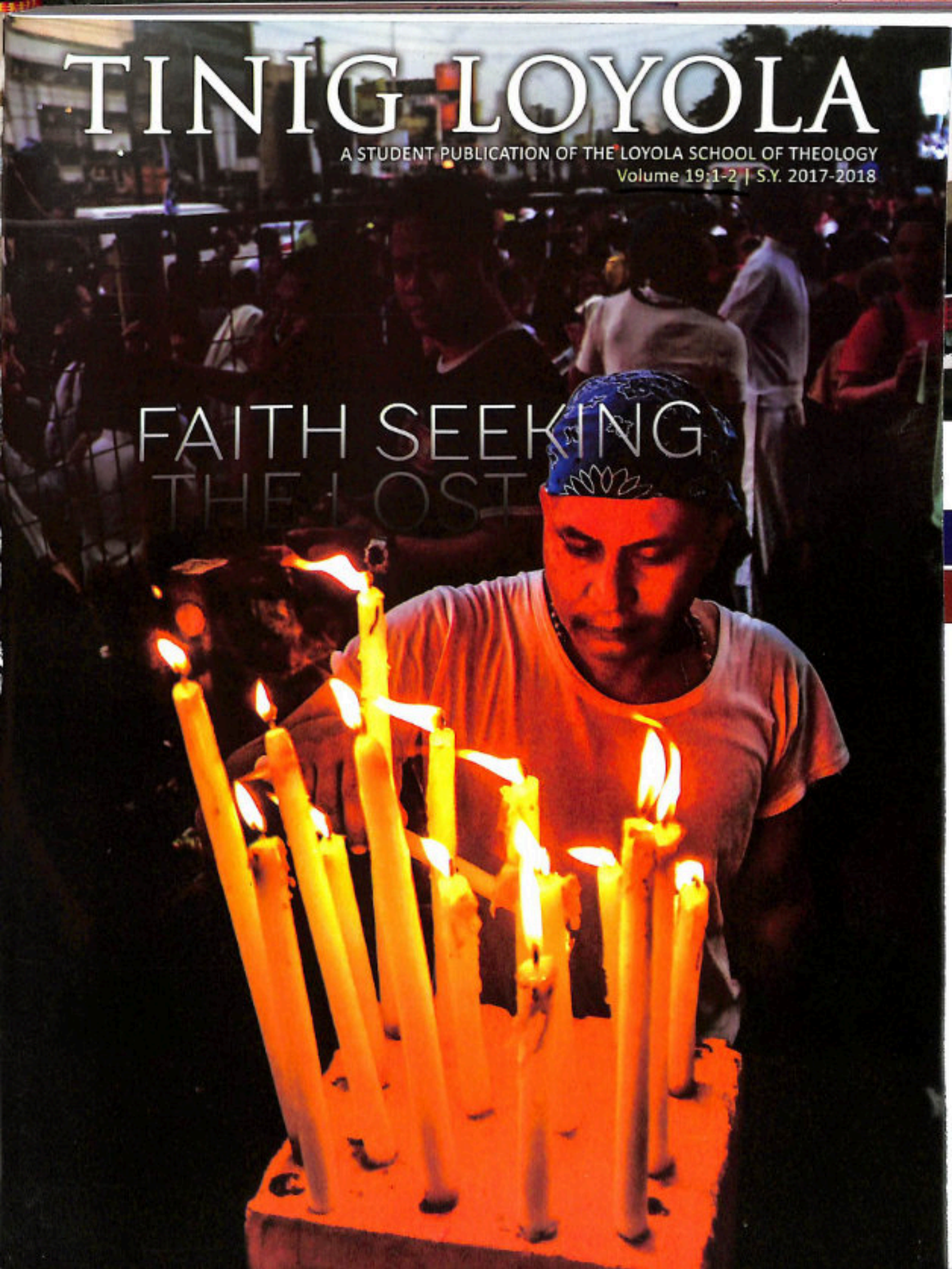
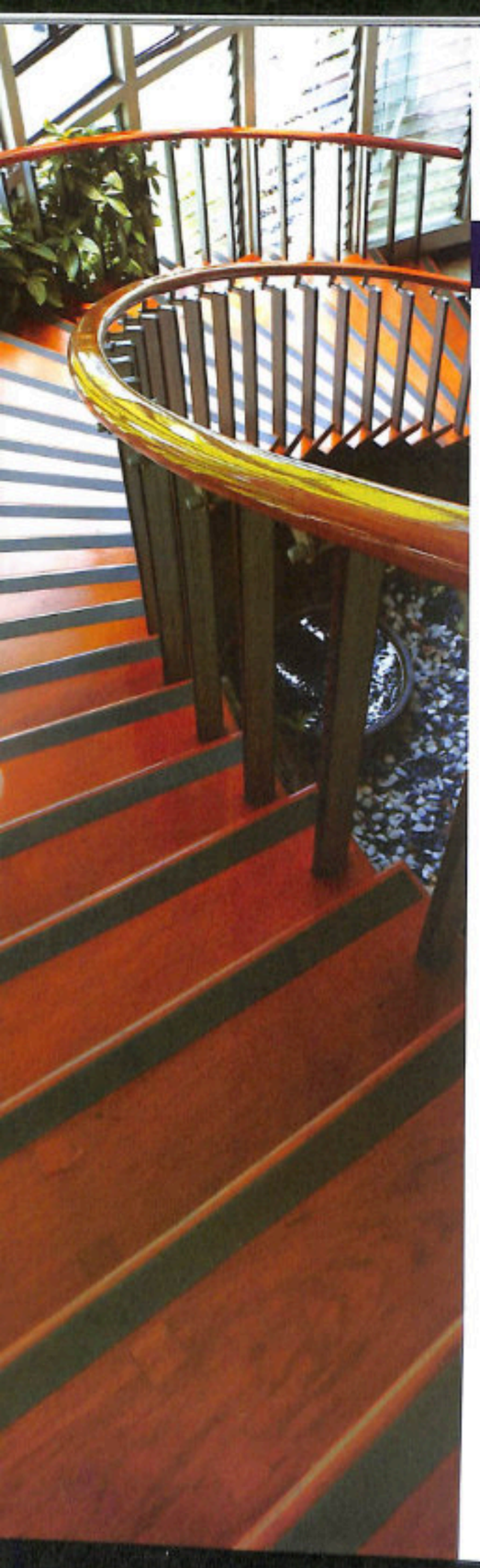
TINIG LOYOLA

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FAITH SEEKING THE LOST





TINIG LOYOLA

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CONTENTS

Editor's Note

FAITH SEEKING THE LOST | 1
by Roel Joe Abonal

Essays

PROPHETIC VIGILANCE & THE CURRENT PHLIPPINE SITUATION | 2
by Jyrnell Badana Salino, MSC

THE SPIRIT OF *CATHOLICISM*, EIGHTY YEARS AFTER | 5
by Earl Allyson Valdez

SOCIAL MEDIA & EDUCATION FOR RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP | 9
by Rev. Fr. Fernando Egargo

"NUN OF THE ABOVE" | 13
by Rev. Fr. Ramon Echica

WE TALK TOGETHER: IN THE SPIRIT OF YOUTHFUL DIALOGUE | 15

INSIGHTS FROM THE PARTICIPANTS | 19
by Earl Allyson Valdez

Features

AN AFTERNOON WITH FR. ROGEL | 22
by Eugene Parayaoan

A THEOLOGY FROM THE EARTH: AN INTERVIEW WITH SACRED SPRINGS | 24
by Mamert Mañus

POPE FRANCIS: A UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION | 28
by Rev. Fr. James Kroeger, MM

FORMATION FOR MINISTRY IN THE 21ST CENTURY ASIAN CONTEXTS | 33
by Archie Dei Magarao, Sch.P

BEING NICO | 38
by Robbie Paraan, SJ



Homilies

"HACKING" THE GOSPEL | 40
by Most Rev. Honesto Ongtioco, D.D.

ALL I REALLY NEED TO KNOW, I LEARNED IN LST | 43
by Rev. Fr. Roberto Yap, SJ

Reflections

DOING THEOLOGY IN THE "THIRD WORLD" | 45
by Rev. Alexander Zammit, MSSP

PHILOSOPHY, THEOLOGY AND *CURA PERSONALIS* | 47
by Adrian Jeric Peña

YES, 'TIL THE VERY END | 49
by Roel Joe Abonal

News

NEW JCAP PRESIDENT, JESUIT PROVINCIAL | 52
by Mamert Mañus, SJ

THEOLOGICAL HOURS | 54
by Earl Allyson Valdez

LST NEWSBITS | 56
by Eugene Parayaoan

DEMOGRAPHICS | 58
by Eugene Parayaoan

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EDITOR'S NOTE

FAITH SEEKING THE LOST

Roel Joe Abonal

When you log on to your social media account, chances are you'll be reading a lot of memes about politics, the Church, the economy, society and culture. While we laugh about them, some frown and others tremble, it signals that our times are changing. Change in leadership styles. Change in lifestyles. Change in perspectives. Change in attitudes. Thus, in a world that changes faster than ever before, we cannot help but notice that not everyone gets into the pace of our running. Some are, sadly, left behind.

