth ministry topics.



Participants from the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific and from over 30 countries all over the world.

What is it all about?

In response to the call of the Society of Jesus in one of its Universal Apostolic Preferences that we journey with the youth, the Loyola School of Theology in cooperation with Don Bosco School of Theology held an onsite International Conference on Youth Ministry on Easter Week of 2023.

Keynote Speakers



Dr. Jayeel S. Cornelio



Fr. Martin M. Macasaet, SDB



Fr. Renato G. de Guzman, SDB



Fr. Jose V.C. Quilongquilong, SJ



Fr. Jerome Vallabaraj, SDB



Fr. Antony Lourdunathan, SDB

Programme and Workshops

DAY 1

Jesuit Ministry Among Young Adults in Croatia
Marija Selak, Mateja Potroško, Marina Grubišić, Mate Žaja, SJ

Jesuit Youth Ministry in Vietnam
Le Van Luan, SJ and Vu Chi Thanh, SJ

Jesuit Ministry Among Young Adults in the USA with Christus Ministries
Fr. Tri Dinh, SJ and Fr. David Romero, SJ

Understanding Later Adolescence and Young Adulthood
Dr. Teresa Gustilo-Villasor

Christ's Youth in Action Campus Ministry
Bro. Raoul Roncal, SW

Out-of-School Youth Skills Training
Fr. Jose Dindo Vitug, SDB

Parish Youth Ministry
Fr. Ramon Jade L. Licuanan

Inculturation in the Youth Ministry of the Chemin Neuf Community
Pamela Tuason CCN, Timothee Tillard CCN, Cécile Sauvestre CCN

Youth for Christ Ministry of the Couples for Christ Global
Jeremy Quimpang

Masters in "Me"dia: Youth Social Media Formation
Fr. Norman Melchor Peña Jr., SSP

The Feast Youth Ministry
Stefan Nikolai Capucion, Zildjian Pigao, and Rizmon Reyes

DAY 2

Jesuit Ministry Among Young Adults in Croatia
Marija Selak, Mateja Potroško, Marina Grubišić, Mate Žaja, SJ

Jesuit Youth Ministry in Indonesia
Fr. Alexander Asmara, SJ, Fr. Alexander Koko Siswijayanto, SJ, Ms. Gabriella Natalia

Jesuit Youth Ministry in Vietnam
Le Van Luan, SJ and Vu Chi Thanh, SJ

Jesuit Ministry Among Young Adults in the USA with Christus Ministries
Fr. Tri Dinh, SJ and Fr. David Romero, SJ

Christ's Youth in Action Campus Ministry
Bro. Raoul Roncal, SW

Masters in "Me"dia: Youth Social Media Formation
Fr. Norman Melchor Peña Jr., SSP

Alternative Learning School and Ministry Among Youth-at-Risk
Fr. Dennis Casaclang, SDB

Ministry for Singles of the Couples for Christ Global
Ace Arthur Lu

Youth Ministry and Catechesis in the New Normal
Fr. Renato de Guzman, SDB

Youth Ministry of the Focolare Movement
Mr. Gio Francisco

"Christ is alive! He is our hope, and in a wonderful way he brings youth to our world, and everything He touches becomes young, new, full of life. The very first words, then, that I would like to say to every young Christian are these: **Christ is alive and He wants you to be alive!**

Pope Francis,
Christus Vivit

The 2018 Synod on Youth and Vocational Discernment recognizes the importance of the perspectives of the young. We stand at their side. We glimpse the future with them. **We walk with them in order to perceive and discern where the Spirit is leading the world and the Church.**



THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Dionne Arae Seneriches



Still Pilgrims

James Ryan Seneriches, SJ

Pastures beyond the river
Hope to arrive howsoever.
Through ravines, hills, cliffs, mountains
Go we shall before it darkens.

"Sure you are the path to take?"
Being too sure is a mistake.
Blind I can be, but hear can we
Listen well, that is the key.

The path I have not yet seen.
The only one ever been,
Is our Master good and true,
Always with us through and through.

Let us remember His voice,
That pierces darkness with joys.
Unlike mumblings that disorder,
That push us to the border.

Let us listen to His sound,
Trust in that and move around.
We walk with Him as one,
Though still pilgrims we have won.

Sheep, dog, bird, pig, manatee
He journeys in serenity.
Newborn, young, adult, or old,
He journeys with as one fold.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Non-Negotiables for Ministering to the Young

Fr. Jerome Vallabaraj, SDB

Today, it is generally accepted that neither the Human Sciences nor theology can function independently in any sphere without mutual dialogue, rapport, or interaction. Nor even more does Youth Ministry as Practical Theology. But one also recognizes that such a dialogue, rapport, or interaction is not all that easy since latent unexpressed fears of reciprocal contamination persist. The necessity for dialogue is made difficult since each science, with its advances, feels right to emphasize its tendency to be autonomous and independent. The need for dialogue is further complicated by the diversity of languages and methodologies used by each science which makes reciprocal understanding and comprehension even more difficult.

In the context of such a scenario, Youth Ministry needs to respond to two core questions: a) What is the relationship that exists between Youth Ministry and other disciplines which have similar focus and interest in the young? and b) What is the scientific methodology that the Christian community needs to adapt to plan and minister to the young?

In attempting to articulate an answer to these questions, we are not primarily concerned with practical solutions, nor are we merely interested in enumerating the things to be done or avoided. The problem has to be articulated from the theoretical foundational perspective, namely, the logical process by which the various sciences and disciplines understand and seek to discharge their tasks or responsibilities toward the care of the young.

1. From Single-Disciplinary to Cross-Disciplinary Thinking[1]

The relationship between Youth Ministry and other theological, anthropological, and educative sciences is complex but at the same time needs to be coherent and unified. It is complex because it deals with the same subject viz. young people but from diverse perspectives such as theological, sociological, psychological, educational, cultural, etc. But young people cannot be perceived solely from any single point of view. Thus, Youth Ministry cannot be reduced to any one process, be it education, socialization, or formation. Further, there are many agents involved in Youth Ministry. Yet in this multiplicity of outlooks, the subject is a person, a human being who is existentially integrated and unified. Therefore, Youth Ministry is concerned with the young person as a whole and as a unique individual. The adjectives 'complex' and 'coherent' do not refer to two successive moments, but they become a call to keep in mind and respect the diverse points of view.

[1] Vallabaraj Jerome - Kavuth Sevi, *Empowering through Animation. A Pastoral Pedagogical Paradigm of Youth Ministry*, Bangalore (India), Kristu Jyoti Publications, 2010, 11-12.

At the same time, however, they are reminders that everything done in Youth Ministry concerns a single individual person or has one common reference. Hence, the need to spell out the type of linkage that is to be endorsed in this relationship between Youth Ministry and the human sciences.

The ongoing reflection on the relationship between Practical Theology and the Human Sciences calls upon persons to move progressively from Single-Disciplinary Thinking to Cross-Disciplinary Thinking. Considering the complexity of Youth Ministry, it is important to distinguish the different levels of thinking it involves.

Intra-Disciplinary Thinking focuses on the Youth Ministry's evaluation of various options within the Youth Ministry itself. Inter-Disciplinary Thinking focuses on the role that different disciplines will play in the construction of Youth Ministry. The Inter-Disciplinary approach is characterized by interaction among the diverse sciences that promote reciprocal relationships and mutual confrontation. Dialogue becomes the focal point. Multi-Disciplinary Thinking assumes the need for many disciplines to comprehend complex systems. In the Multi-Disciplinary approach, all the information culled from the different sciences is simply juxtaposed and the concerned sciences share facts and figures with each other while remaining unaffected or unchanged. Meta-Disciplinary Thinking or Trans-Disciplinary Thinking intends to transcend the interaction and confrontation between different disciplines by not focusing on the nature of the disciplines but on the problems whose solution demands the cooperation and help of all possible cognitive tools, rather than focusing on disciplines and their specific approaches. In the Meta-Disciplinary approach, the borders which situate different disciplines are crossed over and an attempt is made to obtain a clear picture of the logical and conceptual ties that bind them together.[2]

While each of these is relevant in any cross-disciplinary thinking, Youth Ministry generally focuses on the inter-disciplinary level, bringing into dialogue a range of disciplines to describe the purpose, persons, processes, and practices of Youth Ministry. As pointed out earlier, the problems that confront Youth Ministry are complex but deeply unified and coherent. No discipline can claim to solve everything on its own. Given this situation, Youth Ministry also acknowledges the need to dialogue and confront other human sciences in order to arrive at an adequate methodology and conceptual structures. Such a standpoint on the part of the Youth Ministry demands a commitment to certain fundamental aspects of the Inter-Disciplinary Thinking that undergirds this perspective:

a. It accepts the fact that the basic resources of rationality are distributed across the human community and that sharing and evaluation of knowledge across contexts is possible.

b. It respects the competence of each discipline. The dialogue among the various disciplines will be profitable only if each discipline offers its specific contribution in a serious and meaningful manner.

c. It acknowledges that the locus of rationality is in the judgment of the rational agent and not in the propositions, beliefs, or procedures of a disciplinary community.

Such judgments are socially mediated, that is, they are subject to the critical examination of a pertinent community of peers.

Such rational judgments are deepened when the relevant peer community is expanded to include members of other disciplines and diverse cultures beyond one's own community of discipline.





d. It acknowledges the capacity to call the other into question and hold each other accountable despite diversity. Inter-Disciplinary Dialogue is possible only when the various interlocutors converge around the problem with the awareness that no one possesses a solution in an autonomous manner and are moved by earnestness to find common ground. Inter-Disciplinary Dialogue does not detract from the specificity of each science but respects the competence of each.

e. It demands a basic minimum knowledge of the language and parlance of the interlocutor. An Inter-Disciplinary Dialogue can take place only when all those involved know at least the rudiments of the epistemological mechanism of the other and can overcome the bad habit of insulating oneself in one's own proper world.

f. It accepts the existence of a regulatory principle for such an encounter. The interaction among the various disciplines is viable only when there is a regulative statute for the very same encounter. In Youth Ministry, the attention to the human person, as integral and indivisible, becomes the governing principle.

Youth Ministry acquires and defines its scientific status or charter in its Inter-Disciplinary encounter, realized from the Christian faith perspective and in its effort to transcend even the plurality of approaches, by evolving a single course of action in which epistemologically distinct disciplines creatively contribute towards a new synthesis considering their original specific contributions.

Thus, Youth Ministry, indeed, involves a:

a. Theoretical domain, i.e., unification of various contributions into a new discipline, original and at the same time dependent on the disciplines which have inspired such a reflection. These reflections and studies become the guiding principles and lay the fundamentals of what Youth Ministry is and ought to be today.

b. Practice domain, i.e., concrete choices made by many different pastoral personnel and articulated with competence and passion due to the urgency of the problems.[3]

2. Promoting Creative Tension Among and Within Each Domain[4]

As stated earlier, Youth Ministry is to be perceived from a double interpretative lens of pastoral theology and the human sciences. Fidelity to the incarnational and anthropological approach invites all to hold in creative tension or equilibrium both the Christian and human domains. Such equilibrium calls on the youth ministers to be faithful both to God and to the human person, to divine pedagogy and human pedagogy, to Christian maturity and human maturity, to theology and pedagogy, to the wisdom character and the scientific character.

Furthermore, Youth Ministry is in the realm of pastoral theology; it calls upon everyone to hold in creative tension the two differing domains of theory and practice, reflection and action, scientific and empirical levels. Creative tension or equilibrium consists in a practice that is theoretically sound, but at the same time, a theory that is concretely applicable and practical.

Theory domain is the result of interaction among three fields: pastoral-theological reflections, reflections by the human sciences, and reflections on current practices in Youth Ministry. Equilibrium among these three fields is also called for. Practice domain is the consequences of interaction among three other fields: design, process, and context. Keeping in mind the context, Practice Domain develops a design, evolves a process, and carries out a verification.

In any Youth Ministry, there needs to be constant interaction and exchange between the reflection domain and the action domain. The reflection domain in interaction within its threefold field of theology, human science, and current practices will shape the practice of Youth Ministry. At the same time, the action domain with its triple tasks of design, process, and verification within a context will inform the reflection domain on the nature of the ground realities. Youth Ministry thus ought to assist persons to become effective doers of Youth Ministry by becoming effective thinkers of Youth Ministry and vice versa.

(3) Tonelli R., Per la vita e la speranza: Un progetto di pastorale giovanile, Roma: LAS, 1996, 29-32. (4) Yuhlsbeing - Kiewith, Empowering through Animation, 15-18. (5) Hanz talks in terms of presuppositions and practices with which the theological, developmental and socio-cultural and historical aspects are set in. Cf. Hanz Bichard - Senior III Mark (Eds.), Reaching a Generation for Christ: A Comprehensive Guide to Youth Ministry, Chicago, Moody Press, 1997, 29-30.

The double interpretative lens provided by Pastoral Theology and the Human Sciences, and the domains of theory and practice, reflection, and action with their respective fields facilitate us to suggest the four basic perspectives in Youth Ministry which are evident at the level of planning and ministering to the young.

a. The Foundational Perspective is derived from Christian Faith and the Human Sciences. It provides the rationale and criteria for ministering to the young in a particular context, keeping in mind the principles and canons derived from the double interpretative lens of the Theological and Human Sciences and from the analysis of the Youth Ministry practices currently prevalent.

b. The Contextual Perspective enables a judicious analysis of the prevalent situation (problems, results, difficulties, etc.) and the structural, cultural, political, economic, etc. situations in which the young are found.

c. The Paradigmatic Perspective organizes the above two perspectives into a coherent logical unity and elaborates a design or a plan wherein the methods of intervention, lines of action, modes of collaboration with other sciences of action in terms of the Inter-Disciplinary approach are taken into consideration so that Youth Ministry can attain its goals and objectives.

d. The Formative Perspective of the youth minister has been one of the principal areas through which the fruitfulness of the Youth Ministry has been also gauged. Notwithstanding many praiseworthy efforts, the process of formation practiced today seems to be rather inadequate in responding to present-day challenges. It can be said today that the formation of youth ministers constitutes not only an urgent priority, but one would say an authentic emergency.

3. Non-Negotiable Foundational Essentials for Every Youth Ministry[6]

Keeping in mind three of the above four perspectives, in this part I shall elaborate very briefly on those non-negotiable pastoral-pedagogical fundamental criteria to be kept in mind in every Youth Ministry setting.

3.1. Called to "behold the young"

Youth Ministry runs the risk of viewing the young in terms of needs, activities, programs, etc., forgetting that they are persons in a particular context. Keeping the young at the center and at the heart of Youth Ministry requires that the young person be envisaged in his/her totality: body, intelligence, feelings, and will; in all his/her relationships with him/herself, with others, with the world at large and with God. Call to Beholding the Young demands some fundamental perspectives through which Youth Ministry is called to perceive, comprehend, and recognize the young and their culture. In other words, Youth Ministry, imbued with the attitudes of empathy and optimism, is called upon to shift its mindset from a quasi-mechanical to an autopoietic perception of the young and their world through the pastoral presence of the youth ministers among them.[7]

3.2. Ministering to the young in their milieux

If Youth Ministry is to be fruitful, then the primary concern will be to identify the milieu in which the young seek life and fullness of life. Ministering to the Young in their milieux calls on youth ministers to recognize the dynamic forces that impact the youth milieu, the factors that contribute to the betterment of the social fabric in the young, and the criteria for the choice of Youth Ministry settings.

3.3. Journeying towards fullness of life for all

In an ever-widening multi-faith context, ministering to the young invites all to shift from an overly Ecclesio-centric to Regno-centric Ministry wherein the Reign of God signifies and denotes the symbol of fullness of life for all and becomes the motive and the ultimate goal. "I came that they may have life and have it to the full" (Jn 10:10).

3.4. Empowering the young

Empowering treats of enabling the young to be agents-subjects in relationships. In Youth Ministry, empowerment invites all those ministering to the young to move away from all





forms of power-over and to initiate a process of power-with, which, in turn, is transformed into power-created wherein persons trust each other, respect the competence of each other, help each other, and where unconditional love becomes the supreme criterion. Such an option perceives the young not as objects of Youth Ministry but rather as protagonists in relationships.

3.5. Empowering through evangelization and education

The Regno-centric concern for the fullness of life for all is manifested in an ongoing dialogue between Education and Evangelization. This dialogue when translated into tasks seeks to develop and support both the human and faith/religious dimensions of the young. Therefore, Youth Ministry needs a deeper comprehension of the maxims: "educate by evangelizing and evangelize by educating" (pertaining to the content) and "educate by ministering and minister by educating" (related to the activity). These maxims are elaborated and accomplished by enabling the young to undertake: a journey towards building up a personal identity within a culture; a journey towards fostering social order as the place for solidarity; a journey towards recognizing and moving towards the Transcendent God. For the Christian youth, this journey towards the Transcendent becomes a journey towards an authentic experience of Jesus Christ which puts them "not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ: only he can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity."

3.6. Becoming a community [8]

Youth Ministry solicits a move away from a ministry that spins around individuals to a ministry centered on community. Becoming a community is one of the pivotal tasks in Youth Ministry since sociological, ecclesial, and pedagogical factors solicit the same. Becoming a community involves becoming an Educative-Pastoral Community, understanding its implications, and acquiring the requisite skills and practices to promote such a community.

3.7. Engaging in visionary planning

What has been presented so far calls for a commitment toward visionary planning. Engaging in Visionary Planning highlights the usefulness of such planning, its characteristics, and invites to keep in mind the principal moments in the itinerary of such a planning process. Thus, ministering to the young needs to shift away from an ex-tempore or improvised approach to an approach that engages in visionary planning.

The Christian community has begun to appreciate the young as one of her greatest resources, since they bring a new dynamism and a fresh approach to life, help the community discover new possibilities and ideas, and are willing to attempt new solutions. The young are keenly sensitive to the signs of the times; the Christian community perceives a movement toward a renewal of the world in the values they seek. Hence, she has realized that Youth Ministry, far from being optional and peripheral, must become a vital ministry. In a Christian family atmosphere, the community becomes educative, because it places the integral formation of the young at the center of its pastoral projects. Such a community becomes a pastoral community since it keeps evangelization, "a complex process made up of varied elements" at the center of its life and promotes the values of the Reign of God in the community and society.[9]

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[8] Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, Directory for Catechesis, Vatican City, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2009, 73.
[9] Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi, Vatican, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1976, 23.



THE Church AND THE Young



A PERSONAL REFLECTION

Fr. Martin Macasaet, SDB

The topic of the relationship between the Church and the young is a tricky one, admittedly. Yet, if I may just immediately make a personal note: it is a theme that is very dear to me – as a priest of the Salesians of Don Bosco and as a youth minister and educator.

I am myself a "product" of youth ministry (regarding my priestly and religious vocation). And every time in my teaching, when I arrive at the above-mentioned topic in the course outline, I cannot help but do my "hidden agenda": to make all youth ministers take seriously this rapport between the Church and the young, motivating them indeed to foster such a relationship. But at the same time, I will also be the first to admit that there are no easy tricks or templates to it.

Yes, step-by-step directions to bring young people and the Church into a close relationship with each other do not exist. But in my study and research, I have come across something else which may prove helpful now in our reflection on the topic. It is an insight provided by an author, perhaps very little known and yet worth considering.



"Equating" the Church and the Young

This concept was first brought forward several years ago by the Italian youth ministry professor Riccardo Tonelli. While (as we pointed out earlier) little might be known about him in the English-speaking world, his proposal regarding the Church-youth relationship is for us a valuable and universal one. For him, the ideal is that the Church and the young be considered immediately as one ("equating" them with one another, as it were). In doing so, any "relationship" between the two would be rendered somehow unnecessary or redundant. He explains:

> The young and the Church are not to be taken as two distinct subjects as though they ought to be put into a relationship and then bridge the distance and seek compromises between them. The Church is the community of the sons and daughters of God who confess that Jesus is Lord. Standing in this great people marching in history towards the fullness of God's Reign are also the young. They enjoy the same title fully as with all other persons. Somehow the young are "already" the Church . . . even if they should still grow in their reflective consciousness of this great experience and still strengthen their sense of participation. Moreover, they have a privileged place in the Church one born out of love. For the young, the Church is a mother who recognizes herself in the children she has borne.

She cannot be at peace until she is able to bring them the fullness of life. The confines of this most special relationship is boundless, right from the moment the Church is called upon to express God's love to all people: "Can a woman forget her baby at the breast, feel no pity for the child she has borne? Even if these were to forget, I shall not forget you" (Isaiah 49:15).

An Attainable Ideal?

I see the point of Tonelli. Is it possible that we're only making it more difficult for both the Church and the youth if we continue to assume a dualistic, dichotomized mindset? Whereas if we immediately integrate or merge both sides as one, and work on that premise: might there be different results?

It does seem strange or unusual, this ideal proposed by Tonelli of equating the Church and the young. It even sounds like cutting the proverbial Gordian knot, rashly dismissing the discussion, and merely offering a quick-fix solution. But it may be worth giving it a try, if only to depart from the old mindset.

There is a general feeling of weariness, given the not-so-ideal state of things with Filipinos in terms of church attendance (for instance). To jump not to an unknown abyss, but to a standard which is after all what we have been aspiring to: isn't that exactly what we desire? Tonelli did point it out clearly. As sons and daughters of Holy Mother the Church, young people ought not to be separated in the first place from the family of God's People. They are part and parcel of God's family, the community of those called out of darkness into God's own wonderful light.

The Youth vis-à-vis the Church

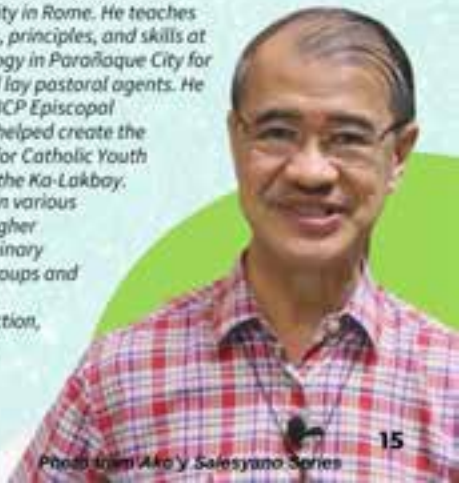
Of course, they should not be kept as though spoiled, privileged kids. The correct mix of loving guidance and responsible freedom, the balance between rearing and autonomy, and the healthy tension between belonging and independence can all somehow reflect on youth in relation to the Church. And as a kind, caring, and concerned mother, the Church, for her part, lovingly nurtures and nourishes them, patiently forgives them, and waits for them to come back when they go astray. She gently understands their quirks and even tolerates them somehow. All these will, I believe, guarantee not only that young people will stay within the confines of the Church. No – they will dwell in her heart, receive her love and care, and be actively involved in her mission.

Just look at the recent phenomenon in the USA, which fittingly started inside a university chapel in Kentucky. The Asbury Revival (as it has come to be known) began with a supposedly routine chapel service for the students. In a matter of days, it became a full-blown, round-the-clock event of praise, worship, and prayer to God. Attracting the attention of a world tired of empty promises and thirsty for the Spirit, it caught fire for its simplicity, spontaneity, and solidarity. The live-streamed services went viral over social media, and news agencies covered the event. People even from faraway countries came to witness it and participate in it. Naysayers, however, were dismissing it as merely sensational and short-lived. But such skeptics had to eat their words in the end. It was hardly an event that was fleeting, loud, and fancy; instead, reverence, awe, and unity were felt.

Yes, there is no need to panic – unless we got it all wrong in the first place. And it's perfectly alright that we don't have ready-made recipes or templates to help us bridge the distance between the Church and the young. However, the rapport between the youth and the Church – perhaps often thought to be weak, unstable, and distant – is actually as strong as ever. They are the ones keeping her constantly rejuvenated. They also provoke and challenge her to regain her humility and in fact, to listen to them.

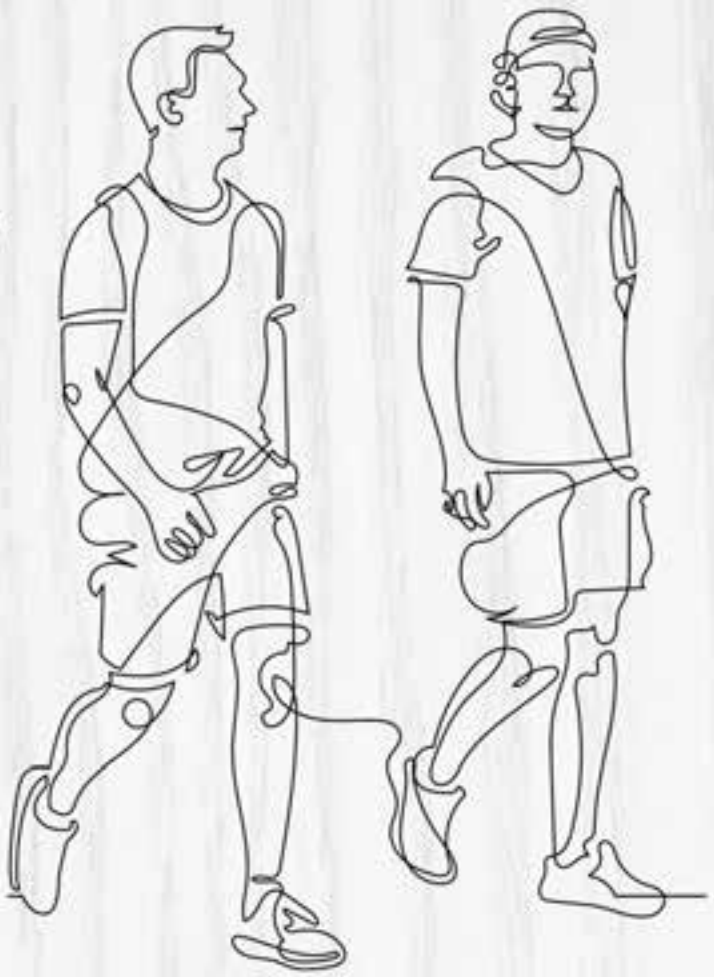
What a healthy relationship, therefore, will there be between the Church and her children: they are no longer the future of the Church at all; they are her "here and now."

Fr. Martin Macasaet earned his doctorate at the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome. He teaches youth ministry foundations, principles, and skills at Don Bosco School of Theology in Parañaque City for seminarians, religious, and lay pastoral agents. He was a consultant for the CBCP Episcopal Commission on Youth and helped create the Directory for the Directory for Catholic Youth Ministry in the Philippines, the Ka-Lakbay. He has worked with youth in various ministry settings such as higher education institutions, seminary formation, chaplaincies, groups and movements, vocational discernment, spiritual direction, retreats, and sacraments.



ACCOMPANYING THE YOUTH:

Human, Not Just Spiritual

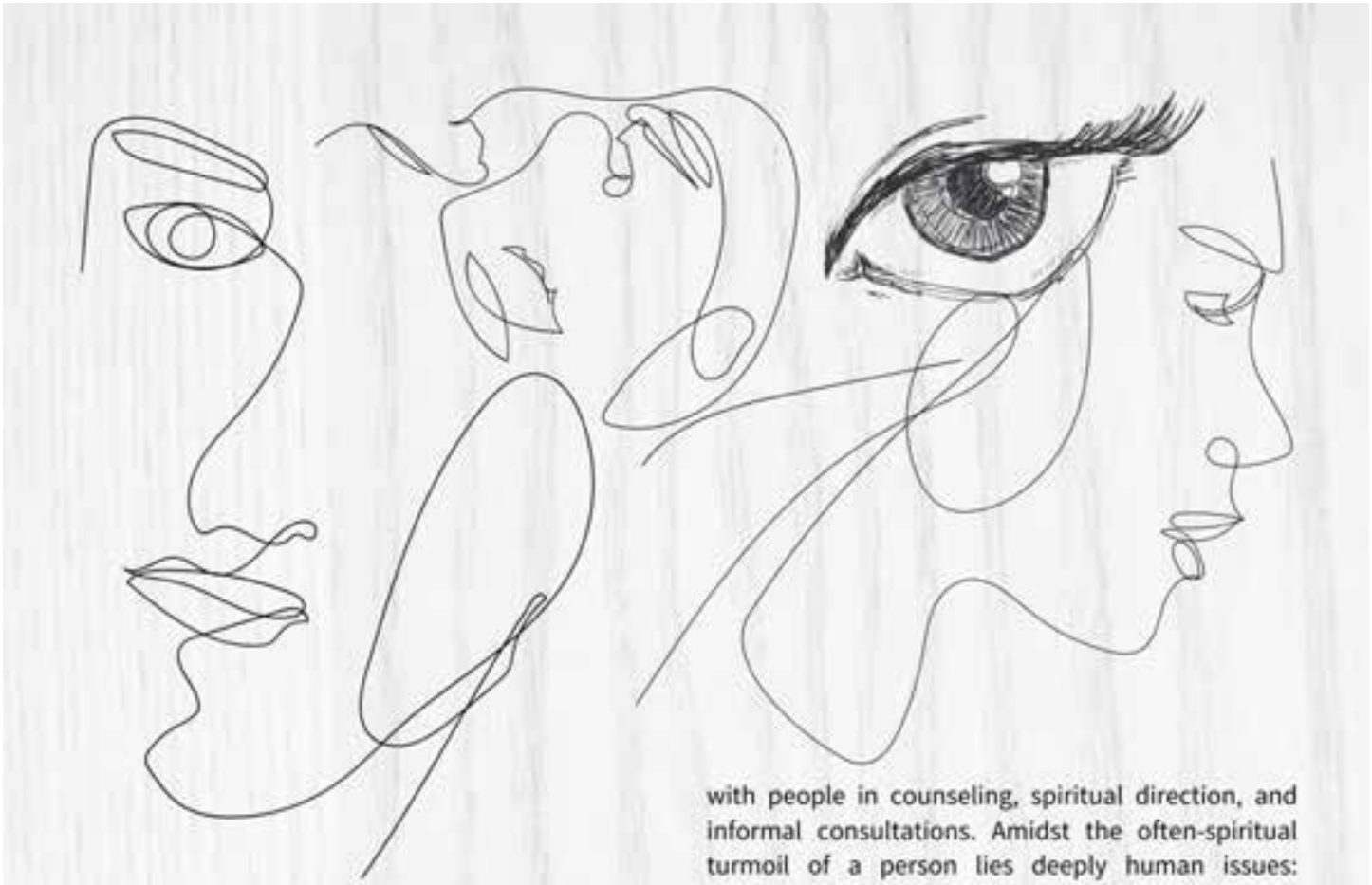


Bien Emmanuel C. Cruz, SJ

I was talking with one college student from Ateneo de Manila recently, and our conversation moved into the various initiatives the Church has for the youth and the many activities that create spaces of encounter and dialogue among the young and those within church circles. As I was recounting how the Society of Jesus made "Journeying with the Youth" one of its Universal Apostolic Preferences and how Pope Francis' recent call to synodality expands the reach of the Church's listening ear, the young man smirked at me and said, "These are all good, Brother. But I hope these conversations will not just end up in documents and more programs in parishes and church-related offices. I hope these conversations will translate to the Church—or at least to representatives of the Church—truly to accompany us where we are: in our insecurities, confusions, fears, and doubts. I hope church people can be there for us when we are struggling with our faith... to be there for us when we are struggling with many issues about ourselves."

We often hear in our religious circles that now more than ever, the Church must listen to the youth and accompany them. Pope Francis, at the beginning of his pontificate, set the tone for this mission of accompaniment. The Pope asserted in *Evangelii Gaudium* that "the Church will have to initiate everyone—priests, religious, and laity—into this 'art of accompaniment' which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other."

Many groups, sincerely responding to this call of the Pontiff, drafted numerous new programs to create adequate spaces for encounter; these are all well and good. However, these programs must not only be focused on spiritually accompanying the youth and leading them to deeper faith and commitment to their Christian vocation. Rather, in strengthening the faith of the youth, the Church must also acknowledge and appreciate the humanity of the young. Human formation is a necessary aspect of this accompaniment as well.



A psycho-spiritual approach

As a Jesuit in formation, I understand the Society of Jesus in the Philippines has devoted much time and effort to our human formation as well as our spiritual and Christian formation. Since 1981, the Emmaus Center for Psycho-Spiritual Formation and Accompaniment has been providing both spiritual and human formation to seminarians, religious, and lay people. The basic premise and philosophy of Emmaus Center is that spiritual formation, even in the context of the priesthood, must involve the human formation of those undergoing seminary training and religious formation. Human formation basically pertains to providing a person with adequate and helpful insights and psycho-emotional tools to render a realistic, integrated, and helpful understanding of the self, the same self that responds to the Church and eventually to God's call to holiness.

Embedded in our formation, this is also the primary way we Jesuits encounter and converse with people in counseling, spiritual direction, and informal consultations. Amidst the often-spiritual turmoil of a person lies deeply human issues: neglect, abandonment, worth, and self-esteem. When we have provided handles for these deeply human issues, the person can better understand him/herself in prayer before the Lord. However, due to the current situation of a world emerging from the pandemic, the secularization of societies and lifestyles, and the multitude of external influences that affect the psychological environment of the youth, our desire to meet the youth and the young faces greater challenges. Among these are the gaping generational gaps between adults and youth. Church groups tend to place the human formation of the young as a secondary priority in their school and parish programs. In prioritizing catechism and spirituality, the human aspect of an adolescent is often neglected—what we end up with are young adults active in church activities, knowledgeable of the catechism but lacking psycho-emotional maturity. This deficit in human and psycho-spiritual formations is often manifested in emotional outbursts, lack of depth, and what the late Fr. Jaime Bulatao, SJ calls "split-level Christianity" or living a double life.

Journeying with the youth

I had been assigned to Cagayan de Oro City to teach at Xavier University Junior High School for two years during one of the most tumultuous years of our generation. I was tasked with mentoring, forming, and teaching Grade 10 students during the pandemic. Sure enough, the situation and the stresses of the pandemic online learning highlighted the various and often serious mental health issues the younger generation has. To add fuel to the fire, other people's assessments of these mental health issues among the young could range from skepticism to insensitivity.

One of the least helpful things we can say to a teenager experiencing emotional problems is that "It pays not to be too sensitive" or "It will eventually go away." Equally problematic is to dismiss the underlying problem by suggesting, "Prayer is the only solution to a mental health problem!" These statements and corresponding attitudes towards the growing number of mental health problems among the young disregard the reality and suffering many young people experience.

I am not saying that I am an expert in addressing the various problems the youth are facing now, nor am I saying that I have successfully unlocked the path the Church must take to accompany and journey with the young effectively. However, my experience and connection with the young generation have provided me with insights and perspectives that, when considered, can be helpful to our own initiatives to understand, listen to, and respond to the needs of the youth today. Let me offer four simple pointers as good and helpful reminders in all our encounters with young people.





1 Listen to their Human Stories: Often, we come to meet the youth in our schools and parishes with our own agenda. We often come to prayer meetings, sharing sessions, study circles, and conversation groups already armed with points and reminders for them to learn, remember, and apply in their lives. We often do this, sincerely offering what we think is good and beneficial to our younger brothers and sisters. While it is good to come prepared, it is equally important to come open to whatever specific concern and story the young may share with us.

During the height of the lockdown in 2020, instead of asking my class to have an online recitation, I opted to have a round of sharing. I told my students to just answer the question, "*Kumusta ang buhay*? (How is life?)" Lo and behold, stories of struggles, little joys and victories, and deep-seated emotions came up in our conversations. As if naturally, the small class started compassionately conversing with each other. We ended the class feeling consoled despite the different burdens we all carried. I left the class grateful that I decided not to have a graded recitation and just let my students tell their human stories.

2 A Call for Authenticity: In one conversation I had with a Grade 10 student back in Cagayan de Oro, I asked him what an ideal teacher is and what makes a formator effective. Initially, I thought he would answer that the teacher ought to be inspiring and that the formator must be well-versed in spiritual matters and whatnot. Instead, the young student replied that for a teacher to be effective and for a formator to be inspiring, he must be "true to oneself."

Probing the student further, I realized he meant that for an adult to connect properly with the young, they must be authentic to themselves. I think I understand him. For us to draw out the authentic desires of the youth and encounter their authentic selves, we must be authentic to ourselves, too. We do not come into our encounters with the youth pretending to be wise sages to inspire them or present ourselves as better. Age indeed brings wisdom but presenting it to the youth exaggeratedly harms the possibility of a truthful encounter. We may end up pretending to be a person we are not.



3 Unconditional Regard: Carl Rogers, one of the leading psychologists of his time, developed a technique in counseling that centered on the client's ability to transcend their own concerns, aided by the therapist, rather than the latter's presuppositions. One of the hallmarks of this technique is what is called "unconditional positive regard." The website positivepsychology.com describes unconditional positive regard as "not about liking a client or accepting everything they have done; it's about respecting the client as a human being with his or her own free will and operating under the assumption that he or she is doing the best [he/she] can." In short, this unconditional regard is a disposition of respect toward those whom the therapist is meeting with. The same is true for our encounters with the youth.

Often, older individuals complain about the youth's lifestyle, choices, and language, dismissing them as a symptom of the deteriorating morality of the young. Not to mention the numerous people who complain about things such as "gender fluidity," "self-love," "mental health wellness," and "cancel" which they often hear coming from the youth. I wonder how many of them took the time and effort to listen to what these things really mean and how they impact the lives of the younger generation, especially millennials and Gen Z.

Ms. Eva Galvey, a good friend, a co-founder of Emmaus Center along with Fr. Venancio Calpotura, SJ and Ms. Teresa Nietes, has wisdom to share. With her more than 40 years of handling the formation of seminarians, religious and lay, it is proper to say that her breadth and depth of experience gave her the wisdom to deal with various individuals in different situations with unique issues across generations. When I asked Eva how she adapts to the changing language and variety of issues of people and how she manages to accompany newer generations despite stark differences in taste, language, beliefs,

and perspectives, she simply smiled at me and said, "Well, you just have to take them for who they are... If you listen closely enough, you'll realize we have more similarities than differences. You must respect how they present themselves to you and how they say it to you… The rest will follow."



4 Witnessing and Integrity: Looking back, I am thankful for the many individuals who have accompanied me in my youth. As a student of the Ateneo de Manila who started at age six, graduated from the university at age 22, and eventually entered the Jesuits, I am in awe at how much support I had both in school, at home, and in the church while I journeyed through the fun and often tumultuous years of adolescence and youth. Moreso, I can name individuals who have left a lasting impact on me, from the teachers I had in high school to the mentors in college, and most especially to numerous formators who were at the beginning of our Jesuit formation. But there is one common characteristic among them: they all had integrity. They lived a life that bore witness to the values they talked about.

Accompanying the youth will inevitably have differences in status. No matter how hip we try to be or how much we try to adapt our language to relate to and connect with the youth, we will always be older individuals with different perspectives and sets of values. Often, these differences in status can come in the form of teacher-student or mentor-mentee relationships. We always have something to teach. But the temptation lies when the values and lessons end in the teaching part.

Once I was approached by a basketball player for the school varsity, and he started complaining about how empty he perceived one of his mentors to be. In trying to hype them about doing things out of nobility and sacrifice for the team to win, their mentor relied on lines that were inspiring and eloquent enough to the point that he thought these were drawn from the movies. According to the basketball player, the mentor's words were inspiring, but felt empty because he knew how their mentor lived and how he treated his wife and family. Integrity is everything. We meet the youth who are often exposed to the superficiality of the world fed to them through the type of media they consume. These are individuals thrown around by the waves of fleeting and superficial things. They need anchors to guide and stabilize them, individuals who not only inspire but witness to the values that the youth thirst for: commitment, honesty, integrity, confidence, charity, and justice. Thus, only when we start walking the talk can we truly journey with and accompany the youth today.

Bien Emmanuel C. Cruz, SJ is a Jesuit Scholastic now residing at Loyola House of Studies and studying Theology at Loyola School of Theology. He is now in his first year of Theological Formation. Prior to Theology, he spent two years teaching at Xavier University, Ateneo de Cagayan.