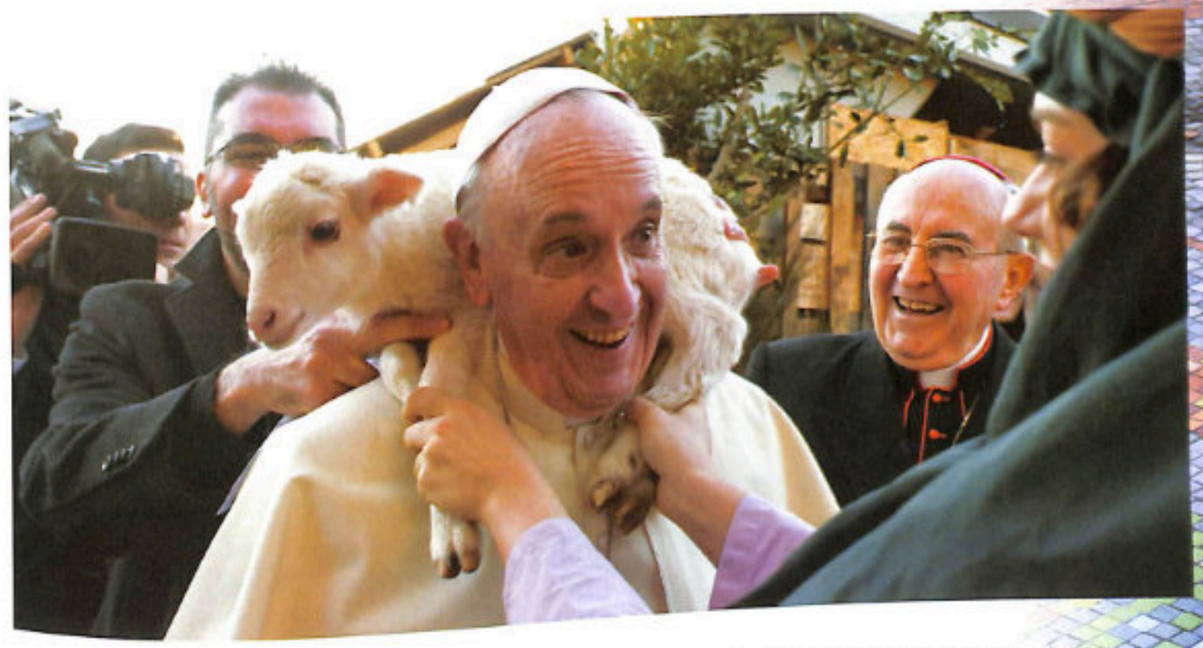
The victims of this fast-changing world are those whose feet cannot catch up. They lag behind and most of the times, the powers-that-be feign deaf and blind to their plight. In a world that promises a better life, to whom is it truly addressed? Only the able? But how about those who are weak? Those who cannot fend for themselves? Unfortunately, our society seems to admire only those who are strong enough and who can contribute to the well-being of others. How many women and not-so-old people are rejected or replaced at work all because of their age and gender, even if they can carry out the work demanded from them? How many daily wage earners have no security of tenure only because of the fear of some companies to thresh out money for their benefits? How many employees are there both in private and public who are overworked and underpaid? And the list of questions goes on.



As we are faced with changes in contexts of people, doing theology has never been more demanding. It seems that there are more questions than answers. And answers most often than not elude us especially when we need them the most. In front of a child asking why God allowed his father to die in the hands of vigilantes, what is our answer? In the face of the youth's search for meaning and purpose and authenticity, what is our response? In a world that aches because of injustice, giving more importance to economic gains than heal a broken "common home", what do we do? Theology demands more encounters on the ground with people who daily experience God in their search for meaning and purpose.

That is why, it is imperative for us to be seekers of those who are lost, those whom society has chosen to leave behind. Because it is in them and through them, where we can also meet God and know Him more. It is important to note that Jesus busied Himself looking for the lost of His time, welcome those who are unwanted, healed those who are broken, gave life to those who died literally and figuratively. As disciples of theology, we can only have a good grasp of what we know and learn inside the classroom when we immerse ourselves in the classrooms of the world and meet teachers whose basic lessons taught to us are their lives and faith.

Pope Francis in his latest exhortation says: "I like to contemplate the holiness present in the patience of God's people: in those parents who raise their children with immense love, in those men and women who work hard to support their families, in the sick, in elderly religious who never lose their smile. In their daily perseverance I see the holiness of the Church militant" (cf. Gaudete et Exsultate, no.7) Indeed, in the smallest and the unlikely, God is present and can be found.



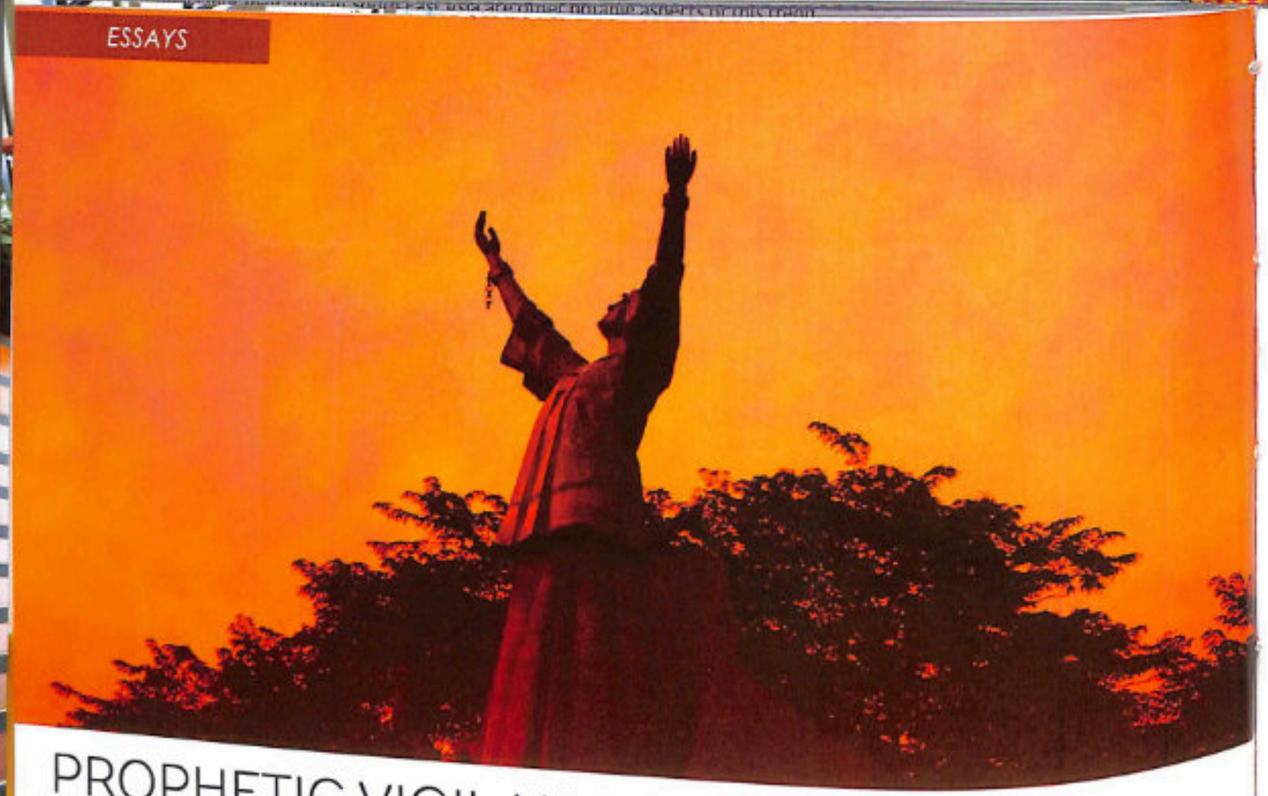
As the Church in the Philippines celebrates the Year of the Clergy and Consecrated Persons, let us also remember those priests and religious with whom we have found God by their daily witnessing in their vocation. Their dauntless and unyielding dedication to shepherd God's people is but an inspiration to us who are still on our way, being formed according to the heart of Christ. At times, they can also be lost as they search for the lost sheep but through our prayers and support, they can also be found and be effective as holy shepherds of God's flock.