Shepherded

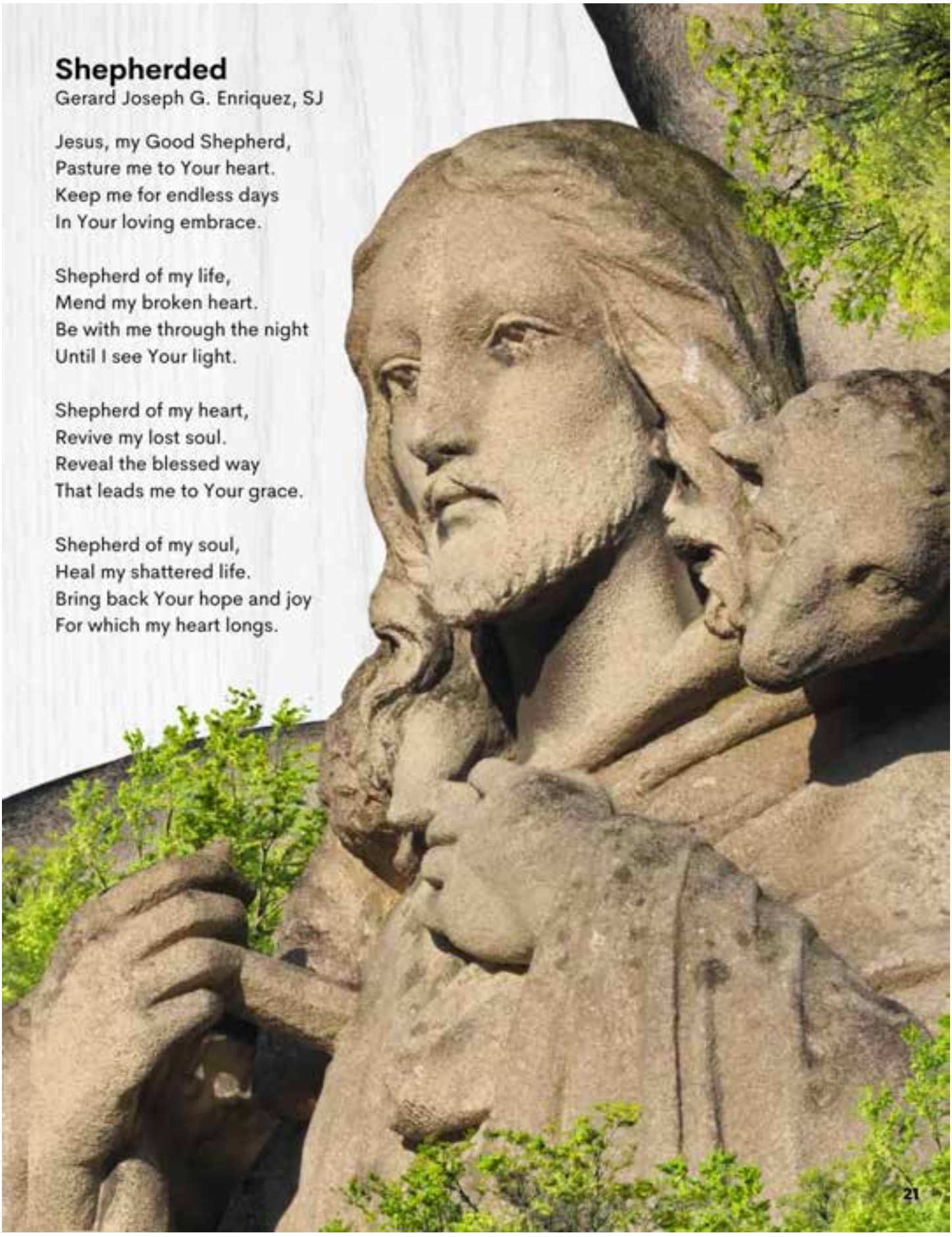
Gerard Joseph G. Enriquez, SJ

Jesus, my Good Shepherd,
Pasture me to Your heart.
Keep me for endless days
In Your loving embrace.

Shepherd of my life,
Mend my broken heart.
Be with me through the night
Until I see Your light.

Shepherd of my heart,
Revive my lost soul.
Reveal the blessed way
That leads me to Your grace.

Shepherd of my soul,
Heal my shattered life.
Bring back Your hope and joy
For which my heart longs.



FINDING ONE'S WAY: DISCERNMENT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Fr. Eric Anthony S. Escandor, SJ

"How do I know God's will?"

At first glance, it seems like a simple question. But in my many years as a vocations promoter, whenever someone asks me this question, I often find myself pausing for a long time to compose a meaningful response. I wish it were easier to know God's will, but then I realized that if it were that simple, we wouldn't need God's light anymore, and ultimately, we wouldn't need Him at all.

Five hundred years ago, a Basque nobleman also wrestled with this question. It took him a cannonball incident and a life-long discernment journey to realize the answer to this question. When St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, was recuperating from surgery to fix his leg, he began to think about the course of his life. He gradually noticed the different dispositions that he experienced while daydreaming about his already uncertain future, and "began to marvel at this difference in kind and to reflect on it, picking it up from experience that from some thoughts he would be left sad and others happy, and little by little coming to know the difference in kind of spirits that were stirring: the one from the devil, the other from God" ("Reminiscences" in Personal Writings, 15).

He realized that God worked through the many events in his life and began paying attention to the rumblings in his heart due to those frequent musings. He also discovered how emotions flow toward God or away from Him. He likewise desired to pursue greater and loftier goals along the way. From giving up his nobility to embarking on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and begging for his provisions along the way, he desired to accomplish greater things for the eternal King rather than for any earthly king.

While many attribute his conversion to that cannonball incident in Pamplona, it was in Manresa where he experienced a complete *metanoia*. In Manresa, he gained deeper insight – albeit painstakingly – into what he later called consolations and desolations. This conversion culminated with that famous illumination by the River Cardoner. In his autobiography, he describes what he felt: "And while sitting there, the eyes of understanding began to open for him. It was not that he saw a vision, but that he understood and knew many things with such great enlightenment that all things seemed new to him." One can say that this spiritual enlightenment is the fruit of what is later known as **discernment**.

To Discern Means to Sift Through

Many think that discernment is telling the difference between right and wrong. But this is not the case for Ignatius. Discernment is about choosing between two goods and not between good and evil. If given a choice between committing a moral act and an immoral one, one need not apply discernment there – one simply decides to do the right thing. People imbued with this spiritual gift seem to have the uncanny ability to look at something in a way that weighs whether it fits well within God's plan or not. Some others liken discernment to "gut instinct" because discerning people seem

to sense, almost immediately, when something is not quite right. Ignatius, however, teaches us that discernment is not just a mere "gut feel." Discernment is God's gift itself – enabling us with the capacity to orient all our actions and thoughts along God's ways simply by keenly savoring how God works actively in and through our lives and noticing how we are growing in our ways of living and loving ourselves, one another, and ultimately, God.

The word discern comes from the Latin *discernere*, which means distinguishing, separating, or sifting through. In the Ignatian sense, discernment is sifting through the various data that one has gathered while making a meaningful and life-giving decision. Fr. Ramon Bautista, SJ, an expert on Ignatian spirituality and also my novice master, likens a discerner to a jeweler who can distinguish between a genuine gemstone and a fake one. But before he can do that arduous task, it would take him years of assiduously noticing and observing the qualities and characteristics of an authentic gemstone. Discernment is not simply a one-time event but a skill that is polished and nurtured over time.

The Prerequisites of Discernment

"In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night. God said: Whatever you ask I shall give you…. 'Give your servant, therefore, a listening heart to judge your people and to distinguish between good and evil. For who is able to give judgment for this vast people of yours?'" (1 Kings 9-14)

The Lord was pleased when Solomon asked for a listening heart or, in other translations, a discerning heart. So pleased was the Lord that He gave him not only his request for a discerning heart but also "riches and glory that among kings there will be no one like him." A meaningful discernment process necessitates a heart oriented toward the source of wisdom. There are prerequisites before we can embark on a meaningful discernment process. I am listing down three important ones.

The **first prerequisite** is the capacity to appreciate and relish God's presence in our lives. In the first week of the Spiritual Exercises, Ignatius devotes meditations that develop a deep awareness of how God loves us unconditionally and generously. The grace he suggests that we beg for in prayer is profound gratitude for what the Lord has done in our lives. For Ignatius, recalling occasions where we experienced God's healing love and abiding presence is essential. This means that we need to savor each moment, no matter how seemingly inconsequential they may be. We slow down and pause to enjoy what has happened with an attitude of gratitude. Without the grace of profound gratitude to the Lord, discernment will be hard-pressed. As a vocation director, it is one important characteristic I'm looking for in a vocation searcher. More than motivations and desires, the vocation searcher's capacity for gratitude opens up the path to a meaningful discernment process.

The **second prerequisite** is what Fr Mon Bautista, SJ calls our capacity "to look in and look out." This capacity "to look out" means being sensitive to key exterior events and realities in our lives and recognizing the "signs of the times" in our world today. The capacity "to look in" is our ability to grapple with our dominant feelings and interior movements and their discernible patterns in our lives (cf. Wood for the Fire, Bautista). These form part of what we call data for discernment which are then brought into formal prayer.

The **third prerequisite** is having adequate knowledge of our inordinate affections or excessive attachments. Ignatius wrote clearly that the purpose of the Spiritual Exercises is "the conquest of self and the regulation of one's life in such a way that no decision is made under the influence of any inordinate attachment." It is, therefore, crucial for those of us who are undergoing a process of discernment to have sufficient awareness and knowledge of our attachments that prevent us from making free and life-giving choices. It is inevitable to get attached to something or someone. Ignatius recognizes these attachments as part of our human



situation. What Ignatius invites us to do in the Spiritual Exercises is to bring the Lord back into the center of our lives. Certain attachments in life give us a sense of stability. But certain attachments become so central in our lives that they weigh us down so much. Stability then deteriorates to stagnancy, impairing our capacity to make free choices. This requires courage to face our vulnerabilities and the humility to accept them.

Flow of Discernment

"The next day John was there again with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?"

He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon. Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus." (John 1:35-40, NAB)

After identifying the prerequisites, we have cleared the way for a meaningful discernment process. Here I'm using the term "movement" instead of steps to indicate a flow rather than a step-by-step process. Often, treating discernment in a linear movement creates an impasse in deciding as we tend to get hung up on finishing the process rather than focusing on the encounter with the Lord, who is leading us to particular directions in life. Movements indicate to us that we are moving toward God and not away from Him.



The **first movement** in discernment is to identify the question. In the passage above, Jesus asked the two disciples of John this question: What are you looking for? Similarly, in discernment, we may find it helpful to imagine the Lord asking the same question to us. This question forces us to retreat into our innermost longings and desires, which connect us to the Divine. Our Catechism affirms that "the desire for God is written in the human heart, because [the human person] is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw [the human person] to himself" (CCC, 27).

This capacity for God allows us to venture deeper into our heart's desires and enable us to orient our actions and thoughts along God's ways. Because the human person is *capax Dei*, St. John Paul II reflects, "[one] is able to live a personal relationship with [God] and to respond with loving obedience to the covenant relationship offered to [the human person] by one's Creator" (St. John Paul II, General Audience, August 26, 1998). We may not fully know God's will – obviously because we are not God – but we do have the capacity to discern it by use of our reason and faith life – precisely due to our being made in the image and likeness of God.

It is important to note that as we respond to the Lord's question, we seek further answers by asking more relevant questions. The disciples did not stop at one question. Their initial question led to other questions that only sought to clarify their motivations and desires. The more focused and specific our question is, the better and more specific the answers we will get. A lot of times, young discerners come to me with a desire to be genuinely happy. Who doesn't? We all want to be happy. But I remind them that searching for happiness is such a broad endeavor and can only lead them to further confusion and doubts. By sharpening the questions, we get to weed out the unnecessary data that come to us and begin to ruminate on the data that truly matter. Questions like, "How do I pursue this happiness? What makes me truly happy? What do I value the most? How do I see myself given a period of time?" can help clarify motivations and desires.

This will then lead us to the **second movement**. We notice the interior movements and dispositions within us and those happening around us. Discernment does not begin on a blank canvas. We bring with us a wealth of experiences, and so it is necessary to step back from the experience using

the Ignatian examen of consciousness. The examen will help us become aware of our feelings and the directions we are being led into. It is also in this movement that we are asked to identify and lay down our options before our loving God. We scrutinize them carefully by checking on our motivations, both pure and impure. The examen will open our eyes to discernible patterns of consolations and desolations that can help us in making a meaningful decision. Ultimately, we ask ourselves this question: Which of these will help us become a more loving and life-giving person and, in doing so, will also serve ***God's greater praise and glory***? Notice the comparative language. For Ignatius, it is always the more, the better, the greater which indicates an ever-dynamic response to God's invitations in our lives.

The **third movement** is to consult a third person whom we can trust and one who has accompanied us along the way. A lot of times, we may get caught up with our own selves that we cannot see things objectively. Make no mistake about it – this spiritual guide will not make decisions for us. Instead, he will help us make sense of our discernment process and the data we have gathered thus far. An excellent spiritual guide will also be able to detect unfreedoms and inordinate attachments that prevent us from encountering the Lord Himself.

Lastly, the **fourth movement** is the most important one. It is to make a tentative choice based on available data we have thus far gathered. We ultimately rely on the grace of God for light and peace, knowing that His plans are for our own welfare and not for our destruction (cf. Jeremiah 29:11). We cannot possibly know everything or gain access to all data but God's grace should be enough light for us to move towards the path where the Lord might be calling us. Some people I know are unable to make a tentative decision. They want to attain a level of certitude that betrays our human capacities. But we cannot go on discerning a particular question forever. At some point, we need to make a tentative choice. While we cannot be entirely sure about a particular path, it should not stop us from making life-giving decisions. While we cannot know fully well God's plans for us, because we are *capax Dei*, we can perceive signs of affirmation that tell us that, indeed we have trod on the right path of discernment. What are these signs? Ignatius points to the increase of faith, hope, and love in us.



We would have become life-giving in a chosen path we have made. This means that a particular discerned path empowers us to foster a right relationship with the Lord and a meaningful relationship with other people. It is important to note that God's invitations are not meant to be hoarded but are to be shared with all. A discerned action then can be likened to the multiplication of the five loaves distributed to nourish the hungry and the lost. Responding to God's invitation necessarily links you to other people, as Frederick Buechner once wrote, "Your vocation in life is where your greatest joy meets the world's greatest need."

There are so many things that can be said about discernment but ultimately, as Ignatius experienced it in his lifetime, discernment is a life-giving way of knowing and embracing God's will in our life. It is a process that respects and reinforces our freedom and capacity to choose what would make us grow in a more life-giving manner and one that would praise, serve, and glorify the Lord more in our lives.

Fr. Eric Anthony S. Escandor, SJ is currently the Vocations Director of the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus. At the same time director of the Jesuit Candidacy House (fondly called "Arvisu House"), he has been accompanying young men to discern the possibility of a religious vocation for seven years now. #JointheJesuits



THE YOUTH SHARE THEIR STORIES

The Tinig Loyola Team invited five young people to complete the following prompts:

1. Share something about yourself.
2. Share something about your faith.
3. Share something about your values.
4. Share something about your weakness.
5. Share something about your deepest desire.

Get to know each one of them in the pages that follow. Let this be one of the many ways we can walk with our dear young people in genuine interest and authenticity.

Have a meaningful read! 😊

RESSA YANGGO MAYONAN

I am Ressa Mayonan, 27 years old. I was born in June of 1995, and I grew up in a Higaonon tribe in Bukidnon. My parents are also 100% Higaonon. I grew up with a lot of love from my parents, and they had big dreams for my siblings and me. Out of my 12 siblings, I am the only one who graduated from elementary, high school, and college. My other siblings have started their own families. Unfortunately, both of my parents already passed away; my father in 2007, and my mother in 2014 due to an illness. Even though we grew up without the guidance of our parents, they taught us always to show love to others. Their guidance and love continue to be in my heart and mind until now. (translated from Binukid by James Seneriches, SJ)



KHENIE MASALIHIT



My name is Khenie, which comes from the Kapampangan word "keni," which means "dito" or "halika rito." I'm a second-year accounting student at the State University of Malabon, also known as the City of Malabon University. I serve the Church, the people here in our community (Sacred Heart Mission Station, Caloocan), and other places and communities as a youth volunteer, catechist, lector, commentator, and part of the Social Communication Team that handles anything related to technology.

It is not easy to be a student, a daughter who wishes to help her family, and a servant of God. But, in my own experience, I can do it all with the gift of time management. Moreover, if you really want what you are doing, you will enjoy all of it. So yes, I enjoy helping others, especially those in need. Despite having many activities, household chores, and church work, I am a consistent dean's lister, and last year, in 2022, I became one of the best volunteers in our community. It was a great achievement, yes; but even if there is no reward, it is okay with me; I can continue what I am doing. I am not into prizes, rewards, or anything in exchange for all the help that I give to the community because God has been showering me with blessings. The more I give my time to those who really need help, the more blessings I receive.

KENAN GAWARAN

I am Kenan, a senior political science major from the Loyola Schools [of Ateneo de Manila University], currently serving the Ateneo Student Catholic Action as its President. I suppose my character as a student of social sciences and as a student-leader of a faith-formation organization says a lot about who I truly am as a person. I'm really into social studies and engagements, as well as spiritual ventures. Yet, at the end of the day, I firmly believe that what I am so far is not merely a product of my personal volition, but is shaped by a sense of community, responsibility, and vocation.



GEM NANAMAN



It would take a bit of that "brave energy" to even look at myself, much less examine me, as the fear element is crippling due to scars that I would not want even to recognize. I am very much willing to wear my armor but remove my walls, as my psychiatrist told me, "God is going to use your 'scars' as a story to help others."

My parents, Gibriel and Celeste Nanaman, are running a school up to primary education. I just finished college at the University of the Philippines – Cebu, with a degree in business management. Currently, I am working for our school while at the same time undergoing training to be the future CEO and administrator. I am also managing our tutorial center with the intent to learn a lot to be able to manage and handle bigger endeavors in the future. I was also given the opportunity to be a model and a "Youtuber/vlogger," but I decided not to continue that path.

The bigger part of my life has been so much pain and sadness. Even with so much chaos and pain inside me, I am still trying my very best to keep on swimming just to survive the raging waters. It is surreal that I have been able to survive the storm thus far.



DATU ABDULA MARTINEZ UKA III

I am Datu Abdula Martinez Uka III, but many simply call me by my nickname "Dats." I was born and raised in Cotabato City and I took up AB major in English, minor in Philosophy at Ateneo de Davao University. I'm a 28-year-old aspiring yet enthusiastic individual who makes life worth living through my interests in music, writing, research, teaching, and volunteering. Currently, I work as the training and special events coordinator at the Madaris Volunteers Program and a part-time faculty in my alma mater. In the course of work and life balance, I'm also pursuing my graduate studies abroad via remote learning in line with linguistics.

I'm fond of expressing myself and my life journey through writing like my late grandfather, who was a lawyer, professor, supervisor, writer, and editor. My first short story "Under the Starry Sky" was published internationally through Eastlit, a journal and website focused on creative writing, English literature, and art specifically from or connected to East and Southeast Asia. I'm trying to walk in my grandfather's footsteps as he is someone I've been looking up to in the family. He is one of the earliest Muslim writers with so many endeavors. He wrote stories such as "Dulawan," "The Story of the Piangs," and "A Deer for Jesus." He was also significantly involved in the drafting of the 1987 Philippine Constitution as the representative of the cultural community of Cotabato and the Muslim community as a whole. Apart from his multiple professions, he lived life in simplicity and humility. Music, writing, and the teaching profession are the legacy that he passed on to our family, and thankfully, this legacy runs through what I am passionate about.

SHARE SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR FAITH



Dats

Interestingly, I have grown up in an intercultural and interreligious family. My mom is a Cebuana and Catholic; my dad is a Maguindanaon and Muslim, though I, myself, am a believer in Islam. I may not be a perfect Muslim, but I'm always trying my best to become one through words and deeds which are, in turn, my prayers in action.

I was raised in a Catholic school and studied at Notre Dame for many years in elementary and high school. Through this experience, I could see and admire the good things of a religion other than Islam, allowing me better to understand my brothers and sisters of different religions while strengthening my relationship with Allah and becoming closer to my faith.

When I moved and studied college at AdDU, I gained a sense of belongingness and honed my acts of service through participating in outreach programs or activities organized by an in-house organization established to promote peace among Moro students, Salam: the Ateneo Muslim Society (SALAM: TAMS); and an in-house institute for understanding Islam, the Muslims, and peoples of Mindanao that are culturally linked to other Southeast Asian communities through dialogue, the Al-Qalam Institute for Islamic Identities and Dialogue in Southeast Asia. There, I made friends and peers whom I considered brothers and sisters in faith. In a predominantly Catholic institution, AdDU gave me so many experiences to practice my faith and immerse myself in the complexity of cultures and faith traditions.

Gem

In my case, to say that I had a "down" moment in my faith is a gross understatement. I was at rock bottom when something horrible happened to me back in 2017. I was raped. After that, my girlfriend, whom I loved so much, left me. I thought things could not get any worse, but they did. It was like being planted in a black hole, and I just kept getting sucked into this void of toxicity and chaos. It felt like there was no way out anymore... so I decided to be an atheist. I was so mad at God. Because of the rage inside me, I could not be kind to myself and hence, I was also unkind and harsh to others. It took me a very long time to get out of that darkness. In that darkness, though I did not stick with God, He always did stick with me.

Kenan



It is faith that has been the primary mover of my life. My prime conviction is that life is meant to happen in a call-response structure. Human as I am, I recognize my incessant frailty and weaknesses, and, devoid of anyone outside of me, my inherent worthlessness. Hence, I believe that there should be something, someone greater than me who can direct my humble faculties to a higher purpose in the greater scheme of things. It is this God, He who has willed to place me in and with this community of people, who patiently and lovingly calls me day after day, and before Him I have nothing to offer but my meek and humble response.

Khenie

My faith has brought me to where I am and who I am right now. It gives me the courage to face all of life's problems. It gives me happiness and inner peace that I can't explain. My faith also teaches me and allows me to see things that I couldn't see before. I always surrender my worries to God, pray that everything will be alright, and put everything in His hands, entrusting it all to Him. A Bible verse says, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." (Luke 7:50). I had had many bad experiences and committed many sins, but I have always prayed and, with faith, asked God for forgiveness. I believe and I am sure, because of my faith, that He will forgive me and answer all my prayers. That is why, yes, my faith has saved me and has brought me the peace and happiness I had longed for. Lord, increase my faith in you.

Ressa

For me, having faith in every person is something that can never be taken away from [anyone] in this world. Without faith, I would not have been able to achieve my long-cherished dreams of success in learning. Without trust in myself and consistently calling on the divine, [one] cannot attain whatever [one] want[s] in life. (translated from Binukid by James Seneriches, SJ)





SHARE SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Khenie

I have good relationships with my friends, family and relatives, classmates, churchmates, and other people I socialize with. However, sometimes, not everyone will like you or what you are doing. We are not perfect, and we are living in a world full of judgment, even if our intentions are pure or if they produce a good outcome. But what matters most to me is that I will not give them the same negative energy; instead, I will continue to try to become a better person every day. Of course, the most important is my relationship with God. I can say that I have a good relationship with Him. He is always my priority if it is about relationships. I can also say that if we don't have a good relationship with God, we will not have good relationships with others as well. Through prayer and service, my relationship with God has deepened.



Kenan

My relationships have been my greatest and most consistent source of consolation. I used to believe that I was meant to face the world alone, and it would be best to stay that way. But I can remember many instances when people, despite my hard-heartedness, would patiently reach out to me and wholeheartedly empathize with me. It is through them—my friends, the numerous communities that I've been with, and even nameless strangers—that I am able to see my God face-to-face. And so, I am who I am because of these relationships.

Gem

As I have mentioned in [my response to the] previous [question], God has given me real friends. These amazing people I now call "azalea" brothers. The name comes from the condominium where I stayed while studying at UP Cebu. It somewhat became our "headquarters," where we formed a brotherhood, and I was their "leader," their broken, chaotic leader whom they loved, nonetheless. Our brotherhood is what I call my "sanctuary" among people. In terms of place, that would be the "gym." As nice as it may sound, part of my relationships can honestly be rivaled by the negativity of the other part: romantic relationships... If I am not mistaken, the number of relationships I have had is around 12. Each has its own very excruciatingly painful background story. I can talk by sharing, but it will take months, so I'd rather not.



Ressa

For me, I am a person who likes to observe and interact with the people around me. One of the reasons I enjoy talking to those around me is because it allows me to learn more about the world and to broaden my perspective. (translated from Binukid by James Seneriches, SJ)

Dats

I've been friends with many individuals from different walks of life. As someone who is friendly by nature, I preserve good and healthy relationships with younger ones and old ones alike who are close to my heart, aside from my contemporaries. When I volunteered in Myanmar through the AdDU Arrupe Office of Social Formation's Cardoner Volunteer Program, my understanding, perspectives, and respect towards other faiths and cultures were widened and these fostered good relationships with the Jesuits who opened the doors of opportunity and reality for me. Truly, the program gave me so many wonderful and enriching opportunities to add something new to my experience and to serve others.



SHARE SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR VALUES



Gem

I'm a person who values authenticity so much. I believe that each one of us has his/her own demons, and it is necessary for us to recognize ourselves and act according to our true nature, while at the same time being very open to new learnings and improvements.

Khenie

A person's values are the most important attitudes one should have in one's life. People will not see them physically, but our values are seen through our actions. For example, I am a person who is willing to help and give my time to anyone, especially those who are in need, or in a word, "selfless." Being a "selfless" person is associated with generosity, thoughtfulness, and humility. Having this kind of value has a great impact on my life because I am not just helping others, but I am also growing into the better woman I am today. For I believe that if [one is] serving others for the greater glory of God, [one has] already served our Lord. Furthermore, having this kind of value helps me understand the true meaning of service and how to help others without expecting anything in return. That's why I really love the prayer that St. Ignatius of Loyola wrote, "To give and not to count the cost."

Kenan

Perhaps, my personal values revolve around the three values exhorted by the Prophet in Micah 6:8: to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly. This is not to say that I have always been consistent in living out these values all the time. But they essentially serve as my moral compass, the standards through which my relationships are deepened, my faith is ripened, and my true self is realized.



Ressa

For me, life is not fulfilling if you don't know how to value and appreciate the people and things around you. Giving importance and value to those around us is essential to our happiness and fulfillment in life. Personally, I believe that one of the key factors in my success in learning is that I value and appreciate everything, whether it be delight or hardship. (translated from Binukid by James Seneriches, SJ)



Dats

I often uphold my values in life, work, and study. Friendship, thoughtfulness, creativity, humility, loyalty, kindness, empathy, compassion, productivity, and determination are my topmost values as I journey through life with and for others. These values are important to me because they help me grow and develop as a person. Many of my social media stories, posts, and shares are filled with words of wisdom and values that I try to uphold and live with.



SHARE SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR WEAKNESS

Gem

By viewing it just one-sidedly, I can easily say my weakness is my depression. It is true that I am not 100% "psychologically" healthy, and perhaps none of us are. My being psychologically unhealthy has produced a lot of unpleasant characteristics in me as my psychiatrists have also proven. Every time I am triggered, I show some very unpleasant characteristics. In the end, I realized that without my depression I would never have known God's heart. My brokenness brought me to Him.



Kenan

Among my various weaknesses, it is probably my low self-confidence that I think is the most difficult to handle. I'm afraid many people perceive me as a man of great confidence, given my background in youth leadership; however, I am aware of how I think lowly of myself, to the extent that I am always bothered not only by my lacking knowledge and skills but my worthlessness as a whole—in the sense that I do not deserve anything good or better. I identify this as my weakness because this low self-confidence has hindered me multiple times from the opportunity to be more, to grab more opportunities to actualize my God-given potential. This weakness also made me prone to constant abuse from other people.

Dats

I may not be an outspoken person by default. Being introverted and reserved in the eyes of many, I consider it my weakness. I'd rather be a supporter working backstage than be a face to everybody. But despite my inability verbally, eloquently, and socially to influence others, I know that I can still find the strength to see and plan things out carefully to achieve success. This doesn't hinder me from making a small, but significant difference in someone's life. I have known and felt it in my heart, especially when dealing with young people: to achieve up to their potential and to be as positive in their lives as I can possibly be, and I like being a positive force in their lives, who oftentimes have no other positive role models. I guess it is my calling to interact, be with people, and inspire them through my deeds or actions rather than by my face or words.

Ressa

For me, my greatest weakness in life is when my family is in need, particularly when they don't have enough food to eat at home or when they get sick. I love them deeply, and their well-being is a priority for me. However, I also believe that my family is the source of all my strength. With the guidance of God, they are the reasons why I have so much courage to live my life even in the face of problems. (translated from Binukid by James Seneriches, SJ)



Khenie

Many of us have a lot of weaknesses to be considered. When we hear the word "weakness," it does not literally mean that when you do the things you do [like your normal daily activities and duties], you will become weak; it's not like that. My weakness is that, sometimes, I don't have patience in terms of waiting, and I get easily irritated when things don't go in the way I want them to. I don't have a gift or talent for dancing, too!



SHARE SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR DEEPEST DESIRE

Dats

My deepest desire is to be of help to others. I love helping people whenever I can, and this selfless act has been my mantra wherever I go. In Islam, there's a term sadaqah, meaning a voluntary charity that is given out of love and mercy. I believe that such a selfless act, volunteering, is translated into this form of charity. I am driven by the desire of doing random acts of kindness and appreciating simple things that have a bigger impact on me, whether these are of little or no attention to others. I just want to be happy in anything I do, live life with meaning, as well as be productive in my actions, big or small. In a world so obsessed with money, it's a wonderful feeling to be able to help others and not care at all for worldly rewards.

khenie

My heart's deepest desire is to be more like Jesus: always following God's will, serving God and God's people, and serving well. I always pray that God may give me the power to do everything for His glory and strength so that I may carry my own cross. I know this deepest desire of mine will really make me happy and bring direction and focus to my life. I believe that when I do all these, everything else will follow – happiness, peace of mind, my loved ones' health, and all that is good. I just need to entrust everything to Him.



Ressa

For me, the deepest desire in my life is to provide a good home for my family and to find a loving partner whom I can share my life with in the future. (translated from Binukid by James Seneriches, SJ)

Kenan

My deepest desire has always been service. I have been quite sure that I desire to work in the public sector, specifically at the local level, since I really enjoy working with people on the ground, given my relatively extensive volunteer experience in such communities ever since I was young. It is in these places where I can feel and express myself more comfortably, without any external pressure or internal pretension. It is also in these places and with these people that I am filled with so much hope and consolation despite all the difficulties and challenges this world gives. In my desire to serve with and for others, I discover from time to time my life's deepest meaning and purpose.



Gem

My deepest desire is to have good relationships in every aspect. Though things are already going extremely well with my "bros," I still want to open up horizons to new friends and people that I can help in any way. In my family, I want to improve my relationships with my parents, brother, sister-in-law, and other relatives. In romance, though, it would be something of a surreal matter to me if I could finally meet someone with whom I could have a successful relationship. The reason I'm able to make such a negative statement about it is due to my past experiences. I would also like to improve my relationship with myself. I do believe that I should heal first before I can fully love and care for someone else. Lastly, the most important relationship I want to build is my relationship with God. I do believe we can all have a personal relationship with Him.



ON SPRAINED ANKLES AND FAITH

Roselyn Balmes

If I am to be asked about something I can recall from my youth, what instantly comes to mind is getting a sprained ankle twice in 2017. The first one was days before I graduated from college, and the second was when I was walking along Malacañang grounds. I still laugh in disbelief thinking of how I, literally wearing flats back then, twisted my ankle as I was walking with our nanays and tatays from Casiguran. As a Jesuit Volunteer assigned to the campaign opposing the development aggression project that would render people's displacement from their homes, I was tasked to coordinate our lobbying efforts.

On that day, we were set to meet with an official from Malacañang until I suddenly found myself tripping my foot as we walked toward the latter's premises from San Miguel Church. Before all of that, I was a graduating student of Ateneo de Naga, who also suddenly found herself inside the university clinic after twisting her ankle while walking through a staircase. I was rushing back and forth to complete some graduation requirements and make it to the ongoing protest that day. To follow the advice of the nurse to stay put was not really an option, knowing that my fellow students and council members were braving the heat of the summer sun. To us, nothing really mattered at that time but to express our opposition to the proposed imposition of the death penalty in the country.

I can still vividly recall myself lamenting that sprained ankle after our meeting in Malacañang, and how that was already a second in less than a year. I can't help but really find the resemblance laughable… but also, profoundly affirming. If any, what is common about those two incidents (of course, aside from the sprained ankles) will be: that there were religious persons around and that both happened a few meters away from the church.

To have engaged in these causes as a 20-year-old and part of generation Z (Gen Z) fresh off from college surely wasn't very ideal. To have seen such brokenness in the world and learn how deep and enduring that was for the many communities was something I really would not imagine for such an age. I guess that rings true for the 20-year-olds, basically the Gen Zs, that we have now. With easier access to information on current socio-political events and technology, most of the younger generations easily find themselves being anxious and distressed. While some find themselves in the same situation as mine – being in communities fighting for these issues and other spaces of engagement, there are also some who are left to feel the brokenness on their own, busy with the demands of life. The Church would usually ask: "How can we better serve our youth?" But maybe, we can consider the question, "How can we be in better solidarity with our youth?"







I had never had a firm grasp of my own spirituality and relationship with the Church until those experiences presented to me an image of God that affirmed my personal advocacies: a God with whom I share the same convictions, especially His ministry with the poor. Surely, my case is an exception as I claim that my personal advocacies have led me to the faith that I now deeply hold. Must it be sheer luck and serendipity to have been assigned to a faith-based organization working with religious people and leaders? I literally found and grew in faith outside the pillars of the Church – beyond her sacraments and liturgies unto her communities and mission to the poor.

The faith cultivated in me while working with these communities has allowed me to put up a fight out of love and solidarity with them. In moments of frustration and anger over meetings with politicians or government agencies, there has always been a God who reminds me to shift my focus on the nanays and tatays who, at the end of the day, keep the fight and the faith. When feelings of hopelessness remind me that the fight is a long and winding road, there is a God who invites me to enjoy the journey, nonetheless. And when questions like, "Is this worth it?" creeps in, there is a God who insists that it is always worth it simply to share in His mission: to love and to be with His beloved people.



To walk with the poor entails a lot of sprained ankles down the road. I personally cannot imagine it for the youth engaging in many social and political advocacies right now, including even those who are witnessing all of these unfold as they brave through other demands of life. To us, engaging digitally via social media or literally joining these communities or sectors is nothing but a full expression of ourselves – a shot at a kinder and more just society that we want to build in the present and manifest for the future. I can only hope and pray that in serving Christ's beloved, the poor, these young people may also find God who is always in solidarity with them, in their feelings of hopelessness, and in the meaningful and radical work that they do. In its most concrete sense, the Church also finds them, supports them, and sees them more radically, with their inherent power to lead actions and be in a collective and collaborative mission. To see the Church as their partner, sharing with them the same dreams and hopes for the sectors they work with and in the larger society that we all share. Ultimately, may God find them – may God find us – amid the chaos and brokenness of the spaces we all tread and navigate.

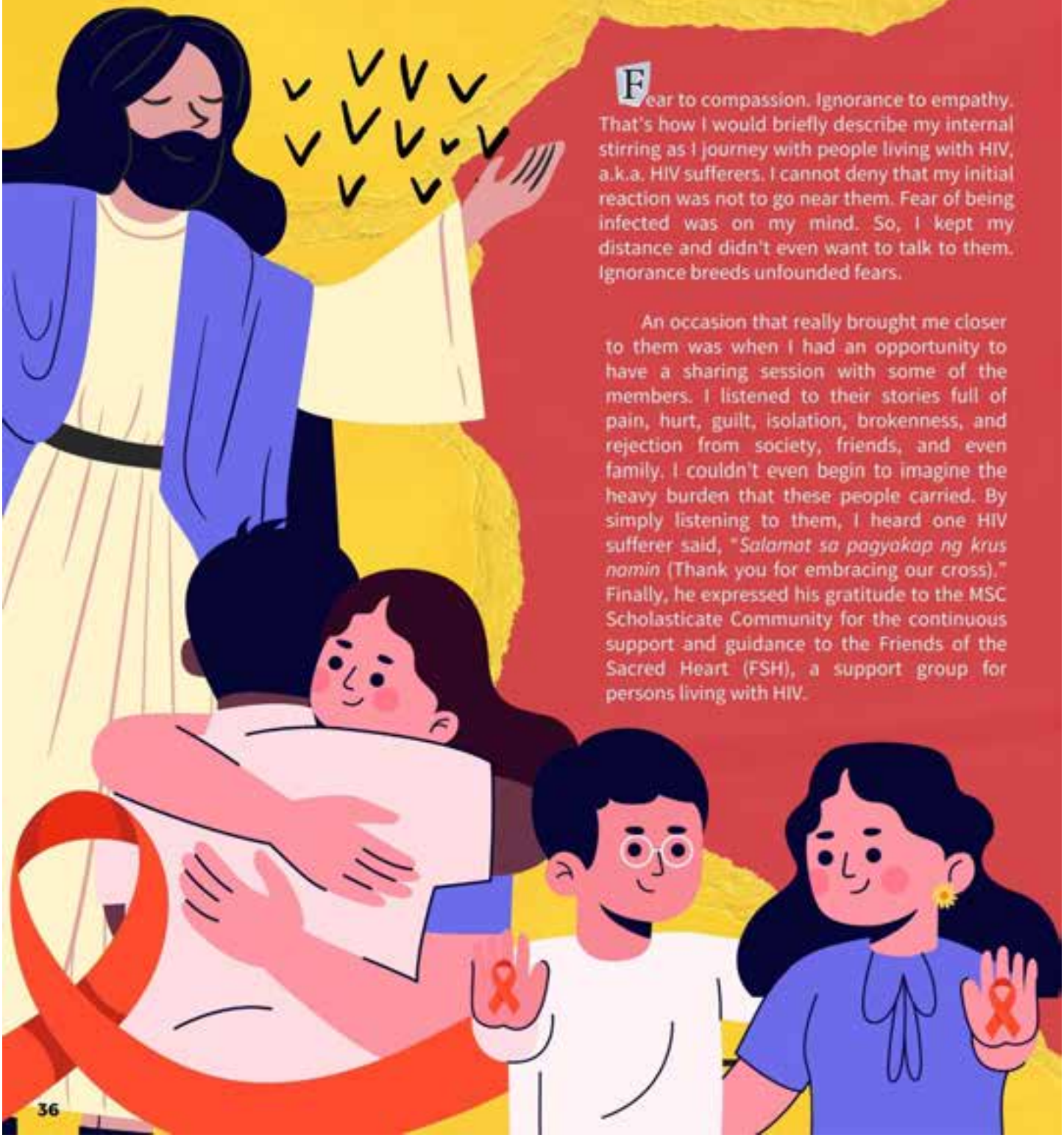


After finishing her Psychology degree in 2017, Roselyn Balmes joined the Jesuit Volunteers Philippines where she was missioned to Casiguran, Aurora.

Currently, she is with Ateneo de Manila University's Office for Mission and Identity while also taking graduate studies in Philosophy and being a fur parent to Peanut.

TOWARD COMPASSION & EMPATHY

Frt. Erwin T. Rosique, MSC



Fear to compassion. Ignorance to empathy. That's how I would briefly describe my internal stirring as I journey with people living with HIV, a.k.a. HIV sufferers. I cannot deny that my initial reaction was not to go near them. Fear of being infected was on my mind. So, I kept my distance and didn't even want to talk to them. Ignorance breeds unfounded fears.

An occasion that really brought me closer to them was when I had an opportunity to have a sharing session with some of the members. I listened to their stories full of pain, hurt, guilt, isolation, brokenness, and rejection from society, friends, and even family. I couldn't even begin to imagine the heavy burden that these people carried. By simply listening to them, I heard one HIV sufferer said, "*Salamat sa pagyakap ng krus namin* (Thank you for embracing our cross)." Finally, he expressed his gratitude to the MSC Scholasticate Community for the continuous support and guidance to the Friends of the Sacred Heart (FSH), a support group for persons living with HIV.

The FSH started a few years back. It began as an initiative by a confrere and was embraced by the students in formation as an apostolate. The support group provides pastoral care, spiritual intervention, and activities such as recollections, educational forums, ongoing accompaniment, formative intervention, life journey sharing and fellowship, and outreach programs, among others. Through this group, I first heard about the orientation on HIV. As I got involved in the apostolate, my views about HIV sufferers gradually changed. I realized first that they were just like me, ordinary people. Had I not known they were positive for HIV, I might have acted naturally and welcomed them warmly because being positive of the virus didn't manifest physically. They looked fine and normal.

Interestingly, the lived faith of HIV sufferers is a source of great inspiration. They have not given up hope. Their faith in God sustains them. Caring people support them. They can live with the disease; it is the stigma that hurts them more. If there is one message that they want to convey to us, it is to help "stop the stigma." They are already facing a sickness without a cure. Do they need to suffer more from how society views and treats them, even their own families and loved ones?

HIV/AIDS is like leprosy at the time of Jesus. No one dared to approach those afflicted with it for fear of catching their disease. The lepers, too, had to warn people when they were nearby. They had to ring a bell and shout from a distance, "Lepers! Lepers!" We read in the Bible that Jesus encountered a leper once who asked him for healing. What did Jesus do? "Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' He said. 'Be clean!' And immediately, his leprosy was cleansed. (Matthew 8:13)" In the same way, this is an invitation from Jesus for us to treat people with HIV/AIDS with compassion and to offer whatever help we can.

Moreover, DOH-OIC Maria Rosario Singh-Vergerie, on World AIDS Day, said, "The ongoing HIV and AIDS epidemic in the country remains one of the long-standing issues requiring concerted action from all sectors of society." We need people and groups to educate people. The FSH does that by offering monthly recollections and formative talks from psychologists, guidance counselors, and MSC priests to curb the transmission and guide the sufferers.



Many members of the FSH experience depression and anxiety. The monthly gathering helps them to cope and manage their feelings. It also serves as an outlet to express their problems and other concerns. Their faith in God is strengthened, especially through recollections. FSH's goal is not only to prevent and control the spread of HIV/AIDS but also to build a world where persons living with HIV/AIDS are morally and spiritually empowered.