Equally important to remember also are those people who silently and tirelessly work for others. Let us not forget the fathers and mothers who brave the traffic of the cities and the danger of rivers and mountains just to make sure their children eat and study well. Let us not forget the drivers, the workers in our respective houses, the staff who clean after us; they make our theological learning easier, comfortable and meaningful. Let us not forget the simple people who contribute whatever they have, whether financially or spiritually, just for us to receive good formation as we prepare for our future ministries.

If there is any reason why we should always gear towards seeking and gathering God's lost and fragmented people, it is because of our faith in God Himself. He, who chose to be with us no matter how lost we may be, is our hope that amidst the uncertainties of this world, there is One beacon of light who leads us to the certainty of love and hope—Jesus, the Good Shepherd, the Light of the World. He is the Seeker of the lost, the Guide to those in darkness.

The problem is not feeding the poor, or clothing the naked or visiting the sick, but rather recognizing that the poor, the naked, the sick, prisoners and the homeless have the dignity to sit at our table, to feel "at home" among us, to feel part of a family.
-Pope Francis

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PROPHETIC VIGILANCE & THE CURRENT PHILIPPINE SITUATION

Jymell Badana Salino, MSC

"Hard of face and obstinate of heart are they to whom I am sending you. But you shall say to them: Thus says the Lord God! And whether they heed or resist—for they are a rebellious house—they shall know that a prophet has been among them." (Ez.2:4-5)

Based on the pronouncement of President Rodrigo Duterte, six months from his assumption as president, drug users and peddlers may be lessened in numbers. But, almost one year after he was proclaimed president, the moral fiber of our country is gradually deteriorating. We find ourselves in a situation where results are more important than individual rights.

Since June 2016, the administration's "bloody war on drugs" has resulted in up to 12, 000 killings to date. The victims are mostly from the urban poor communities, as reported by the Philippine National Police. President Duterte and other senior officials have prompted and encouraged the killings in a campaign that could be tantamount to crimes against humanity. Human rights workers and church people's investigation has found that the police are falsifying evidence in order to justify the unlawful killings. Despite growing calls for an investigation, President Duterte has vowed to continue the campaign.

Bishop Pablo Virgilio David, DD of the Diocese of Kalookan also aired his voice after his ecclesiastical territory was tagged as the "epicenter of the war on drugs." He witnessed the rising number of deaths and denounced the act of killings. Like a modern-day prophet, he recognized the signs of the times and courageously preached about the original intention of God for creating humanity amidst the growing extra-judicial killings.

On the other hand, human rights advocates and activists are also facing threats after President Duterte announced the total crackdown of organizations who directly criticize him.

The death of Fr. Tito Paez, a 72 year old retired priest, last December 2017 put President Duterte's war on drugs campaign on the spotlight. Fr. Paez was driving home after facilitating the release of political prisoners in Cabanatuan City when he was slain by assassins in an ambush. As an activist priest, Fr. Paez had always stood up for human rights especially in Central Luzon, where he was also the coordinator of Rural Missionaries of the Philippines in the said region.

In the countryside, this administration's full blown war on terror went on high alert after President Duterte declared members of the Communist Party of the Philippines – New Peoples' Army (CPP-NPA) as a terrorist group. At the same time President Duterte also declared Martial Law in Mindanao on the heels of the Maute siege of Marawi. In this so-called war on terror against the rebels, the indigenous peoples are also caught in the crossfire, along with the innocent civilians.

As a result of these war declarations, a lay rural missionary and teacher of the Salugpongan Community Learning Center in Mindanao, Amelia "Amy" Pond, was accused with trumped-up charges and tagged as an NPA rebel. Pond was arrested on August 2016 in Cebu City and was detained for 15 months before eventually being released last December 2017.

Instead of confronting the roots of the rebellion, the government responded with tanks and bullets. They tagged the peasant leaders, community teachers and activists as NPA rebels and supporters. Worse than red tagging is imprisoning them using fabricated charges.

To add insult to injury, President Duterte told the Lumads he would reward them with 20,000 pesos for every rebel they kill. With this statement, he violated the most basic standards of human dignity, while also breaking international humanitarian laws.

Based on reports from the time of the Martial Law declaration in Mindanao, there have been 18 incidents of aerial strikes by the military that hit the Lumad communities, and 66 lumad leaders have also become victims of extrajudicial killings.

In addition to this, almost 7,000 Lumad families have been evacuated due to the intensified military operations. 44 Lumad schools run by the church and non-government organizations have also been forcibly closed due to the intimidation by soldiers and paramilitary groups.

Like the war on drugs, the divide and rule tactic of this regime is the same old card employed by the former colonial powers which used weapons and money to dupe and deploy elements of the local public. This will then lead to a war between Lumad leaders who want to sell their lands for profit and those Lumad leaders who will try to protect their ancestral domain and fight against the exploitation by greedy private companies, eventually resulting in too many deaths in the Lumad communities.

How would the church find meaning in all these?

If the church will renounce the rebels, she will be accused of clerico-fascism while if the church will renounce the government, she will be labelled as being one with the communists. This reminds us of Bishop Dom Helder Camara's famous quote, "When I feed the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why they have no food, they call me a communist."

The church has this "preferential option for the poor but not exclusive" dictum. However, if she will give her loyalty equally to both the poor and the rich, she will render an injustice towards the exploited people. Our response is prophetic vigilance.

A prophet is a messenger from God. He is committed to the condition of God and devoted to the condition of the people. After immersing himself in the realities

of the peripheries, he becomes a mouthpiece of God by carrying the Divine message. He now begins to denounce oppression, injustices and all forms of evils in the society. He has the task to proclaim the Word of God to the people.

Vigilance is defined by the Bible as being awake at all times. It is about being aware of what is happening in the society, by being alert in responding to the signs of the times and by journeying with the oppressed in their struggles. It is unlike the disciples who slept while Jesus was praying.

"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour." (Mat. 25:13) A prophet will bring hope and inspiration to the people condemned to abject poverty by an oppressive system. As the late Bishop Julio X. Labayen once said,

"To be a prophet is to be like Christ, a human being imbued with the Spirit, sensitive to His suggestions, responsive to His call, obedient to His biddings, and generous to His demands."

Immersing in the condition of the people is a herculean but very fulfilling task. The prophet will encounter unpopularity and threats. Most of all, he will become restless as he witnesses the suffering of the people. As a messenger of God taken among these people, his heart will be disturbed and he will experience a deep stirring within him.

Fr. Ben Alforque, MSC also shares with us that "[a] prophet will eventually become a victim of his prophesy." It is in this light that we laud Fr. Tito as he generously served, and in the process, died while defending and championing the cause of the farmers and workers of Nueva Ecija: a true example of a man seduced by God to proclaim His message. He faithfully carried God's message with him and his life of service is that message.

"You enticed me, O Lord, and I was enticed; You overpowered me and you prevailed. I have become a constant laughingstock, everyone jeers at me. For every time I speak, I must cry out, must shout, "Lawlessness and rapine!" For the word of the Lord causes me constant disgrace and contempt. I thought, "I will not mention Him, no more will I speak in His name"- But His word was like a raging fire in my heart, shut up in my bones; I could not hold it in, I was helpless." (Jer. 20:7-9)



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THE SPIRIT OF CATHOLICISM, EIGHTY YEARS AFTER

Earl Allyson Valdez

With the emergence of Catholic Social Teaching, we have also witnessed in the past few decades the rise of "Catholic Social Action." It is consoling to see various faith-based (or, at times, interfaith-based) movements geared towards the promotion of justice, peace, and, more recently, the protection of creation within different contexts and various means. It appears that there is not only a sense of urgency but also a sense of solidarity in responding to social, national, global, and ecological concerns. Moreover, there are people who see that the huge treasury of Catholic social teaching provides solutions and courses of action that respond to specific situations.

A thorough study of the development of Catholic Social Teaching, however, shows that it is far from being a thing of the 20th century. We can in fact trace its beginnings in the publication of Pope Leo XIII's Rerum Novarum in the late 19th century. However, in the years leading to the Second Vatican Council, several theologians have seen that the idea of social action as part and parcel of the Christian faith goes back to the time of the early Christians. Among these theologians, Henri de Lubac stands out as an important figure. Eighty years ago, he showed that the Catholic faith is essentially social in its nature, through his seminal work Catholicism: The Social Aspects of Dogma (in French, Catholicisme: Les Aspects Sociaux du Dogme, which has been translated and revised in English as Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man). Against the understanding of his time that faith should remain within the private lives of individuals, he affirmed that a faith fully lived essentially involves concern for and towards others as individuals and members of the society. He showed this with his own rich understanding and critical interpretation of Sacred Scriptures and the Church's Tradition.