The invitation for us is to help reach this goal. The first thing we can do now is to be aware of what HIV/AIDS is. What is it? How is it acquired? Is it contagious? How can we help prevent its spread? What is being done for those that are infected? How can we help spread awareness of the disease? What can we, ordinary people, do for them? For now, let us start by having an awareness of the disease. Let this be the first step toward totally eradicating the stigma attached to it.

Frt. Erwin T. Rosique is a professed member of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.



Finding God together with the Youth in Kalookan

Gerard Joseph G. Enriquez, SJ

The first time I met the youth of the Sacred Heart Mission Station in Kalookan was unforgettable. Foreseeing the long commute from Ateneo de Manila, my apostolate companion and I left the campus at half past eight in the morning. We walked to LRT Katipunan Station, got off at Recto, and transferred to LRT Line 1. Time's running out, I thought. We had no time to waste.

Upon alighting the train at Monumento Station, we immediately looked for jeepneys that would bring us directly to the Mission Station. We asked around and walked for a few meters, yet we still found no jeepney. Apparently, we got off at the wrong station. To make things worse, a heavy downpour soaked us as we took the additional jeepney and tricycle ride. We were supposed to meet the youth at ten in the morning. We arrived a little past eleven. They had been waiting for more than an hour, so there was no time to waste. Drenched in rainwater with my socks not spared, I introduced myself to the Kalookan youth.

Since that fateful day, I have been meeting the youth every week to discuss various topics – how one ought to relate with God, how one makes good decisions, what an individual's values are, who one's support system is, and what social issues are affecting the youth, among others. Initially, I was afraid that they would not find our weekly gathering meaningful. I was apprehensive about their attendance at our weekly gathering. After all, why would they be interested in matters of God, society, and self? Would they be not more inclined to Facebook memes, Tiktok influencers, and, perhaps, Netflix? Were they not all about having fun?

True enough, some of them would miss the weekly sessions while others would arrive late. I had always thought that they were simply disinterested and were coming to the formation sessions out of sheer obligation. Later, I realized that the youth had reasons for their tardiness and absence. A few would have class even on Sunday afternoons. While many of them had academic requirements to fulfill, others had personal reasons. One time, a youth member who regularly missed our sessions told me that he had to assist his sickly mother in selling lugaw. Another young woman who came late informed me that she just finished her laundry. (I wondered how tired she must be to come to the formation session right after doing laundry). On another occasion, one member suddenly had her eyes glued to her phone in the middle of the session because she had to take a surprise online quiz. Had I not known, I would have thought that she was merely being disrespectful.

There are dozens of reasons why our youth cannot join the formation sessions. Maybe some of them were really disinterested. Yet, there is more to absence and tardiness than mere disinterest. Each one has a unique context that



must be understood and respected. I was wrong to say that the youth are merely after what is simply fun and enjoyable. How easy it was to generalize, assume, and judge quickly when I was unaware of their personal circumstances. I failed to understand them when I refused to listen.

In being with the youth, I have been given the graced opportunity to hear and be part of the young's sacred stories. This graced situation has allowed me to understand and eventually genuinely fall in love with them. And so, if there is a primary lesson that I have learned from our young people, it will be this: to listen to their sacred stories.

One of our last formation sessions was on social issues in the Philippines. I thought it would be best if they would identify on their own the specific issues that plague our country. As they shared their thoughts, I was deeply impressed by their level of social awareness. When we talked about the education sector, they spoke of their experiences – how students endure the heat during the summer months and how unprepared the schools were for online learning mode. When we took up the health sector, they were quick to identify malnutrition because they had seen underweight children in their neighborhood. They happily shared that they volunteer for the feeding program of the Mission Station. On politics, employment, and the environment, they had something valuable to say, too. They knew what was going through in our society not only because they read it from the news or learned it from school. Rather, they are informed by their firsthand experience of the numerous injustices in society.

Knowing what they have been going through, I have developed deeper admiration for the young in Kalookan. Despite the lack of resources, support, and financial capacity, they still power through with their big dreams for themselves, their loved ones, and the Church. They continue to trust in the Lord who provides. They generously serve in the church in different capacities. They show up at school and in the church while figuring out their own identity, risking at relationships and fighting every hurdle along the way.

How may I know the young people affectively? Am I in touch with their joys and hardships? Do I celebrate or suffer with them? Can I see their needs and hear their cry for help? These are the questions I have learned to ask along the way. There is still a lot for me to discover about the richness of the young people in Kalookan. Such discovery can only happen when I listen.

My greatest mistake was talking too much and failing to listen. Not only was talking for two hours exhausting, but it was also far less interesting compared to the experiences and insights of the young. I failed to bring them closer to God when I only spoke of concepts and did not hear their personal encounters with the Lord. I did not reveal God to them when I failed to be the listening ears of our God. I would not have known what they needed if I was so obsessed with the solution even before I heard the problems. I would not have understood the problem if I judged their behaviors right away.

The way to our young people's hearts is through our ears. If we truly desire as a Church to accompany them, we must learn to listen to their experiences so that we may know how to support them in their difficulties and help them achieve their dreams. If we wish to serve as Christ does, then we need to immerse ourselves in the lives of the young just as He did when He was on earth. If we wish to proclaim Christ to our young, then we must listen. If we wish to welcome the young into the Church, we must hear them. However, to accompany the young is not a smooth-sailing adventure. In my experience, it entails walking and taking two trains and a jeepney. It can be tiring and time-consuming, and rightly so – youth accompaniment is a commitment to be with the young no matter what – to listen, to reflect, to plan, and ultimately to find God together.

Who knows? God might reveal Himself to you through the young just as He showed Himself to me in the young people of the Sacred Heart Mission Station in Kalookan.



Gerard Joseph G. Enriquez, SJ was assigned to the Jesuit Mission Station in Kalookan during his last year of philosophical studies as a Jesuit scholastic. He is now preparing for regency, the next phase of his Jesuit and priestly formation.



ECOLOGY'S FORUNNERS

Alyza Marie M. Betito

The youth are forerunners toward a universal ecological conversion. Conversion as a kind of transformation requires action, and when I think of climate action, the first person that comes to mind is Greta Thunberg, a young person. Many people have been voicing their concerns about climate change; but why does it seem that Greta's voice is particularly impactful?

It has something to do with the youth's contagious energy. Wherever I go, the younger generation is full of energy. When I was a college student, I had the opportunity to conduct my practicum teaching in a public school where I handled five sections, and though the sections I taught varied from regular classes to science-oriented classes, what was shared among the students was their exuberant spirit. After college, I served as a Jesuit Volunteers Philippines (JVP) teacher for two years in Del Carmen, Siargao Islands and Arteche, Eastern Samar. It was my first extended exposure to the youth as an adult companion, and even more, I was amazed by the passionate spirit they exemplified. I eventually returned to my hometown after my JVP journey and then accompanied youth in Bicol for seven years. Outside of my work and encounters with the young, I can affirm that wherever I go, the young are indeed animated and talented. When we give them a platform, and with a bit of guidance, they shine and unfold all their potential.

We need young people's vibrance to achieve a global ecological conversion and address the urgency of the climate crisis. It will surely be a long process, but it must begin with every individual, according to one's own pace. Conversion is more than an outer movement focused on actions. It is as much an inner movement that springs forth from one's relationship with God. Total transformation can only happen when it starts from within. While young people have the power to create a more significant impact on ecological justice, everyone must undertake an environmental conversion.

Pope Francis' encyclical states, "What is more, Saint Francis, faithful to Scripture, invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness" (Laudato Si' 12). Everyone, especially the youth, has to see how God directly speaks to each one through the environment. However, young people can easily yield to distractions. They may be too dependent on technology and social media and not be mindful of God's ways of

speaking to them. They may also quickly jump on the bandwagon and fall into what Pope Francis calls a "throwaway culture." They may also fall into what the late former Jesuit Superior General Adolfo Nicolas called the "globalization of superficiality," which refers to having less ability to think, reflect, and digest acquired information. Nonetheless, the young are also "woke" enough to embrace good changes and do not simply throw their hands up when guided well.

With this, they need adult companions who, like Jesus who journeys with the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, will offer listening ears. They need people who imbibe the Ignatian values of *magis* and *cura personalis*. They need mentors who themselves witness to the faith they profess and share. Aside from educating and motivating the young, these adult companions must show their commitment toward ecological conversion more in deeds than in words. Looking at my work in campus ministry, I acknowledge that without young people helping out in our different activities, our activities will not be sustained and not be as ablaze with creativity and beauty. In a discernment session with the leaders of our school's Youth Christian Life Community, I remember a student who is a leader of our organization saying that he sees their role as "youth bringing fellow youth towards Christ." Indeed, no better individuals could lead the youth to Christ than the youth themselves. If we want more people to undergo ecological conversion, it is safest to start with young people who will help spread faster the message of Jesus' love for the poor and all of creation.

Thus, there is a need to train the youth on how to be ministers, especially to their fellow youth. We have to provide them with various formation and immersion experiences where they may better discern how they want to journey with their peers. At the Ateneo de Naga University, I am so happy about the pilot test we did on an eco-spirituality retreat for student leaders, which was made possible by the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific (JCAP) led by Fr. Gabriel Lamug-Nañawa, SJ and Ms. Ria Limjap through their flagship project, "Caring for Communities and Creation." The experience has been both refreshing and impactful for our students. They have begun gradually embracing some habit changes and planning on projects for a more sustainable society and a community that cares for one another and the planet.

During the pandemic in 2020, we started piloting an online eco-spirituality retreat for the Grade 11 students in our school. The inspiration to focus on the said theme is the Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus and Laudato Si'. This year, we made our Grade 11 and Grade 12 recollections as Laudato Si' retreats, with an added theme of discernment for those in Grade 12. As a campus minister who facilitates students in this experience, I am always amazed and inspired by the energy of the young. They are filled with ideas. They have so much to give. They continue to inspire and radiate hope.

Reflecting on my experiences as our students' guide, I realize I can only lead them as far as I have been. I have not gone so far toward ecological conversion. But as I look back on my younger self, I see how far I have been since then. I am grateful for all the companions in my journey – family, peers, students, colleagues, and mentors. Even though I seem the same in many ways, I know that deep down, I am different. I have been changed. I am being changed. Gradually. The difference is made possible by my relationship with the Lord – an ever-present, patient, and merciful God who walks with me in my journey, a God of surprises, graces, and second chances who puts no pressure but encourages all the more as I take little steps toward ecological conversion.

My prayer for everyone, especially the young, is that we may see our interconnectedness with nature and that we may fully accept God's love for each of us and all of us. May we manifest this love in and through people, experiences, and nature. I pray that we may all dwell in that love forever, deeply and personally, so that we can respond with a sense of haste and as much love, as Mary on her visit to Elizabeth. We entrust ourselves to her.

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REMEMBERING OURSELVES IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Mikel Bunyi



The poet Rilke once wrote, "Flare up like a flame and make big shadows I can move in. Let everything happen to you: beauty and terror. Just keep going. No feeling is final. Don't let yourself lose me." How might we live Rilke's line in our lives in the age of social media? In this brief reflection, allow me to discern three themes in my experience of social media as part of the youth.

De-temporalization in social media

We are beings in time. We are born with a past, present, and future. In social media, however, a de-temporalization occurs where one gets used to the instant-ness of personal messaging and the automatic refreshing of new posts. There is never an idle moment while we are on social media as we are always bombarded by texts, images, and videos being shared. Because social media is never idle, our attention is constantly focused on our devices even when we no longer need to, such as in moments of free time or whenever our body needs rest from the world. What is lost in this de-temporalization is our ability to appreciate the value of time.

In past generations, the passing of time was significant. We commemorate feast days of saints, fast and abstain during Lent, and celebrate Jesus's birth. In all these examples, time is not merely a numerical or quantitative entity but also has a qualitative aspect to it. We celebrate special days because something happened in the past that we yearn, desire, and aspire to repeat in our present context. In our age of social media, the passing of time is not meaningful anymore because our feed is always curated to show the latest and most recent posts. As a result, we are not mindful that we have spent hours on our screens without realizing it.

Social media as a form of disembodiment

My first philosophy class taught me that we are always embodied beings or that we are/have bodies. Our embodied dimension is essential to our being human because it is through our bodies that we interact with the people we love and with the world at large. There is no doubt that whenever we are online on social media, we are disembodied because we are reduced to an "icon" or a "profile page" when we interact with others over the internet. However, what is problematic about social media is we tend to be forgetful of our embodied dimension as humans.

Because of the de-temporalization that occurs in social media, we forget that our bodies need rest from our constant engagement with social media. It has become a habit of people to log on to their social media accounts after work to see what posts they have missed while at work. Instead of letting our bodies rest from the tasks we need to attend to, we further exhaust ourselves by being online at inappropriate or unnecessary times. Our sleep cycles are altered and disrupted when we are online until the late hours of the night. Our mind never has time to rest because it is always stimulated by posts, notifications, and comments in our feed.

Besides the damage of social media on our individual selves, we also inflict the same forgetfulness on others' embodiment. We are quick to judge or label a person over an issue because what we see online is merely the profile pictures of others. We are more prone to miscommunication or discord with others because we lack the other's body language to assess how we must deliver our point across. When we interact with others, they are reduced to their avatars and we forget that they too can feel emotions and thus are vulnerable to pain like us.

Tragedy in/of social media

Because of de-temporalization and disembodiment, it is hard to handle tragedy whenever it is shared on social media. During the height of the pandemic, it seemed that everywhere you looked there was devastating news. Others call this endless consumption of tragic news "doomscrolling" which leaves a person feeling depressed and anxious. Doomscrolling is problematic because younger generations have been more or less accustomed to being online unlike some older generations who were able to interact with the world prior to the rise of social media sites.

Tragedy is part of being human. It forms our character and shapes our desires. Jesus says, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." Those who mourn for the world are blessed because they see the world for what it ought to be but is not. Sadness gives meaning to our lives because it ignites our indignation for more goodness and love in the world. The tragedy of social media is that we are unable to befriend our sadness because of the endless posts in our feeds. Rather than letting our sadness be productive starting points for action, we are numbed and paralyzed because we feel helpless. We forget that those who mourn will be comforted. We forget that our loved ones are there to embrace us in our saddest moments. We forget that the future is still being written and finding its way through. We need to remember what makes us human: our embodied and temporal dimensions.









Mikel is a student from Quezon City. He occasionally wonders about what Marilynne Robinson once wrote elsewhere: "this being human — people have loved it through plague and famine and siege."

Just Waiting

Marck Darryl V. San Juan

When I was brainstorming for this piece on youth accompaniment, a subject dear to my heart, I was able to write a few unique drafts. I never do that; writing is usually a protracted struggle toward the deadline. But, soon enough, I was stuck and couldn't follow through on any of the drafts. I couldn't figure it out until I went back to one word, a question intimately familiar to parents of very young children: Why? Why am I doing this? The "Eureka!" moment came with a strong tug on my chest: I am doing this because I'm helping my younger self.

There's a popular therapeutic approach in counseling called re-parenting one's inner child. When a child is parented in an unhealthy way, the present, adult self, who can be guided to learn healthy coping mechanisms, can re-parent their inner child to guide them toward psychological health and wellness. My ministry in accompanying the youth, I realize, is rooted in a visceral desire to re-parent my inner youth.

My high-school life had had no formation of any sort, no outlet for my many questions about existence, career, relationships, and everything in between. I was an introverted over-thinker who would read the rules of the crowd to blend in and mercilessly attack myself when I often failed, inevitably.

As a high school teacher fresh from college, I found my motivation in the attempt to supply what I didn't have when I was younger. I needed someone to tell me that I didn't need to impose on myself what I thought of imposing on myself. I needed someone to gaze at the mess of my own self, the many shards of glass that make up the vase of my self-ideation, and not immediately jump at the chance to judge and answer and shatter my own self even more. I needed someone to hold me. I needed someone to let me breathe from my own self.

In college, I stumbled into help in the form of an affirming friendship with a Jesuit scholastic. Our initial conversations were terribly one-sided: I was motivated to empty all my questions about the Church vis-à-vis reproductive health, queer people, and sexual abuse. He was immensely patient throughout it all. He would let me ask my questions then he'd probe where they were coming from. It was discomfiting, but I seized the opportunity. Over and over, he'd make the conversations light; he'd make me feel that he's interested in my life. In me.





He'd bring me to delectable holes-in-the-wall in Marikina and we'd talk about anything and everything, religious or otherwise. He'd usher me to embrace my frustrations—yes, with the institutional Church, but, more importantly, with my own experience as a young person. He made me realize the unflappable certainties of my childhood—that I shouldn't ask the questions I was asking; I shouldn't feel the feelings I was feeling; I shouldn't dare believe that what I had in mind was worth talking about—were not the reality, after all. Sometimes, there would be someone willing enough to listen.

Our friendship nourished the conditions that would define the way I do my ministry. It has two essential components: One: "God is love." I'm sure my students know this phrase...but do they really know it? Do they feel it—realize it? Is it real-ized—is it made real, that they are loved, and loved by God—in their life? And: Ignatius spoke about "finding God in all things." Well, where? In what things? How do I bring my students to see with similar eyes, i.e., to realize that God was, is, and will be where we are?

My friend mirrored God's love to me and showed me that it is not necessarily confined within the physical walls of a church. Thus, can I bring my students to see this love where they are—yes, even in the most ungodly thing (they think) they find themselves in?

The isolationist, locked-down experience of the past three years is a challenging time to feel, much less show, the omnipresent love of God. In one conversation with some of my best students, I remember being blind-sided by a comment I would never have imagined coming from their mouths: "I want to love learning again." I felt shattered when I heard that. In response, I had only silence. Tears. Solidarity.

I wish I had more. I wish I had answers. I wish I had the temerity to say that this is a pruning of the world, one that will lead to more fruitfulness and deeper growth, to us as individuals, as institutions, as a society. But everything was just deadened at that point. Deprived of power, of sense, of sensation. Deprived of the capacity to feel human. It feels so despairing, accompanying the youth at this time.

I look back at those conversations without regret. I realize, our young are not waiting for us to be perfect or to turn water into wine. Our young are not waiting for us to solve the existential problems of our age. Those would definitely help.

But, to my eye, our young are only waiting for us to sit beside them and allow their own selves—feelings, thoughts, and all—to unfold in front of us. They're just waiting for us to meet them as God intended—as our fellow human beings.

Marck Darryl San Juan is a campus minister at the Loyola Schools of Ateneo de Manila University.





Inspired by God's Love:

Teaching Beyond the Pharmaceutical Counter

Romuald Lim Velario

Never in my wildest dreams had I thought that I would be teaching again. I did not initially have the courage to go back into the academe because I had lost my passion for teaching during the height of the pandemic. Two years ago, I was hired and bound to work in one of the hospitals in the Middle East, so I left my job as a teacher. Unfortunately, I was not able to proceed due to travel restrictions. I got depressed and started to feel sorry for myself. Fortunately, there was a vacant slot in one of the hospitals in Davao del Norte, and I was hired as a hospital pharmacy staff.

Looking at the bright side, I thought the job gave me a break from innumerable teaching-related preparations such as modules and laboratory manuals. I enjoyed my day off with no worries about beating the deadlines of various paperwork. I also liked working in a hospital setting. I encountered various patients and clients with different personalities. Some patients were arrogant, stubborn, kind, understanding, and polite as I explained the proper usage of their respective medications at the pharmacy counter.

The pharmacy where I used to work is located beside the hospital's chapel. Thus, I had plenty of time to pray before and after my shift. This, I think, helped me recall a long-forgotten vocation and inspired me to consider joining the Jesuit Candidacy Program at Arvisu House.

As a candidate, I was offered a job by our candidacy director to teach at the Ateneo Junior High School because one of the faculty members would be on maternity leave. I was initially hesitant because the subject offered was "Araling Panlipunan" for Grade 7 students. I asked myself, "How can I teach outside my expertise?" At the time, I had only had teaching experience in pharmacy courses and other health sciences. Moreover, I had only usually taught college students, with no experience at all in handling first-year high school students.

I asked the Lord then if accepting the offer could help me in my discernment. I brought this up with a Jesuit scholastic living with us in the candidacy house, and he encouraged me that teaching could be a good way to gather more data for my ongoing discernment. My fellow candidates also motivated me, believing that I could be a good teacher. Of course, I struggled during my first week of teaching because I had to adjust to the hybrid mode of learning. I had to make sure that both the online "meeties" and the onsite "roomies" understood the lesson. It felt like teaching two classes in one session.

After a week, I felt that I regretted teaching again in this new normal setup. Thus, I prayed anew and asked for the Lord's guidance. After a few weeks, full face-to-face classes were implemented. It was a relief that I would no longer

struggle with hybrid teaching. Aside from hybrid teaching, one of my challenges was dealing with students with different personalities and needs. There were students who needed attention and extra motivation; some had a lack of interest in the subject, and others were non-participative. I had to think of innovative ways to engage them in the lesson. I used various indoor games for oral recitation, such as the "Oops Game," wherein I assigned a certain number per row, and when I called the number, the last one to stand and say "Oops" would answer my question, and sometimes the last student would give the next number to determine the next student to answer my questions.

In this way, many students could enjoy and participate in class. What I experienced thus far has made me grow in the conviction that teaching is a noble profession. It takes a lot of patience and resilience to shape the young minds of today's generation. As a second parent in the classroom, I must always think of the welfare of my students by making sure that no one is left behind. I can vividly remember the day I encountered a certain group of students who made no progress in their output because they did not like their groupmates. I was so disappointed that I scolded them. I brought up this concern during my prayer time, and God helped me figure out the solution. I talked to them calmly and shared with them my personal experiences and struggles in working with a group. I also encouraged them to get out of their comfort zones and gave their groupmates a chance to redeem themselves. True enough, they successfully submitted a better output. I believe that each person deserves a second chance to change his or her outlook in life, for the better.

My experience as a teacher has enabled me to see that God has plans for each one, greater than one can ever conceive. Often, it can happen that the choices one fears to end up worst may, in fact, be the best because hidden aspirations better discern directions than just purely rational thinking. This reminds me of an excerpt from St. Ignatius: "It is not hard to obey when we love the one whom we obey."



Indeed, if I love the Lord, I should do my very best to serve out of love. I believe that though I have limited capabilities, I have been graced with unlimited determination to walk the extra mile beyond what I am tasked to do. I only need to believe and trust the Lord, my real teacher, great motivator, and ultimate supporter. Despite doubts, fears, and anxieties, I shall be led by Him to a place where I can be truest to my identity as His beloved.

Romuald Lim Velario hails from Jolo, Sulu. He finished his bachelor's and master's degrees in pharmacy at the University of the Immaculate Conception, Davao City, Philippines. While discerning his vocation, he also does part-time teaching at the Ateneo Junior High School and takes some units at the Loyola School of Theology.



AN **UNEXPECTED** ***DREAM***

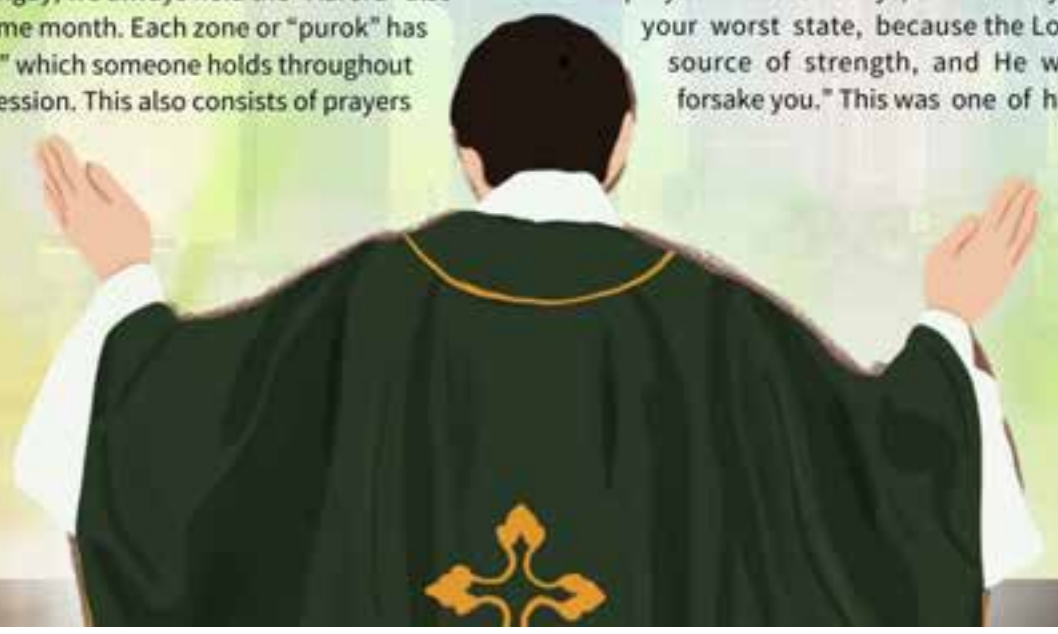
Sem. Neilsen Mari R. Rito

When I was in elementary, I had not had any idea of a seminary until my mom told me so. I finished my preschool at Our Lady of Roses Montessori in Oas, Albay, and enrolled at the St. Michael Academy where I started my elementary years. Unfortunately, I only stayed until Grade 4 in that school because of some problems I encountered. Then I transferred to Aletheia Christian Academy in Ligao City where I finished my elementary schooling. It was in my sixth grade when I started contemplating what school I would go to for junior high school. My two choices then were Aquinas University (now renamed UST Legazpi) and St. Michael Academy.

When I was young, I was already participating in some liturgical activities like attending Mass on Sundays and feast days. Of course, there was the "buya" at the start of May. This is the fluvial procession of San Roque in Barangay Bongoran. My brother and I were always on the river to witness the procession. When we hear the crowd's noise, it means that San Roque is already approaching, and when it passes by, we always shout, "Viva, San Roque! Viva!" I also participated in another liturgical activity called the "Aurora." In our barangay, we always held the "Aurora" also in the same month. Each zone or "purok" has a "parol," which someone holds throughout the procession. This also consists of prayers and songs or "the gozos." Our barangay does this every night, and after the procession, a sponsor called "tangran" offers refreshments. My family and I are also devotees of Mama Mary. We pray the rosary when we join the procession during Holy Week and on weekends.

My mother knew many priests including Msgr. Honesto A. Moraleda. Msgr. Ham was always at Pacific Mall on Saturdays to celebrate the anticipated Mass. One time, my mom approached Msgr. Ham and they began discussing. She introduced me to him. Mons told my mom that "I should try to enter the seminary." My curiosity about the seminary began. Questions popped up in my mind like, "What is a seminary? Where is it located?" Then I came to know that a seminary is a place that is considered "a home away from home." When I realized that I would be far away from my parents, I was deeply saddened because I had not been used to being separated from my family at the time.

Before I entered the minor seminary, Msgr. Ham and I had a conversation. I asked for his advice for me to be ready to enter the seminary. One piece of advice that I remembered him telling me is: "Do not forget to pray to the Lord always, even when you are in your worst state, because the Lord is our source of strength, and He will never forsake you." This was one of his pieces



of advice that I can never forget. So, by summer break of 2012, I took the entrance examination at St. Gregory the Great Seminary in Panal, Tabaco City. It was the only school to which I applied for an entrance test.

I started the school year 2012-2013 with tears. From the moment my parents escorted me to the minor seminary, I had often shed tears and longed for them. I felt so homesick. I experienced many challenges during those high school years, but these did not hinder me from pursuing further seminary formation until the day I finally graduated. I spent my whole high school life in St. Gregory the Great Seminary. It was very instrumental in my preparation for college. It helped me with many essential realizations as I chose the path I must traverse.

Before I entered the college seminary, I sought guidance and strength from God. During the 2018 apostolate, I kept on thinking about whether to pursue seminary formation or not. I also asked for advice from Fr. Elbert Cestina, who used to be my spiritual director in Oas. He told me that there was no perfect seminary, but that did not mean that it would thwart my dream of realizing my vocation. He also told me that the key to being an ideal seminarian was to be obedient and prayerful. Weeks before college seminary entrance day, I was already overthinking. I had to keep assuring myself that I must continue to face this new journey of my life and weave from it new experiences.

With the guidance of our Lord, I am now a first-year theologian at San Jose Seminary and continuously answering God's call to serve Him through the vocation of being a priest. I always say to myself that His will must be done and not mine. A lot of unexpected things happened to me in my 23 years of existence, but thus far, being in San Jose is the best thing that has happened to me because it has changed (and is changing) the course of my life. Still, I remain dutiful and bound to all that is expected of me as a seminarian.

Moving from a minor seminary to a theological seminary is a significant transition in my academic and spiritual journey. It is a time when one leaves behind the structured and sheltered environment of the minor seminary and enters a more diverse and intellectually challenging environment of a theological seminary. Reflecting on this transition, I experienced a range of emotions, including excitement, curiosity, anxiety, and even fear. On one hand, there is the excitement of exploring new ideas, meeting new people, and discovering new perspectives on theology and spirituality. On the other hand, there is anxiety and fear over increasing academic demands and expectations, the challenge of engaging with diverse views and beliefs, and the pressure to discern one's vocation more meaningfully.

In a minor seminary, relationships are more hierarchical and structured, with clear boundaries between students and authority figures. However, in a theological seminary, relationships are more egalitarian, with more emphasis on collaboration, mutual respect, and dialogue. This shift is both challenging and rewarding, as it provides opportunities for personal growth and the development of lifelong friendships and professional networks.

Coming from a minor seminary to a theological seminary is an enriching and transformative experience. At an early age, I was able to learn to stand on my own feet and heed God's call. It requires one to be open to new ideas, challenges, and experiences and to be committed to spiritual and academic growth. Through this journey, I gain a deeper understanding of my vocation, develop enduring relationships, and make a meaningful contribution to my community and the world. As I prepare myself for this vocation, I am now foreseeing what I can contribute as I return to the diocese. May Our Lady, Bicolandia's *Ina*, ever intercede for me throughout my vocation journey.

Neilsen Mari Rempillo Rito hails from the Diocese of Legazpi. He is a first-year theologian at San Jose Seminary.





The Pope: Answers and a Listening Church

Francesco Janne Y. Labuntog, SJ

Immigration. Racism. Women ordination. Abortion. Sexual abuse. Pornography. Masturbation. Gender Identity. Tinder! These are the most pressing issues that Hulu's *The Pope: Answers* addresses head-on. Let me give you a brief peek into this film, hopefully without spoiling the fun! Because yes, you gotta watch it yourselves!

This new film features the Pope in conversation with 10 young (aged between 20 and 25) Spanish-speaking men and women who openly share the main concerns of their generation, their profound questions and struggles even as they grapple with some of the teachings of the Catholic Church. Unlike any documentary, this one does not just show an authority figure like Pope Francis who provides solutions to difficult problems brought up by a diverse group of individuals. Instead, this film embodies the culture of encounter that the Holy Father has always urged all of us to cultivate.

In his encyclical "*Fratelli Tutti,*" the Holy Father writes, "To speak of a 'culture of encounter' means that we, as a society, should be enthusiastic about connecting with others, seeking common ground, constructing bridges, and devising projects that are inclusive of everyone" (216). In my usual Examen, I imagine the whole scene as a lunch gathering where people share their "*ulam,*" reminiscent of the times in high school when my friends and I used to share whatever *baon* we had with us. Each person contributes a unique dish and adds their own splash of colorful dishes to the mix. The result is a stirring tribute to encounter and authenticity!

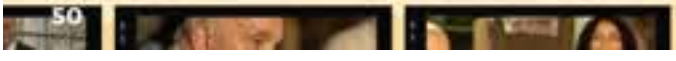
The Pope here has definitely ditched his "big boss" hat as the head of a 1.3 billion-member Catholic Church and become more like a jolly old friend or a wise "*lolo,*" as a friend puts it. It is truly impressive how the Pope has been able to connect with such a diverse group of young people with much equanimity. The youngsters who gathered to speak with the Pope include an agnostic, a pro-choice and pro-life Catholic, an evangelical, a survivor of sexual abuse, a Muslim man, a person who identifies as non-binary, and even a former nun who is a self-proclaimed atheist (cf. Da Silva SJ's article on *America*: tinyurl.com/americathepopeanswers). Despite holding vastly different views (not to mention, a considerable age gap with the Pope), they all lend each other an ear and listen with respect. How else can I describe it but a shining example of a synodal Church!

Another thing I find captivating in the film includes scenes when Pope Francis just pauses and listens very intently. He shows his genuine interest in and care toward each person's unique context and lived experience. He does not immediately judge or correct. Yes, even when faced with pushbacks from young people who challenge his ideas and pronouncements.

In a 10-minute scene wherein the young women in the group talk about abortion, Milagros, a Catholic feminist, throws shade at the Church for condemning women who choose to have abortions; while María, a pro-life Catholic and member of the Neocatechumenal Way, claps back and shares her own experiences with women who have suffered the aftermath of abortion. And just when you think things cannot get any more interesting, Lucia, a former nun, jumps in and throws some major shade at the Pope's comparison of abortion providers to "hitmen," calling it way too simplistic.

But what does Pope Francis do? He listens intently. And after hearing them out, Pope Francis says, "I thank you for having the sensitivity to see that this is not a mathematical problem. It's a human problem." I find it truly inspiring to witness the Pope's willingness to listen attentively instead of resorting to defensiveness. This approach, which prioritizes empathy and the recognition of diverse perspectives and experiences, aligns perfectly with the kind of "listening" we urgently need in the Church. It serves as a profound reminder that even amidst our differences on certain matters, we can still embrace a genuine spirit of "listening" driven by love and empathy, rooted in a profound recognition of each individual's unique reality and lived experiences. A culture of encounter!

At the end of the film, Pope Francis thanks everyone for their bravery in sharing their personal truths: "Thank you. Each one of you has been brave enough to tell the truth. I liked that because each one of you has said it with your own personality, and from your own lives." I hope that the Church gives more space for authentic encounters like this – a space where everyone can express themselves without first being paralyzed by the fear of being judged or preached at. Maybe this is really one of the few essential ways the Church can truly reach out to young people; yes, a very meaningful way the Church can be genuinely a listening Church.



Photos from National Catholic Reporter, Times Live, & America Magazine.

Beckon, Lord

Adrian Pobre

A bud of faith had long been planted
Within the hearts of children begotten
By parents scarred by sin then banished,
Estranged, exiled from the Vine-tender's Garden.

And so, for centuries, they toiled and waited
On barren soil and in waste they waded
Far from Divine, they laid forgotten
Away from Eden, they crawled unaided

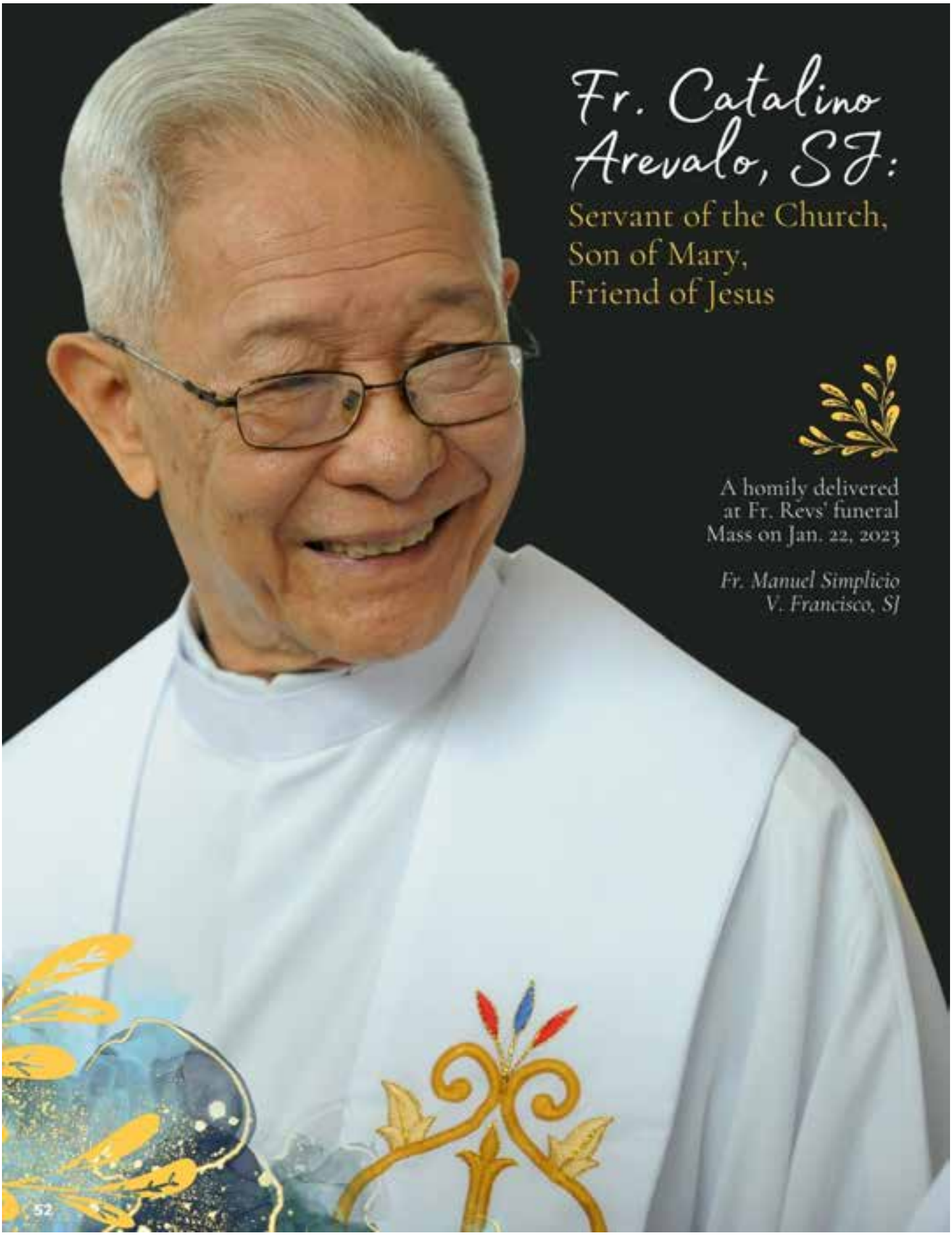
But though His love they took for granted
When darkness fell, He still responded
On faithfulness, a bond was founded
Salvation rings a Savior's promise

Now here I write as a child of light
Stirred by the seed sown deep inside
On my Master's call, my heart takes flight
His Kingdom come, both far and wide

For faith is a flower that springs in strife
And blooms in Love without requite.
His grace reveals and paves the way
Desire burns in His Spirit's saving sway.

This sheep shall heed its Shepherd's voice.
'Cross pastures green and deep ravines.
O, truly free, I shall make this choice.
Cross it shall be, In Him through me.





Fr. Catalino Arevalo, SJ:

Servant of the Church, Son of Mary, Friend of Jesus

A homily delivered at Fr. Revs' funeral Mass on Jan. 22, 2023

Fr. Manuel Simplicio V. Francisco, SJ

On behalf of Fr. Provincial, Fr. Jun Viray, Fr. Socius, Fr. Peter Pojol, requested me to deliver the homily during the funeral of Fr. Catalino Arevalo. I could not say no, because Fr. Revs is also Lolo Revs to me, my granduncle on the Ocampo side. He narrated to me that before the war, my great grandfather, Lolo Simplicio, Lolo Picio for short, after whom I was named—Manuel Simplicio—would take the bus from Cabanatuan and join the Arevalos for lunch in Manila on Sundays. And that he and my Lola Leonarda would spend the month of April in Baguio during their growing-up years.

As granduncle and mentor, he vested me during my ordination in 1997 and delivered the homily during my thanksgiving Mass as a newly-ordained Jesuit priest.

A few reflections about Fr. Catalino Arevalo.

Servant of the Church

The Catholic Church produced several great theologians during the latter half of the 20th c.—Rahner, Schillebeeckx, von Balthasar, Congar, Bonhoeffer, de Lubac, de Chardin, Gutierrez, to name a few. Why did Fr. Revs who possessed an equally brilliant mind not publish much, people ask? That is because he spent his entire career teaching. He taught generations of priests, religious and lay people various courses in systematic theology—the Eucharist, Holy Order, Christology, Ecclesiology, Mariology, Soteriology, and Ignatian Spirituality—here in Loyola School of Theology.

Our batch was fortunate to have had him as our Christology professor and ordination retreat facilitator. In class, someone raised a question. Fr. Revs' reply? "Are you a heretic?" That ended further discussions in class.

We have the honor of being lambasted by Fr. Revs, "This is the worst class I have ever had." Our only consolation was that he called every succeeding batch his worst class—ever!

He only penned a few theological essays and published a collection of homilies, because most of what he wrote, he did so on behalf of local church leaders, Jaime Cardinal Sin particularly, and ecclesiastical institutions, such as the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) and the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference (FABC).

He was the first Asian member of the International Theological Commission and founding member of FABC. According to journalist Jose Torres, he drafted the landmark, "Evangelizing in Modern Day Asia" which remains the "most influential articulation of the local churches in Asia." FABC has acknowledged Fr. Revs who served as its main theological adviser, as the "Father of Asian Theology."