In appreciation of his great work, we can reflect on three important points as regards his work, and these would greatly help us in our involvement and struggle for social justice as part of our Christian faith.

Catholicism: A Concrete Answer to A Concrete Question

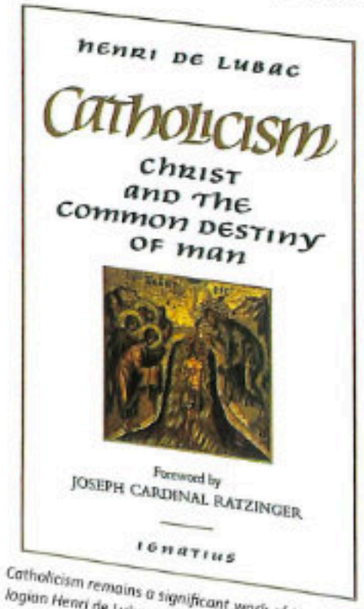
De Lubac thought and wrote in response to the socio-political context of France during that time, which was shaped by the secular ideals brought by the French Revolution. Born in a family with deep Catholic roots, de Lubac witnessed attempts by the French government to rid society

of any religious influence. This radical secularization became even more real for him when he entered the Society of Jesus, as he spent his novitiate at Saint-Leonards-on-Sea in Hastings, along the English Channel. This situation was made more difficult by the fact that the Catholic Church after Trent viewed herself as a triumphalist society, perfect in herself, which stands over and above the world. Due to this view, Catholics believed that allegiance to the Church would mean shunning the world by either embracing a largely spiritualized form of living or using all means to "Christianize" society by conforming the world to become like the Church.

As a Catholic theologian, de Lubac was caught between two extremes. On the one hand, there lay the tendency to practice the Christian faith within one's own private and individual life, careful to not let it "spill over" into the public and social life. On the other hand, there was the invitation to join the Action Française, a national movement which, apparently, dissolves the Christian message and reduces it into a sociopolitical ideology, reducing as well the Church as a society with solely immanent ends and interests. De Lubac, however, refused these extremes and worked out a synthetic view of the Catholic faith that, on the one hand, retains the transcendent and personal aspect of Divine Revelation (and thus of faith), and, on the other hand, brings out the implications of this faith lived in the realm of the social.

Catholicism shows de Lubac's allegiance and faithfulness to the Church and her teachings across time. Refusing the triumphalist view that prevailed since the Council of Trent, he also points out that the Church essentially bears the capacity to embrace worldly reality while remaining distinct from it in terms of its faithfulness to the Gospel. As such, the Catholic faith is always in search of the unity of God with the created world in all aspects of life. This means that for the Christian, the individual cannot be separated from the social, inasmuch as faith in God cannot be separated from worldly participation. And with this as a general principle, de Lubac shows that involvement in and concern for social issues that affect peoples, believers and non-believers alike, are essential in one's own belief. This message also comes with the reminder that the Christian message is the kingdom that goes beyond any expectation and future grounded in ideology. Thus, Christian social action always looks forward to the promise of salvation, resisting to be diluted and subsumed into any purely humanistic or ideological goals.

Overlooking the fact that this was written in 1938, one can see that this message is relevant for the Christian of today, most especially in states and countries—the Philippines included—that witness the rise of authoritarian regimes fueled by grave manipulation of the truth. In a world dominated by the massive influx of information, greater social mobility and the fluidity of foundational concepts, one can easily slide to the two tendencies that de Lubac faced in the early 20th century. However, the challenge for Catholics today is to proclaim the Gospel in and through socio-political involvement, one that neither privatizes one's faith nor absolutizes it as the solution to all facets of human life. And perhaps in coming up with courses of action grounded in the Christian perspective, each and every one can refer to de Lubac's synthesis.



Catholicism remains a significant work of Jesuit theologian Henri de Lubac (Photo from amazon.com)

Social Involvement as an Essential Part of Christian Faith and Life. It is not surprising that de Lubac backs his theological perspective on faith and social action with Church Tradition, citing and explaining various sources from the Scriptures, to the Church Fathers, to the Scholastics, and even to the Mystics. In the revised and translated edition of de Lubac's opus, an Appendix containing extracts from de Lubac's sources was included, which he referred to and analyzed in the main text.

In the depth and breadth of these small texts, one can see that de Lubac made the most out of the treasury of Catholic theology. De Lubac wields the wisdom of Gregory of Nyssa on the common nature of human beings as made in the image and likeness of God. He brings out from Origen the social implications of the Church as the body of Christ. He draws from Cardinal John Henry Newman the true meaning of the word "catholic" which calls the Church to draw all peoples and cultures toward Christ. From Augustine and Bernard of Clairvaux, de Lubac emphasizes charity at the core of daily living.

These are just some of the many references that de Lubac compiled,


Through Pope Francis and the Popes that precede him, we see the significance of de Lubac's insight on the social aspect of faith and dogma (Photo from globalsolutions.org)

interpreted, and synthesized in his work, which starts from the theology of creation to the fullness of life in Christ. In doing so, one can see that de Lubac showed his faith and view of social action as orthodox, that this had been how the Church sees herself through her saints and theologians vis-à-vis the whole of created reality. Against a triumphalist view of the Church, one that tends toward either radical isolationism or radicalism, de Lubac brings out the fact that the Church lives in the world while at the same time recognizing that She is not of the world. However, without prescribing any specific form of social participation, de Lubac, reflecting the teachings of the Church, leaves his readers to discern how and when to respond to particular situations and contexts in the world.

What the contemporary Christian can learn from de Lubac is the rigor and discipline to not only hold on to the Catholic faith, but also draw from the rich treasures of Scripture and Tradition in dynamic interaction with the intellectual, cultural, and sociopolitical traditions that exist. Similar to de Lubac's time, contemporary life and culture seem to place theology at the "margins of life," confined and reduced to a mere individual perspective of life. The Christian, who is called to be a "theo-logian," seeking the meaning and purpose of life in God, is called to greater attention to the elements and aspects of life that need to be reflected upon, in which God's presence constantly abides. This task is more real and demanding for us theologians in the proper sense, we who are called to draw this capacity from Christian communities by bringing together faith with other aspects of our life, expressing them publicly and opening our insights for evaluation, criticism, and revision. In this way, we bring the world closer to God through the Church, towards a greater understanding of God's plans and desires for us within our own social, cultural, and political contexts.

Christ as the Source and End of All Social Action. The fact that de Lubac concludes Catholicism with "Mysterium Crucis" (The Mystery of the Cross) tells us two things. First, his understanding of Catholic social action through participation in public life finds its ultimate meaning and purpose in Jesus Christ. De Lubac points out that the unity that the Church envisions for the world is a particular unity in Christ. He puts it succinctly by saying that unity among peoples cannot be the ultimate end, for it has to be abandoned in favor of the true unity with God brought about by Christ when He embraced the world as he hung on the Cross. He followed this with a claim that would sound scandalous for a person of the 20th century, that humanism can only achieve the human when it allows itself to be "converted" into a Christian humanism. Put briefly, our understanding of the human being must be open to receive the self-giving love of Christ in order to be truly human through its own self-giving. If our understanding of what makes us human closes the possibility of receiving God and incorporating grace in it, then our human aspirations transform into an ideology.

Indeed, it is a scandalous claim. Yet for the Christians of today, it presents to us a way out of the contradictions that we experience today. De Lubac suggests that we inject a dose of Christian life and values in a world that currently faces the age of anger

and frustration over Enlightenment ideals, a human society that allows itself to be controlled by the technology it creates, and a way of life that marginalizes people (and the environment) in the name of profit and comfort. As disciples of Christ and members of His body, we are asked to live a life of self-giving, to die with Christ and offer the world up to God, and thus share in the glory of His Resurrection. It is not surprising that eighty years after, this is the same message that the Second Vatican Council and the popes of the 21st century are calling us to be, of what the Christian should be in the world that he is in.