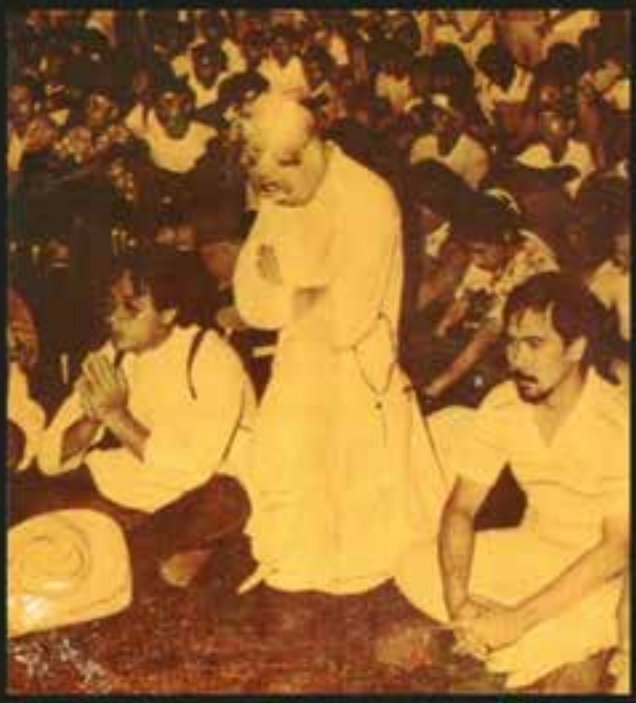
In one of our conversations prior to the pandemic, I tried to persuade him to write and publish. He replied, "Books are now useless in our world of social media. No one reads anymore." Yet his influence as a professor and mentor on church leaders and thousands of clerics, religious and lay people will remain indelible. CPCP President, Bishop Pablo Virgilio David, commented that Fr. Arevalo was "a great teacher to whom we owe our love for theological learning and the spiritual discipline of discernment."



And so, the irony is that while Fr. Revs did not publish much, the late Jaime Cardinal Sin in 1997 hailed him as the "Dean of all Filipino Theologians and Godfather of hundreds of priests." Fr. Revs spent his entire theological career in the service of the Church [whom he so dearly loved].

Son of Mary

Fr. Revs always kept a rosary in the pocket of his trousers, a sign of his filial affection for our Blessed Mother. Prior to his transfer to the Wellness Center, he would spend extended moments in silence before the image of Our Lady of Mediatrix in the Loyola House of Studies Chapel.



In his collection of reflections and homilies, *And They Shall Name Him Emmanuel*, which Fr. Mon Bautista quoted last Thursday evening, he recalls spending the month of May with his family in Antipolo, going to Mass in the basilica and "praying to the dark Lady standing atop the little tree." He goes on to write, "Even today, whenever I return to Antipolo and look at that curiously inexpressive dark face of Our Lady, it is almost always the first thought that strikes me… the priesthood, the priesthood of her Son. And so I believe … the priesthood is a gift, and it was her prayer that won it for me, and her prayer that keeps me from losing it in spite of my sinfulness and inconstancy."

As Mary has protected him under her mantle of maternal love and care, so has she our people. For Fr. Revs, EDSA I was the fulfillment of Mary's prophetic *Magnificat*. The mighty and haughty were brought down from their thrones and the lowly lifted up. A dictator was deposed and a simple housewife raised. An autocrat was spirited away and a people set free.

The EDSA I Peaceful Revolution. How did Fr. Revs end up in Santolan the night the protesters were tear-gassed? Fr. Danny Huang was a scholastic and I a novice then when a stranger informed us that the marines were marching towards EDSA from the East and that we ought to mobilize some of the people gathered along Edsa-Ortigas to transfer to Santolan. To prove his claim, he took Danny and me to somewhere in the hills of Tanay that evening. As Danny and I anxiously and silently glanced at each other, fearing we would be salvaged, we saw in the distance hundreds of marines marching in two lines toward the metropolis. We hurried back to the Edsa-Ortigas intersection and instructed the Ateneo contingent to transfer to Santolan.

In the middle of the night, the marines arrived in Santolan and attempted to disperse the crowds that had barricaded the eastern entry point to Edsa-Ortigas. The marines hurled teargas at the crowd, among whom were Fr. Hontiveros and Fr. Arevalo. Due to the sting in their eyes, they did disperse and washed their faces with water. However, Fr. Revs related that as their human barricade disbanded, the wind shifted and blew the teargas toward the marines, who then scampered. "It was Our Lady's *Magnificat* being fulfilled," Fr. Revs would narrate years later.

As a Jesuit theologian, he was given a special mission, I believe by Our Lord and Our Blessed Mother—to accompany President Corazon Aquino spiritually. They met not by chance, but by providence, in Boston on August 21, 1983.

While waiting for further news about Ninoy's assassination on the tarmac of the old Manila International Airport, Cory, in her memoirs collected by Rapa Lopa, recalls: "I remember that in my prayer I was saying, "Dear Lord, I hope you

can send me a Filipino priest. The American priests have been very sympathetic, but I think I'll feel better if I can talk with a Filipino priest."

The Lord heard her prayer. Ballsy narrates that while they heard the 6 am Mass in Boston College, her mom repeatedly said, "*Sana may pari. Sana may pari.*" After Mass they returned to their home right across Boston College. Ballsy continues, "Then the doorbell rang and Noy opened the door and it was Fr. Revs. He introduced himself, said he was staying in Boston College and told Noy that the American priests told him the Aquinos just live across the street. He offered to say Mass, patiently sat on a chair till we were ready."

They had not known each other personally until the day of Ninoy's assassination when Fr. Revs visited their home in Boston. They would become constant companions from Ninoy's burial in Paranaque to the yellow confetti parades in Makati, from the Snap elections to Cory's oath-taking as the 11th President of the Philippine Republic, from her tenure in Malacanang to her remaining years as a stateswoman. I believe it was Our Lady that allowed their paths to cross, as both would play important roles—political and ecclesial—in the restoration of democracy in the Philippines.

When Rapa, Jim, Jamike, Mayi Lopa, and I last visited him before Christmas last year, he was jovial and conversant. He said on his side table beside his bed was a photo of Tita Cory and PNoy. "When I get up in the morning, they are the first ones I see. I love them both dearly."

Friend of Jesus

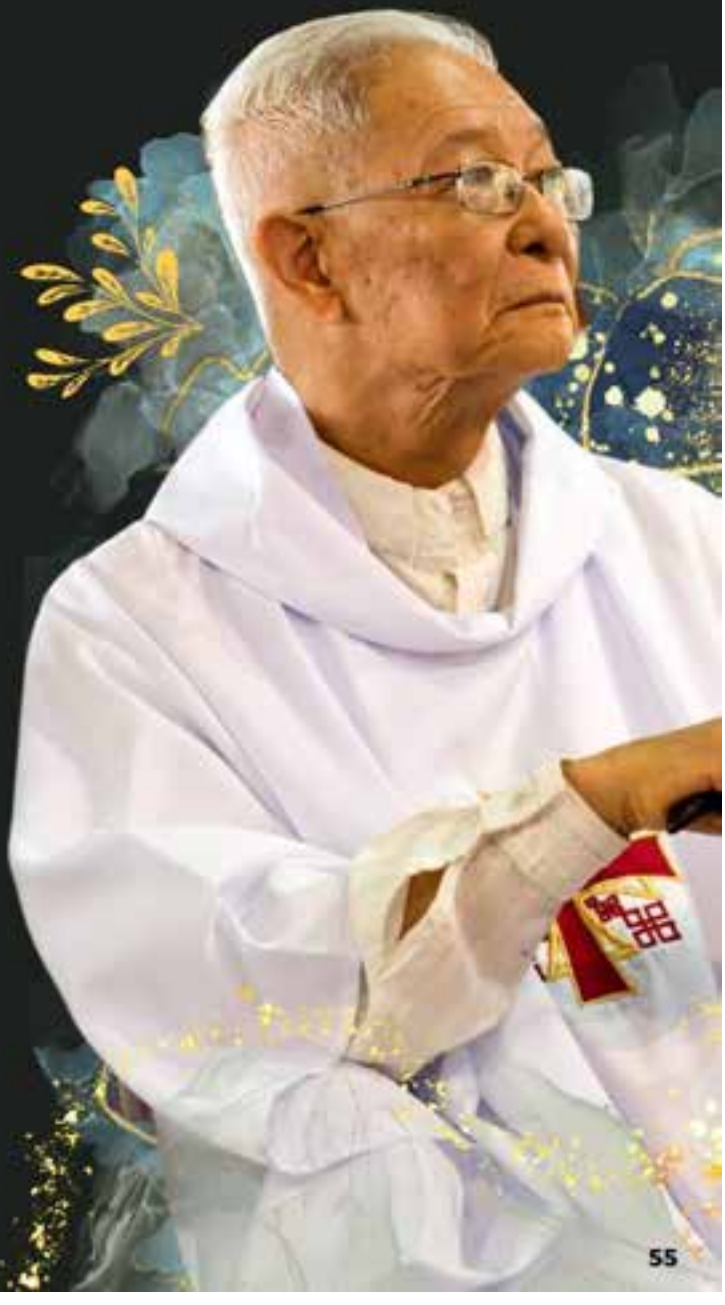
Fr. Revs had a deep devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the biblical image of which is most eloquently expressed in the Crucified Christ.

In his book, *And They Shall Name Him Emmanuel*, he writes, "God who flung the stars and planets into the universe of his making, really suffered for us, really died for us on the Cross. So we might know he has chosen to share everything in our human lives, out of love…. In Jesus, God out of love made our human pain his own. So that having taken on what is ours, we might take on ourselves what is his."

How he longed to see Jesus, his beloved friend, our crucified savior.

Prior to the pandemic, every now and then, Fr. Revs would drop by my office in LST, sit on my sofa, and complain, "The Lord has forgotten me. He has taken my contemporaries but has forgotten me."

In another conversation he lamented that he knew much before that he no longer could remember. And this caused him to panic and despair. "My life is useless." "But Fr. Revs, your presence is a blessing to us." "O, that is easy for



you to say. But I am not like Honti who had many friends and was liked by everyone. My life has no more meaning." I could not say anything else.

"You will never understand what it is like to be in your 90s. It is a totally different experience." Unsettled and perturbed, he turned down invitations to meet friends outside the campus. "Fr. Revs, we are celebrating Christmas Eve Mass in Times Street with PNoy and his siblings." "*Kayo na lang*. I don't know how to be with people anymore. I wouldn't know what to say."

Because he was hesitant to mingle with friends outside the campus, they visited him at the Wellness Center; that is, if his disposition that very moment would welcome visitors. As he more and more kept to himself, he must have found solace more and more in the company of the Sacred Heart, Jesus his friend and savior. In the end, he found his deepest consolation in the presence of his dearest friend, Jesus whom he loved with all his heart and yearned to be with.

In one of his homilies written a few decades ago, he writes, "No longer am I crushed or brought low by my suffering. I can even meet death with hope... Suffering may become a way of oneness with Christ in his own suffering, and thus a way to the hard-won glory of sharing in God's own life.

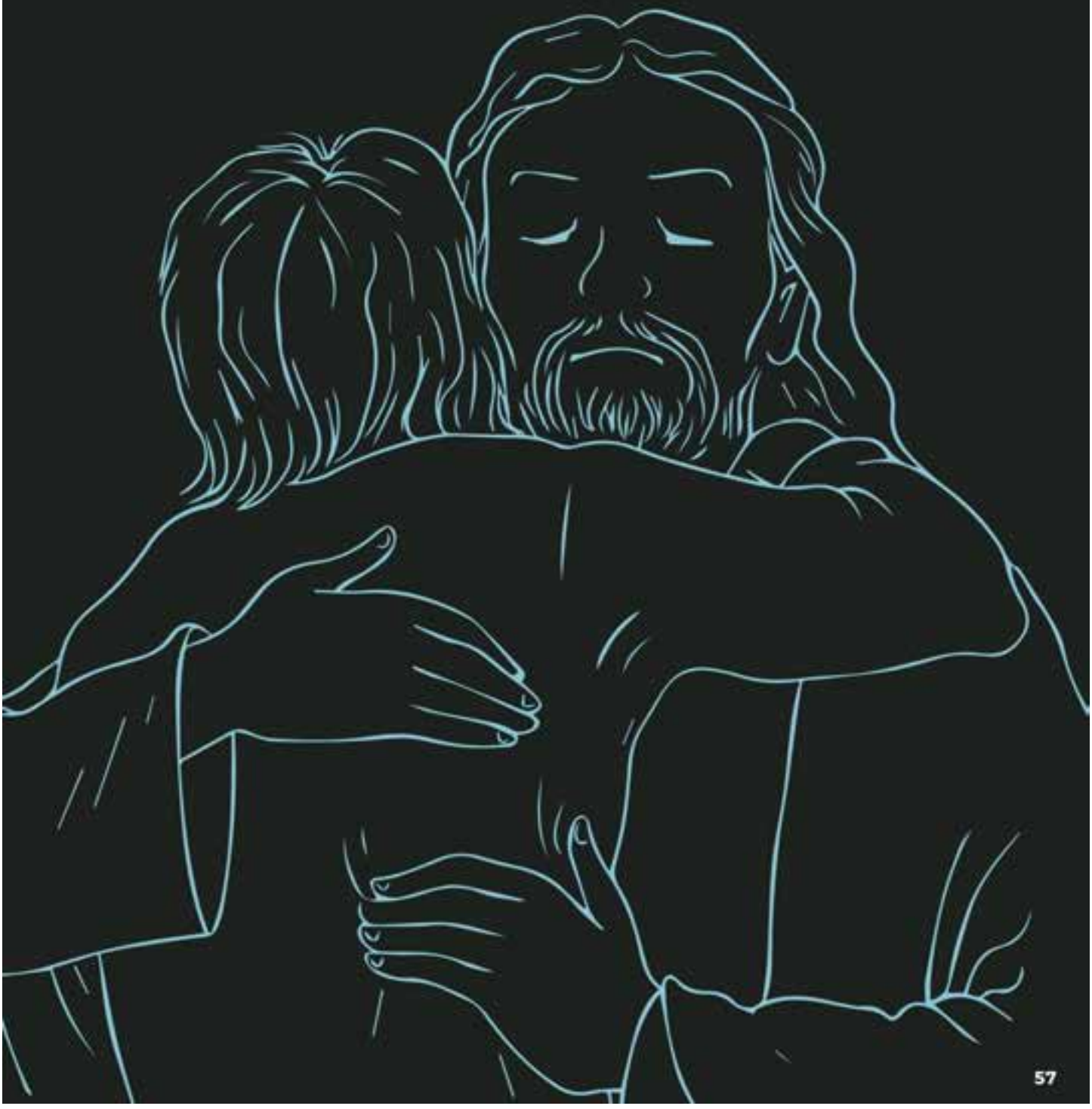
Thank you, Lord, for granting Fr. Revs his deepest desire—to be united with you and our Blessed Mother forever more. As our Psalm today proclaims:

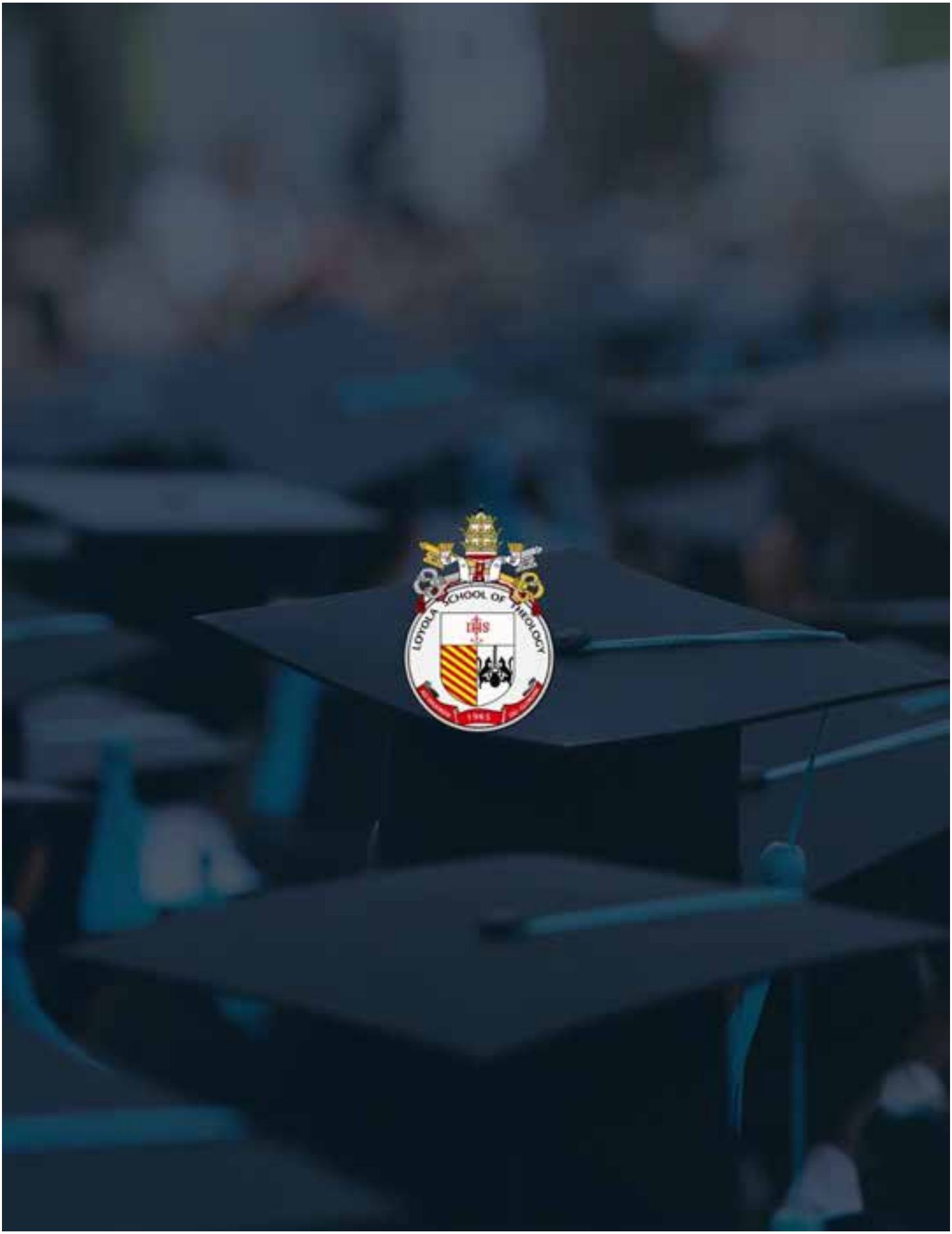
> *"One thing I ask of the LORD; this I seek: to dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, that I may gaze on the loveliness of the LORD and contemplate his temple" (Ps. 27).*

Thank you, Lord, for the gift that Fr. Revs has been to his family and friends, the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus, the Philippine Church, and the Church of Asia. We beseech you, Lord, to grant him, your weary servant and faithful friend, eternal rest, eternal peace, eternal happiness. Amen.