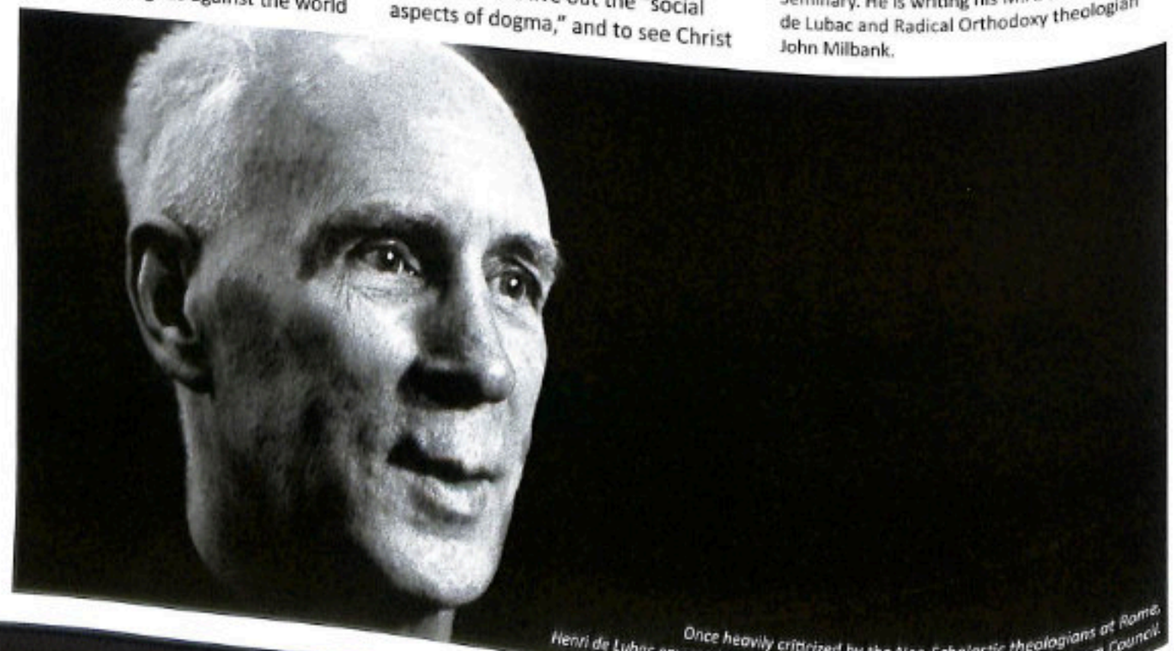
This Christocentric vision of unity, scandalous as it might sound, is the essence of the Christian life as practiced on a day-to-day basis. One can even go so far as to say that without this vision, everything Christian cannot be called as such, and our practices, rituals, and theology are mere cacophony that lacks the life that it intends to express and communicate. Indeed, de Lubac provides us a sketch of the Christian faith in the 20th century, one that goes against the world so as to let this same world fully realize its origin and end in God alone.

Conclusion: Catholicism's Challenge in the Twentieth Century. It is not surprising that eighty years after its publication, the themes that de Lubac tackled and the method that he used continues to be relevant for our times. De Lubac became an enduring theological figure in the Second Vatican Council, and the recent popes have alluded to his life and work in one way or another. But more than these references, de Lubac's unique way of dealing with the reality that he is in and the faith that he receives provides the means for us to be more authentically Christian, in touch both with the world and with the God who creates and saves it.

Faith, in the end, must include within its own understanding the social and public life of the human being, and this demands being with different peoples, embracing different ways of thinking, and engaging different traditions. Indeed, to be Catholic is to explore and live out the "social aspects of dogma," and to see Christ as the "common destiny" of man. It cannot and must not be otherwise.

> Ultimately, Christian faith precisely as "catholic" strives to achieve unity in Christ, made possible by a way of being and acting that is essentially kenotic, that is, self-giving and trusting of God's grace. And since this is an end that we can only approach through ways of thinking and being that are informed and illuminated by faith and hope in Christ, the truths explored and explained in Catholicism continue to be relevant for us today.

Earl Allyson P. Valdez is a third year theology student of LST and seminarian of San José Seminary. He is writing his M.A. thesis on Henri de Lubac and Radical Orthodoxy theologian John Milbank.



Once heavily criticized by the Neo-Scholastic theologians at Rome, Henri de Lubac emerged as a significant and key figure in the Second Vatican Council.



SOCIAL MEDIA & EDUCATION FOR RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP

Rev. Fr. Fernando Egargo

Creating Community through Communication. Man was never created to be alone. The Creator intended man to be a relational being – a person capable of relating with nature, with his fellow men, with His God. For a relationship to happen, it must begin, progress and continue through the process of communication. Communication is the process of bonding, a process of gathering together, a process of realizing God's intention for man. Communio et Progresso (#11) teaches that "communication is more than the expression of ideas and the indication of emotion...It is the giving of self in love." When man communicates, he opens up himself in love in order to understand and be understood. Communication, then, should help create a community through dialogue and "giving of self in love".

To communicate is to recognize the "other" as a person worthy of attention. This, in an imperative way, sets the tone of what all types of Christian communication should be – from the level of the personal, family, community, society, and so on. It excludes, from this understanding, all other types of interaction which is selfish, unjust, dehumanizing, enslaving and manipulative. To define communication as a gift of self in love situates communication as a process of a humanizing interaction.

Communication takes on different forms. Social media is just one among so many. Vatican II (Inter Mirifica #13) affirms the contribution of the means of mass media in "(touching) man's spirit and (opening) up new avenues of easy communication of news, of ideas and orientations" so that it sees in it the reason of "employing (it) to announce the good news of salvation." Communio et Progressio, moreover, situates the means of social communication as the instrument for the "unity and advancement of men." In the 1991 World Communication Day, Pope John Paul II reiterated this opinion by saying that "the chief

aims of social communications and all the means it uses is the unity and progress of human family." The globalization of media, especially with the growing popularity and usage of Internet and social media, has created more transmitters and receivers than people in dialogue and interaction. Being wired to the global media does not mean being a participant. The information superhighway, to a large extent, demonstrates the growing anonymity of a one-way communication process. This, unfortunately, has also created a venue for "trolls" and "fake news agencies" to flourish.

There is, therefore, a need to recover back the true nature of communication where two or more persons cooperate to create an understanding which did not exist before their interaction. We must all work hand-in-hand not only in providing an alternative to the centralized, vertical mass media, but also in combating an alarming trend in social media that seeks to divide and destroy rather than unite.

Using Social Media for Education. Education does not only happen inside the four walls of a classroom. Traditional education claims that learning is achieved within the confines of the classroom carried out through a formal system and measured through the achievement of predefined learning competencies. Of course, education is much more than this. The teaching-learning process can take in different forms and media depending on contexts and needs.

The popularity of social media today can no longer be doubted. Among the more popular social media platforms are Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, to name a few. The number of social media users is in the millions. There is a lot of potential for social media in the teaching-learning process. If skillfully used, social media can be a most effective medium for education. The qualifying term "skillfully used" imply that social media as a tool for educating people is not a miracle worker. Just like any other medium of education, application of social media must be critically done by experts or at least experienced practitioners who have the necessary skills in order to maximize the potentials of social media as an educational tool.

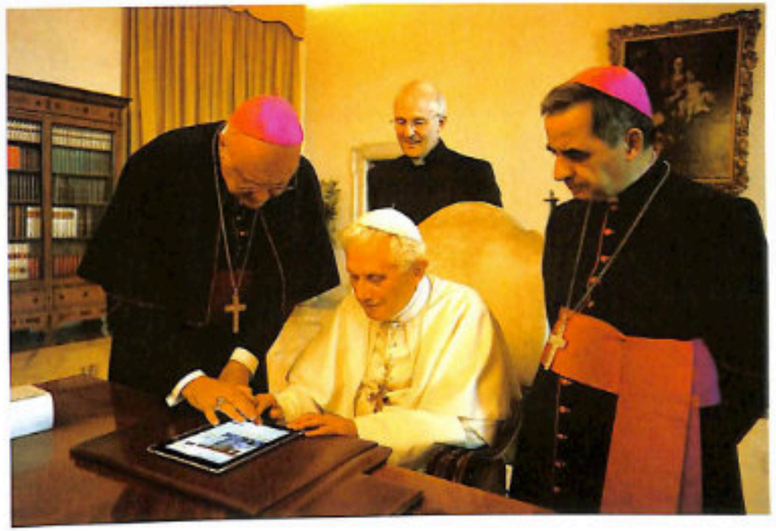
Employing the expertise of people does not mean that these so-called experts become the exclusive producers of educational content, just like in a traditional teaching-learning setting. We do not want social media to end up in the same way. A highly centralized, top-down, teaching process using social media will not necessarily deliver the desired results. Such process becomes a tool for manipulation. What we need is an alternative medium that channels information to all social media users who become rational and critical transmitters and sharers of the same information.



One of the critical areas where social media can take a proactive role is in the field of responsible citizenship. A society needs citizens who are capable of contributing to the common good. The potential of social media as a tool in education for responsible citizenship is wide-ranging.

Talk about educating people about rights and responsibilities, enlightening them to distinguish the morally correct from the morally wrong, informing them about social and political realities, opening a forum for informed and intelligent discourse, providing a venue for articulating one's opinion about issues.