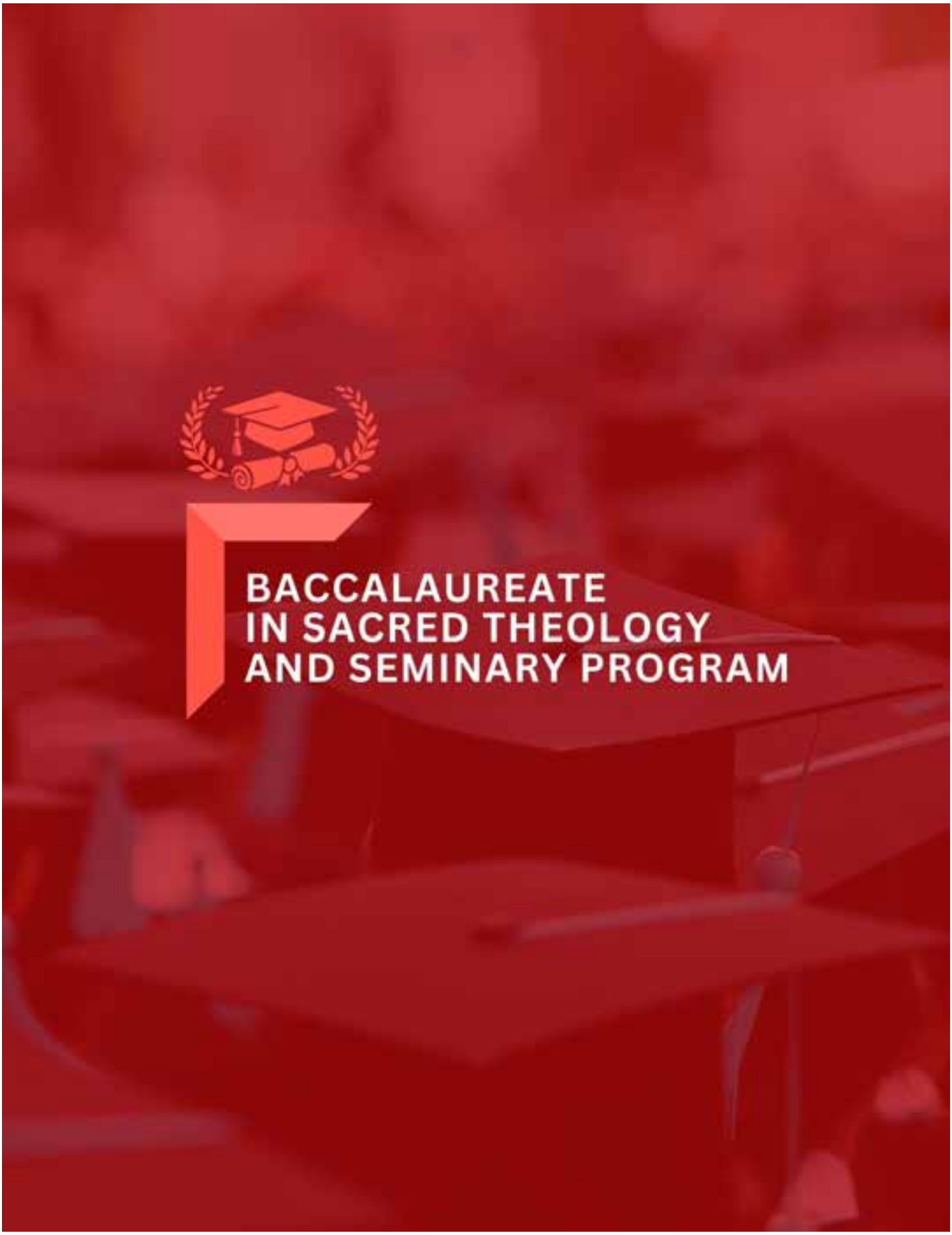


"One thing I ask of the LORD; this I seek:
to dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,
that I may gaze on the loveliness of the LORD and
contemplate his temple."
Psalm 27




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Society of Jesus

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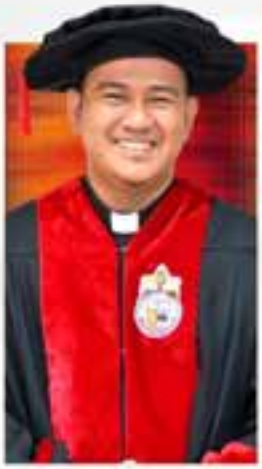
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Sons of St. Anne

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Diocese of Novaliches

Philippines

Magna Cum Laude



SARNO, CIELO JOHN LASAPIN

Archdiocese of Cotabato

Philippines

Cum Laude

MA in Pastoral Ministry



SEETO, ATONIO SAULA TUBUNA

Lay

Fiji



SORIANO, RONEL LUBRICA

Society of St. Paul

Philippines



THANG HA

Society of Jesus

Myanmar



THOMAS, STEBIN

Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

India

Cum Laude

Master in Family Ministry and Counseling



TRAN CAO CUONG

Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Vietnam

Cum Laude



TRAN PHI LAM

Society of Jesus

Vietnam

Magna Cum Laude



URIAT, ARVIN DELA CRUZ

Diocese of Tagum

Philippines



VALES, CHRISTIAN JOSEPH ARENAS

Congregation of Jesus and Mary

Philippines

MA in Pastoral Ministry (Family Ministry and Counseling)



VARONA, JAIME JHEMBOY TAMAYO

Archdiocese of Palo

Philippines

Magna Cum Laude



VIDANES, ARIEL BALDE

Augustinians of the Assumption

Philippines

Cum Laude



VILLASIS, MICHAEL GEORGE MADDELA

Diocese of Novaliches

Philippines

Summa Cum Laude



VU TAI TIEP

Congregation of the Holy Spirit

Vietnam

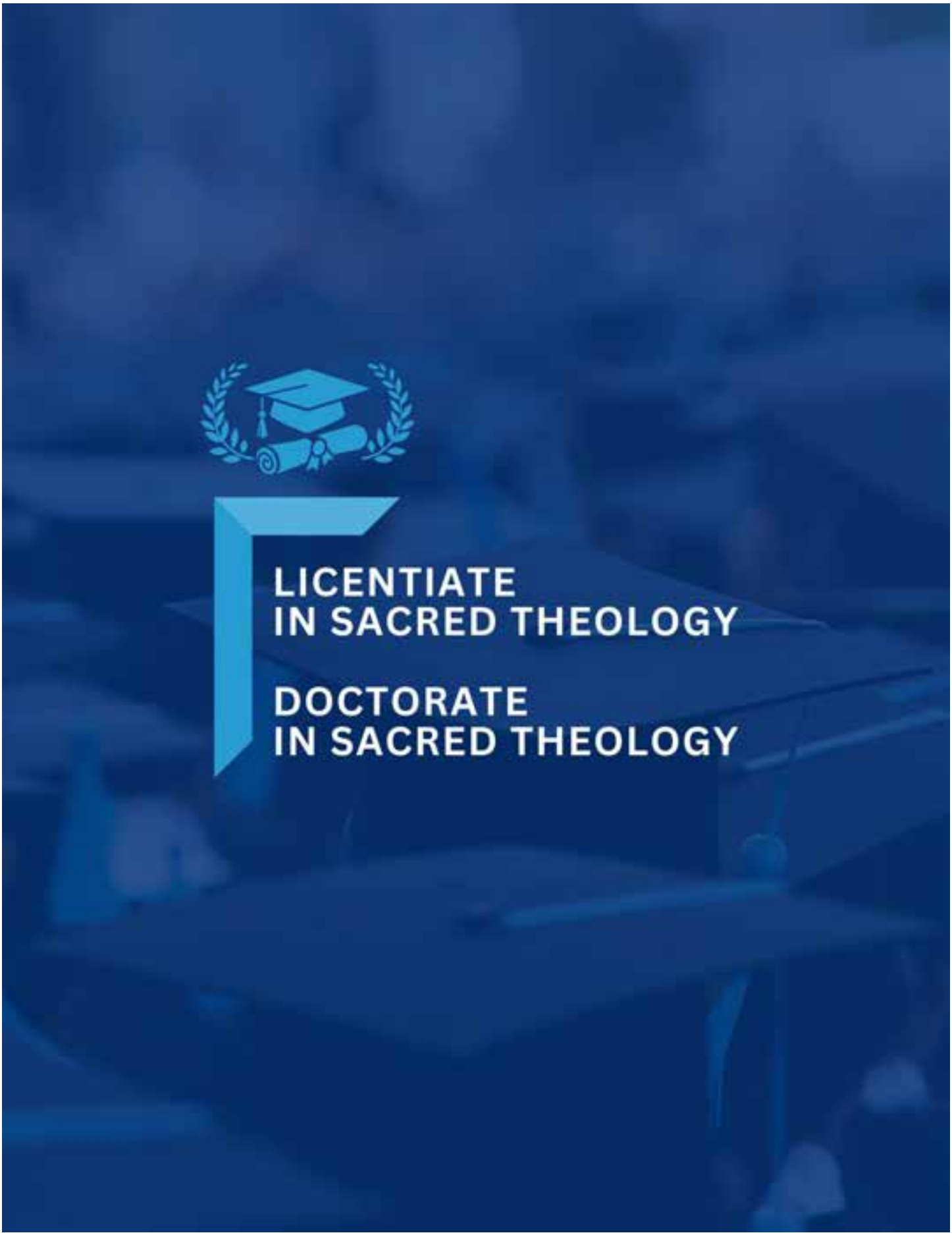


YBAÑEZ, KENZLEE ENGALAN

Society of Jesus

Philippines

Magna Cum Laude


LICENTIATE
IN SACRED THEOLOGY
DOCTORATE
IN SACRED THEOLOGY



DE BACELAR CARRELHAS VAZ PARDAL, FILIPE

Fraternidad Misionera Verbum Dei

Portugal

Summa Cum Laude

STL (Biblical Theology)



D'SOUZA, DIOGO ROGER

Missionaries of St. Francis Xavier

India

Magna Cum Laude

STL (Biblical Theology)



KARRE, JOSEPH THAMBI

Order of Discalced Augustinians

India

STL (Biblical Theology)



PRUDENCIANO, DEXTER MANGOBA

Rogationists of the Heart of Jesus

Philippines

Cum Laude

STL (Biblical Theology)



TRAN THI HOAI AN

Order of Preachers

Vietnam

Magna Cum Laude

STL (Systematic Theology)



YUN, HONGMIN

Congregation of the Blessed Korean Martyrs

Korea

Cum Laude

STL (Systematic Theology)



BUI HA NGAN

Society of Jesus

Vietnam

Cum Laude

STL (Spiritual-Leadership Theology)



JULIU, JESURAJAN LAMBERT

Society of the Divine Savior

India

Magna Cum Laude

STL (Spiritual-Leadership Theology)



TIKOLUTU, INIA

Archdiocese of Suva

Fiji

Cum Laude

STL (Spiritual-Leadership Theology)



SACLOLO, ADONIS GALAMGAM

Archdiocese of Manila

Philippines

Summa Cum Laude

STD (Biblical Theology)


MASTER OF ARTS IN PASTORAL MINISTRY
MASTER IN PASTORAL MINISTRY
MASTER IN SPIRITUALITY AND RETREAT DIRECTING
MASTER OF ARTS IN THEOLOGICAL STUDIES
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THEOLOGY



AREVALO, BRYAN OLORVIDA

Lay

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Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry



PLEÑOS, JR., JOHN CHESTER FLORES

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart

Philippines

MA in Pastoral Ministry (Family Ministry and Counseling)



DEL SOL, VINCENT ROY TAN

Congregation of the Passion

Philippines

MA in Pastoral Ministry (Spirituality and Retreat Directing)



DAYAO, GIAN FLORES

Lay

Philippines

Master in Pastoral Ministry



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Society of Jesus

Myanmar

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LUMOGDANG, LEOGEN DEGALA

Lay

Philippines

Master in Pastoral Ministry



OJERO, ROMEO II RIVERA

Lay

Philippines

Master in Pastoral Ministry



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Society of Jesus

Philippines

MA in Theological Studies (Systematic Theology)



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Philippines

MA in Theological Studies (Systematic Theology)



LIBERATORE, MICHAEL JASON

Lay

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Doctor of Philosophy in Theology (Systematic Theology)

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DIPLOMA IN INTEGRAL
ECOLOGY

DIPLOMA IN INTEGRAL
VOCATIONAL ACCOMPANIMENT

DIPLOMA IN PASTORAL
CARE OF MIGRANTS

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JUNIORATE STUDIES

DIPLOMA IN
PRE-THEOLOGY STUDIES

DIPLOMA IN
THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

DIPLOMA IN CATHOLIC
SAFEGUARDING

PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMA
IN FAMILY MINISTRIES



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Diploma in Basic Pastoral Ministry



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Hijas de Jesus

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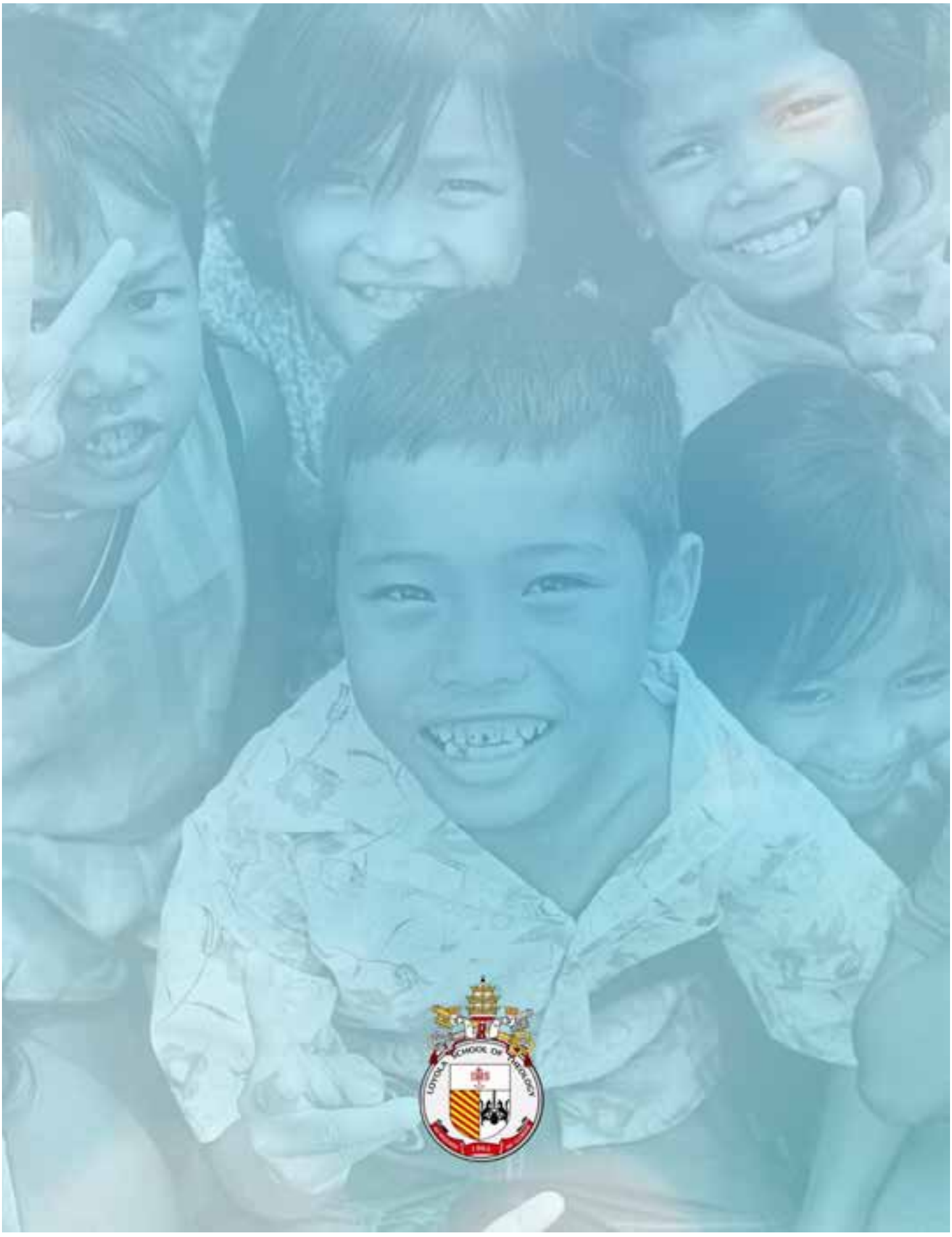


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Society of Jesus

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Philippines

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LIM, VICTORINE CHAN

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Professional Diploma in Family Ministries



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Society of Jesus

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Philippines

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RIVERA, BLESSING JOEL FIDEL

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Philippines

Professional Diploma in Family Ministries



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Philippines

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VITAL, CATHERINE UNTALAN

Lay

Philippines

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YAO, AISLYN LIAO

Lay

Philippines

Professional Diploma in Family Ministries



RAJOO, SANTHANAMARI

Canossian Daughters of Charity

Malaysia

Diploma in Basic Pastoral Ministry (2022)



ZACCHARIUS, ROSLIN

Canossian Daughters of Charity

Malaysia

Diploma in Basic Pastoral Ministry (2022)

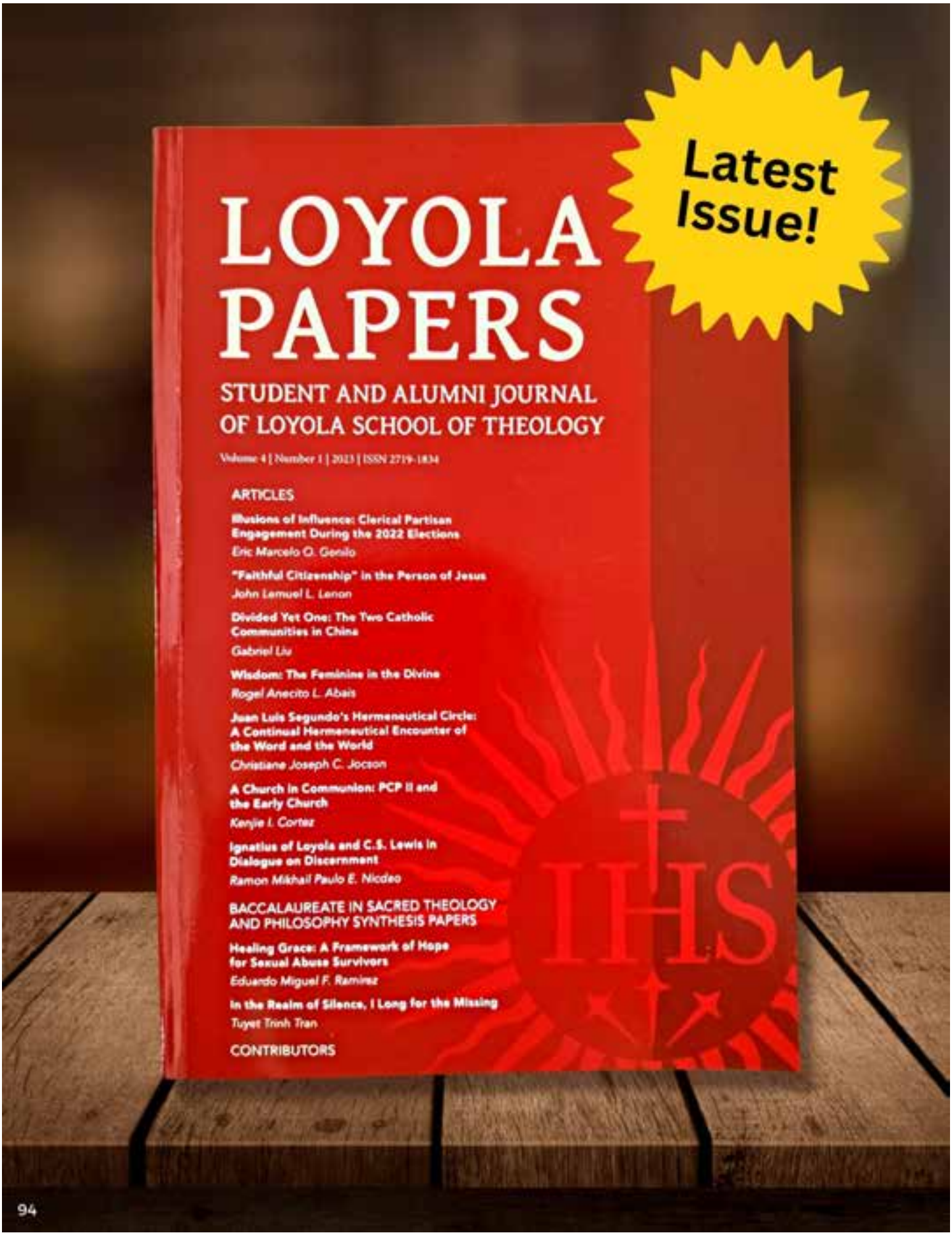

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Volume 4 | Number 1 | 2023 | ISSN 2719-1834
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Eric Marcelo O. Genilo
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John Lemuel L. Lenon
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Eduardo Miguel F. Ramirez
In the Realm of Silence, I Long for the Missing
Tuyet Trinh Tran
CONTRIBUTORS
IHS


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JUSTICE FOR MYANMAR

"It has been too much... too much to lose our young people, our future. Too much to hear the cries of children and mothers. Too painful to see people fleeing, with no access to proper health care, no access to safe and quality education, losing livelihoods. Villages have been burned, civilians including children have been killed and injured by airstrikes or indiscriminate shelling by the Myanmar army. It is happening across the country and escalating this year." (Myanmar Jesuit Newsletter, May 2023)

LST has seven Myanmarese students in the Second Semester of Academic Year 2022-23.

Support the Myanmar Mission via:

1. **Jesuit Mission Australia** (https://jesuitmission.org.au/donate-myanmareaf-w/);
2. **Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific (Manila)** (https://jcapsj.org/blog/2022/12/08/myanmar-needs-you/);
3. **Jesuit Mission Germany** (https://jesuitenweltweit.de/spende/online); and
4. **Myanmar Development Office** (mynsjdo@gmail.com).

Keep updated through the following news outlets:

1. **The Irrawaddy - Covering Burma and Southeast Asia** (irrawaddy.com);
2. **Frontier Myanmar** | In-depth coverage of news, business and current events in Myanmar (https://www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/);
3. **Justice For Myanmar** (https://www.justiceformyanmar.org/); and
4. **Facebook:** #What'sHappeningInMyanmar.

Let us continue to pray for the safety of our sisters and brothers in Myanmar.
May a swift, peaceful end to this devastating conflict be finally reached.