An individual can only become a responsible citizen if his involvement in the social and political processes are supported by informed knowledge (of what is true and just) and that such knowledge is used for the common good. On the contrary, if a person's participation in the social and political sphere is based on "bent" truths (the so-called alternative truth), that person has not yet raised himself to the level of a responsible citizen. He remains in the level of the now-derided trolls.



It is very alarming, however, that social media has recently become a breeding ground for misinformation. Some contents passed around through social media are maliciously intended to hide the truth and, consequently, deceive people. There is the case of the proliferation of fake news from fake news agencies, as well as manipulated strategies of making a certain issue or item trend. This misuse (or irresponsible use) of social media is a disservice to the nation because it promotes ignorance, it sows confusion, and it preys on the gullibility of undiscerning victims. If only these creators of fake news and "trenders" would put their skills and time into something that would promote the common good...

In social media, teaching-learning does not involve textbooks and tests. What we have is the sharing and interaction of a community of teachers who are learners and learners who are teachers. Hopefully, this dynamic community of virtual teachers-learners would influence each other in honestly searching for truth and genuinely pursuing knowledge. No textbooks. No Tests. Just honest-to-goodness responsible citizens searching for ways to promote the common good.

Ethical Principles in the Use of Social Media. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, liberty to captives, sight to the blind... and a year of favor from the Lord" (Lk 4.18-19).

The gospel promises liberation and salvation for people. Before anything else, however, the gospel has to be proclaimed. The church, recognizing both its charismatic and ministerial characteristics, never ceases to look into new possible means of gospel proclamation. It makes use of the product of man's creativity and intelligence. It is in this spirit that the church employs

the means of social communication (social media, especially) in the process of evangelization.

In a predominantly commercially-oriented media environment in the Philippine context, there is an obvious and urgent need for an alternative media which is close to the heart of the people and which seeks to educate rather than manipulate. There is a need for a media which is concerned about promoting total human development rather than promoting a consumerist-materialist culture. It is about time to rekindle the light in a society slowly darkened by unreasonable modernism and secularism and made callous by narcissistic tendencies.

Social media could be an instrument in building a free, just, and peaceful community of persons. It could be used to promote universal values of human dignity, truth, and non-violence as transcendent moral principles. In other words, there is only one crucial purpose for a social media apostolate: the greater glory of God and the good of humanity.

As God-centered and human-oriented, a social media user must adhere and bind himself to the following ethical principles:

1. *Evangelization, through social media, is not aimed towards proselytization.* Rather, it aims towards allowing people to have an increased awareness of their dignity as persons, loved and cared for by the Creator. In this sense, social media becomes an instrument of an act of love where the priority is service for the oppressed and providing a public voice for the voiceless. The contents are directed to all men of goodwill.

2. *For people to intelligently participate in the affairs of society, they need to be truthfully informed.* The people have the right to information in a balanced manner, without any stain of manipulation of facts. They have the right to know about the society they live in and the realities that have a bearing on their growth as persons. Moreover, the real mark of a true democracy is people's participation. A social media user should know how to expose the truth.

3. *It is said that communication is more than just information.* Social media should not only bring true and objective information to the people; it should help people become formed with respect to the universal values of human dignity, truth, and non-violence. A social media user, therefore, has the responsibility of integrity, honesty, and objectivity at all times in order to be capable of informing and forming. He does not seek to serve himself, any individual or any institution except that which is on the side of truth and justice.

4. *A social media user shall never allow himself to be used as an instrument of hate, discrimination, and division but as an instrument of service, love, and communion.* He shall never lend himself to actions that may result in dehumanization or unjust destruction of reputation.

5. *A social media user shall respect the opinion of others. It is fairly just to express a contrary and contradictory opinion.* As he/she expresses his/her opinion, he/she is morally-bound to be polite and respectful as manifested in his choice of words. Social media is not only a venue for self-expression; it is also an opportunity to show our acquired personal decency and discipline.

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"NUN OF THE ABOVE"

Rev. Fr. Ramon Echica

Why does this government feel so threatened by a frail-looking Sr. Patricia Fox, that its Bureau of Immigration has asked her to leave the country? Is she

a. a member of the New People's Army?
b. a terrorist?
c. from the United Nations tasked to investigate reports on Extra Judicial Killing?

She is "nun of the above" (corny pun intended). Levity aside, this administration is inexplicably hurling everything, including the kitchen sink, to the nun. The presidential spokesperson even deliberately misinformed the public that the nun has been arrested five years ago. The implication seemed to be that it is not just the Duterte administration who thinks she spells trouble. This proved to be untrue as the sister herself clarified that in 2013, she accompanied those who were arrested but she herself has never been charged of anything.

To justify her deportation, she is judged to have been engaged in partisan political activities. I am not a lawyer but it seems that the use of such terms is overly simple and lacks precision. For clarity, let us discuss what is political, and what is partisan.

The term "political" is full of ambiguities. Many of our activities – even seemingly harmless ones like paying taxes and teaching history - have political ramifications, whether we are conscious of it or not. After all, we are political animals. Let us give examples that may be more related to the issue at hand. Organizing laborers, educating the poor of their human rights, defending peasants from oppressive landlords, protesting against extra-judicial killings, would have political consequences. But what is political for the establishment may be a concretization of the Gospel values for some religious persons. In the international front, the highly admired Pope Francis may simply be living his understanding of the Gospel when he appeals for a more humane treatment of immigrants. But without

a doubt, his message has political consequences.

If it chooses to, perhaps this administration can specify that foreign religious missionaries must limit their activities to the sacristy and to the sacraments. But no missionary who believes that the Gospel must penetrate all our daily activities will agree to such stipulation. Our Lord Jesus himself says that the presence of God is not limited to temples. In a conversation with a Samaritan woman, our Lord says that the Father is worshipped not only in temples but in Spirit and in truth.

Our country's recent history is replete with examples of foreign missionaries who have conscienticized ordinary Filipinos. The Jesuit John Delaney (American) contributed to the evangelization of a highly secular environment of the University of the Philippines. The Columban Missionaries Brian Gore and Niall O'Brien (Australians) helped organize the farmers working in sugar plantations in Negros; Fr. Tulio Favali (Italian) was killed by members of a fanatical cult because of his activity of organizing basic Christian communities in Mindanao.

Let us go to the term "partisan." A Christian missionary, or any human being for that matter, cannot be neutral in the face of evil. Can one be in the middle ground between truth and falsehood? Whoever says God is neutral must be reading a different Bible. God took the side of the Israelites against the Egyptian Pharaoh. Jesus was partisan for the poor so much that he declared that what we do to them is the single determining criterion for our entrance into the reign of God.

The issue should not be the partisanship of foreign religious missionaries. For them, partisanship is an enfleshment of Gospel values. The issue should be whether one is on the right side of the moral divide. If a priest is proven to be a pedophile, then the full force of the law must be thrown to him. Just recently, Pastor Quiboloy, a Filipino religious leader who is known to be a supporter of the President, was arrested in Hawaii for having high powered guns inside his private plane. Reports allege that he is engaged in human trafficking. This is a kind of religious leader that should be unwelcomed anywhere.

What we should be wary of is not partisanship itself but the foreigner's participation in partisan party politics. For instance, the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States is reputed to have worked for the defeat of nationalist candidates in the past. Another more recent example is the allegation, currently being probed, that Russia meddled in American elections that contributed to the victory of Donald Trump. And what if China interfered in the elections to ensure the victory of a national chief executive who is friendly to their ambitions? It is this kind of meddling that we should forcefully resist.

But the activity of Sister Fox is not party politics. It is her attempt to follow our Lord Jesus. Her expulsion can only come from someone who is both a bully and a paranoid.

Fr. Mon Echica received his Bachelor in Sacred Theology from LST in 1988 as he resided in San José Seminary for his priestly formation. He currently serves as formator of San Carlos Major Seminary in the Archdiocese of Cebu.





WE WALK TOGETHER: IN THE SPIRIT OF YOUTHFUL DIALOGUE

Earl Allyson Valdez

It might as well be called a council to counsel the Church.

Responding to the desire of Pope Francis to listen to the youth in view of the upcoming Synod of Bishops in October, a Presynodal Meeting was convened in the Pontifical International College Maria Mater Ecclesiae on 18-25 March 2018 with the theme, "Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment." The particular task of the participants, coming from different youth groups, religious communities, seminarians, and leaders of civil society and non-government organization groups across the globe, was to produce a preparatory document that will be used as an instrumentum laboris (or working instrument) in the Synod.

As a participant coming from the Philippines to represent the concerns of seminarians and young people, I was deeply honoured to be part of this. This, however, inevitably came with the challenge of letting the voice of young people in the Philippines, particularly those who consider responding to the call of ministerial priesthood, be heard. I was glad as well to be part of a rather large Philippine delegation.

With me were representatives of the Filipino youth sent by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines' Episcopal Commission on the Youth, namely Gerald Coquia (from the Archdiocese of Palo) and Therese Pangilinan (from the Diocese of Bacolod). We were joined by other Filipinos who represented different groups: Sr. Cynthia Calabig, F.M.A., who represented the Salesian sisters as a formator; Chinkee Montefrio, who grew up in Dubai and represented the youth of her local church; and Joy Eva Bohol, representing the youth of the World Council of Churches. Finally, we met Mr. Alwin Macalalad of the Christian Life Community, who was one of the moderators of the discussion groups. Bringing with us the contexts and concerns of our local churches, we took part in the discussion that led to the writing of the Final Document

The Meeting's Process. The Presynodal Meeting kicked off with a rather big surprise: an audience with Pope Francis Himself during the Opening Address to the participants of the Presynodal Meeting. At the heart of His address—in the midst of addressing various issues that affect young people of today—was his call to be brave, that is, to raise genuine concerns and views with much courage. He brought up the

image of young people in the Bible, particularly Samuel in the Old Testament and Mary in the New Testament, as examples of those who hear the word of God and courageously respond to Him. Pope Francis called the young people to take risks not just in voicing their concerns, but also in facing challenges of the present as Christians. He constantly reminded everyone that the Church is essentially a Church that is ever young, and is called to listen to her young members. He called the elderly in the Church to listen to the young as guides and companions. Finally, He discouraged resorting to ready-made opinions and views about them and their lives, or else the Church becomes "old," crystallizing Herself and losing Her dynamism that is rooted and made alive in Christ.

This opening address was followed by seven testimonies of representatives from each continent, followed by questions and inquiries from different representatives of various youth groups and communities. In the different concerns raised by each of these speakers,

we talk together

PRE-SYNODAL MEETING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

19-24 MARCH 2018

The theme of the Presynodal Meeting captures the spirit of dialogue present in the entire event

> the Pope never failed to mention the word "discernment," to not be satisfied with simple answers but to go into something deep and engaging, without losing sight of being disciples of Christ and witnesses of the Gospel.

From there, the real work began. Participants were divided into twenty groups of four languages (English, Italian, Spanish, and French), with each group represented by different countries and regions. These discussion groups answered the questions that were posed and prepared in a Preparatory Document that was done a year before the Presynodal Meeting. These language groups came up with summaries of their discussions on the three main topics proposed by the Document, namely (a) Challenges and Opportunities of Young People in Today's World, (b) Faith and Vocation, Discernment and Accompaniment, and (c) The Church's Formative and Pastoral Activity. Each topic came with outlines and guide questions that helped groups form and summarize views and opinions, coming from each participant's particular context.

A drafting committee was then assigned to collate and summarize on the afternoon of March 21. The committee presented a First Draft the next day, but it seemed in need of much revision and improvement. To facilitate this, participants were invited in a plenary assembly to express orally and publicly what they liked and disliked about the first draft. With those in mind, participants went back to their discussion groups to collectively suggest improvements. A Second Draft was then submitted on March 23, in which participants were asked to suggest revisions through post-it notes to be collated by the drafting committee. On March 24, a Final Document was submitted, one that took heed of suggestions forwarded by participants.

The whole Presynodal Meeting was a tiring process, given the short time to prepare and actually collate the document, punctuated only by free afternoons, a cultural night, and some outside trips, particularly the community Via Crucis at the Lateran Basilica and a trip to the Papal Gardens at Castel Gandolfo. The whole Meeting concluded with all delegates taking part in the Pope's Palm Sunday Mass. Not only did the entire body of delegates join in the procession, but they also had the opportunity to present the Final Document to the Pope before the Final Blessing.

The Meeting and the Document in Via: Some Insights and Reflections

Looking back at the whole process and the final product of the Presynodal Meeting, I believe that the whole encounter was generally a fruitful one. It was characterized by a lively exchange of views and opinions on matters that affect and preoccupy the young people of today; but more than that, it served as a lively encounter between young people and their desires for themselves, their visions of what the Church is and should be, and, not to mention, the different shared hobbies and interests of each one present. It was surprising to finds members in the whole assembly who expressed their faith and creativity through music and sports; it was all the more surprising that even non-believers and representatives of other non-Christian religions shared a meal and discussed issues with Catholics and non-Catholics alike.



One of the English groups discuss among themselves their own views and opinions regarding important matters that affect the youth today.

As a student of theology, I find the spirit of Gaudium et Spes, the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, alive and well in this encounter. Not only does the Final Document show traces of the language and approach of Gaudium et Spes albeit unconsciously, but the very means through which the Final Document was produced is pastoral in essence. One finds here a genuine concern for the young people of the Church, with the desire for these things to be seriously reflected upon by the Bishops in the upcoming Synod.

Related to this is the variety of concerns and topics that are raised and made explicit in the Final Document itself. It mentions of the way technology affects self-expression and communication, the quality of relationships and how they affect the growth and perspective of young people (hearkening back to the fundamental message and points of Amoris Laetitia), and the different psychological conditions that affect young people's search for meaning. The Final Document shows a growing concern for the Church, the need for a more integrated means of learning and living the faith, and the affirmation of activities geared toward the youth and how they lead to a deeper encounter with the Lord. Moreover, there is also a need to communicate a wider concept of Christian vocation, beyond the conventional but certainly misleading reduction to ministerial priesthood and religious life.

Not to be forgotten is the expression of the desire to be accompanied by wiser and older figures, characterized by authenticity and genuine witness to the Gospel. It seems that all participants agreed that they need guides within the Church who tell stories of their encounters and struggles in life, their mistakes and their attempts to correct them, and their spiritual journeys and discoveries of and with the Lord. The process certainly covered this, and the Final Document duly stresses this as a real and growing concern among the young.

As it stands, the Final Document already has some good points; however, one can also notice areas of improvement, things that could be considered as the document is appropriated and interpreted within local churches. One of them, I believe, is the sensitivity toward the variety of contexts that young people are in. As an Asian and Filipino, I think a point that one must be aware of is that the Final Document was framed largely within the Western context and their specific concerns. It is evident in some parts of the document that the primary concern is to keep the youth within the Church through catechesis and youth activities that make sure that their faith is well, alive, and growing as members of the Catholic Church. It seems that there is a need to solidify a Catholic Christian culture and way of life that makes them stand out in public life, without being too partisan or affiliated with political stands.

One can understand this concern given the great wave of secularization that sweeps across Europe and even North America. However, this context seems to ring little particularly to Asians, in which the Christian life is already in dialogue with cultures, traditions, and the poor. With this background, it appears that the young people of Asia are more concerned with bringing the Christian life to the peripheries, communicated through values and a dialogical way of living. Perhaps if this was greatly considered, then the Final Document could have provided some space for the youth to engage in



In his opening address, Pope Francis highlights the need for young people to be courageous enough to speak and act to and for the Church

mission within the context of dialogue. And I believe this could have emerged when, in the middle of the drafting process, participants were distributed among continental / regional groups.

This particular point for improvement shows that the Final Document is an imperfect one, and it can only be so considering the little time given and the great effort it requires to write. However, this does not diminish its value, as it bears the voice of young people from all over the world. One can see its potential and capacity to let the Church grow in Her approach to the youth, putting our trust that the synod fathers would consider the Final Document with much seriousness, reflection, and prayer.

What's Next? Now that the Final Document has been published and translations have been emerging, what the young people can do is to wait for the bishops to convene at the Synod. While this document carries so much weight and value, it is still the statement of the bishops that will have magisterial value,; and this is important because it calls for greater demand and attention for the local churches. Thus, the task of the Synod, as bishops work with this Final Document, is to pay attention to the promptings of the Spirit as to where their local churches are headed in terms of listening to and forming young people.

However, as an instrumentum laboris, I believe that the document is open for study and theological reflection. The Final Document offers different areas and aspects in the life of young people that demand a serious theological approach. More than just the different concerns and topics stipulated in the Document, one can enter into the different implications of the Final Document and the process that gave birth to it. Perhaps, approaches in Pastoral Psychology, Ecclesiology, and even Fundamental Theology can be used as framework in conducting studies that would help in seeing, evaluating, and appropriating the results of this year's Synod. Global phenomena such as the rise of technology and social media, migration, and the place of women in the Church have become trending issues as of late, and it is important to consider how these also form the views and opinions of young people within their specific contexts.

Moreover, considering that the Final Document also received some backlash and criticism in its publication over social media, one may look at the dissenting opinions and trends and seek to understand their emergence. Consideration over theological assumptions and underlying principles that lie between the lines of the Final Document would be of great help in understanding the youth and the Church today.

Seminarians and religious, most of whom accompany young people and are themselves young people, should consider relationships and connections between this Final Document and the new Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis.. Surely, such an effort provides new ways of understanding the priestly formation and the vocation to the ministerial priesthood.

Finally, the Final Document calls for continuous discernment as well as appropriation within particular contexts. As a pastoral document, it serves both as lens and guides delivered in advance, as a tool to help the Church minister and accompany young people. I believe that these concerns only become real and relevant to the Church insofar as they are taken seriously, listened to, and considered with much discernment in our dealings with young people and the communities to which they belong. And if the young people find Christ more in their lives and in the world that they live in, then I believe the 300 or so people who participated in the Meeting have done their work in listening to the Spirit and responding to His call to aid the young people all over the world.

With this, one can see that it indeed became an event for the Church to be counselled by the young. And at this point, we leave it to the decision of the bishops as to how they are going to make sense of the Final Document and how they are going to forge a path for the youth with these things in mind.



The fact that Filipino delegates represent different local churches and sectors beyond the Philippines show that they can be instrumental in shaping the future of young people and the Church (Photo by Therese Pangilinan)

Earl A. P. Valdez *is a third year theology seminarian for the Archdiocese of Manila; he resides in San José Seminary. He was also the editor-in-chief of Tinig Loyola during the 2015-16 academic year.*

Stories & Insights from the 2018 Presynodal Meeting on "Young People, Faith, and Vocational Discernment

The Pre-synod 2018! The Pentecost of the 21st Century! In the history of the Church, this is the first synod on the young people, participated in by the young from all over the world, from different walks of life and religious beliefs. It is significant to me because I witnessed the sincerity of heart of these young people who show a strong desire, a great commitment and responsibility to build ONE WORLD where everybody counts and WHERE EVERYBODY BELONGS! The Pre-Synod offered a safe place for the young to be protagonists and to express their deepest longings in life. It is significant because the Church gave a chance to let the young people SHINE. To SHINE BRIGHTLY in this dimming and confusing world. And SHINE they did! It filled me with hope for a bright tomorrow because of these young people's openness to the spiritual and their aspiration to have a contemplative stance as they embark to live life to the fullest and give their contribution in building a better and livable world.



Sr. Cynthia Calabig, FMA, *is the current novice master of the Salesian Sisters of St. John Bosco in the Philippines.*

My entire Pre-synod experience was a providential blessing. To become an instrument of God's love and manifest His plan in this world was a gift. This was also coupled with the responsibility of letting the voices of young Filipinos be heard. Creating a working document which will serve as a tool for the Synod of Bishops on October 2018 entailed a rigorous process of meetings, open dialogue, revisions, small group and plenary sessions with people around the globe. It was an admirable act for Pope Francis to call for this meeting with young people from all walks of life (Catholics, non-Catholics, non-believers, those in the existential peripheries, etc.) - no one excluded.

It was challenging to come up with a unified and well-represented document expressing the standpoint of young people, given our diversity. In the process, however, I found it enriching to understand the perspectives of other countries - a learning process that was grounded in dialogue. There were moments when I felt the need to step forward especially in mirroring the Asian/Philippine context on the final document. With God's grace, I was driven by the encouraging and heartfelt words of Pope Francis who reminded us to

> "be the protagonists, be brave, take risks, speak openly, freely, frankly and say what is deep in our hearts."

Furthermore, he gave the assurance that our contribution will be taken seriously. Fortunately, most of my comments on the draft were considered, for which I feel glad.

Overall, what was significant in the final document is that our hearts beat as one. The sense of hope for the world's future was evidently felt as I listened to the burning zeal and passion of other young people whose desire is to lovingly serve the Church, share the faith, evangelize others and become reflections of God's unconditional love. It does not end here.

> We are entrusted with the obligation to continue our journey in becoming living witnesses not only by touching the lives of others, but creating a ripple effect of empowering our fellow young people in living out the gospel – no matter how little it may be, as long as it is done out of love.

On Palm Sunday, we were given the opportunity to join the cardinals and Pope Francis within the barriers to submit the final document. I am grateful for the grace of having a personal encounter with Pope Francis. As he approached us and stretched his arms, the vibration of his desire to connect with each one was so strong. It was like a "taste of heaven" as I held his hand tightly, gazed at his authentic smile and his loving, merciful and compassionate eyes. I was speechless, simply embracing the moment with overflowing tears of joy. It made me ponder later how much more it

would be when one comes face to face with Jesus Himself! Something to hope for! As Pope Francis said, "God has faith in you, He loves you and calls you." Are you willing to open the door of your heart? He will not impose, the knob is in your hands. Indeed, "love knows how to risk."



***Alyanna Therese Pangilinan** is a member of the Christian Family Movement (Sons and Daughters Encounter - SADE) (Young Adults Program - YAP), from the Diocese of Bacolod. She is a psychometrician and formerly the Kinder to Grade 3 Guidance Associate at St. Scholastica's Academy.*

The Pre-synodal Meeting was in a nutshell an opportunity for youth and young adults globally (plus online) to contribute to a document (Instrumentum Laboris) that would assist the Bishops in their upcoming Synod this October 2018.

Personally what made this pre synod meeting significant was that for the first time I got to see a hierarchal church that was ready to listen to the youth and allowed us to be the protagonists in this process.

Whenever we had priests, bishops, nuns or other youth delegates - everyone in their language groups gave each other space to talk and explain the realities of their respective countries/religions. I had the opportunity to represent AVOSA (Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia) and for some reason I was sharing a room with 2 Muslim sisters (one from Indonesia and Lebanon) who also participated in the discussions.

It was affirming to see a church that was not exclusive but relational and that focused on the 'common good' - and that we had the platform to experience this first hand.

Having participated in previous discussions regarding the presynod, it was also good to note that the organizers had allotted more time for group discussions rather than 'lecture' type sessions in allowing more space for the youth to speak and be heard, and that on the sides we had priests and religious taking down notes observing sentiments whenever a young person would note something in the document that needed further emphasis/criticism.

As a whole more than the actual document itself what I appreciated was the efforts in the process behind it. The synod team did not only take into account the 300 young people who were present but opened online platforms for those not present to also have a say as well. I believe that further down the line the processes could have been improved but as an attempt of the Vatican to reach out to the youth I do personally commend the baby steps. Perhaps a further review or evaluation of this process could be done in order to improve communication/marketing strategies amongst the young once the synod 2018 is concluded.



***Chinkee Montefrio** is currently a member of the CFC Singles for Christ Community and a member of St. Mary's Parish in Dubai, UAE.*

In the beginning of the Pre-Synod Meeting,

Pope Francis encouraged the youth to speak with courage and listen with humility. With these words, he models the way for today's Church.

He has taken initiative for creating genuine spaces for dialogue. These are spaces that call for, and create, a mature laity. As a moderator, I ensured that I made no input or interventions during the process. My only points for intervention were to give initial guidelines, ensure that conversations stayed on topic, and manage that the process isn't dominated. The conversations were a space for the Spirit, and the group members.

I saw that the youth were up to the task. Their conversations were daring and frank. They sought knowledge when they did not feel confident; they grounded themselves in their reality; they raised questions to each other; they disagreed (frequently!). Most of all, they listened genuinely. And they worked together to smith the pre-synod document which would carry their voice to the Synod. It was a document that takes the Pope's encouragement to task. It reflected the youth's diversity, pain, and hopeful desires. Desires for respect, inclusion, and a genuine journeying with a living Church.

In their conversations, I saw the thirst for genuine community and discernment. These stand as necessary contributions during this moment in the Church, for those who have it as part of their charisms: The Christian Life Community, The Society of Jesus, and other Ignatian communities.

I see a future where today's youth will be steering a renewed and replenished Church. This body of faithful is in a rapid march towards a challenging future, and the journey is a generational one. But in this meeting, I have been left with the impression that if the "old" Church, and the "young" Church can continue to walk in synchrony, then we will see the renewed vibrance we have been working for since Vatican II.



***Alwin Macalalad** is the Executive Secretary of the Christian Life Community (CLC).*

The Pre-Synodal Meeting for Young People was a huge step of the Vatican to gather young people from the Catholic church, Christians of other confessions, other faiths, and those who do not affiliate with faith groups.



"We want to listen and learn from young people. Not the fake young people but the real ones... You are the young people that we would need to listen and be in conversation with. Be authentic and do not filter your opinion..."

These were the words of the Holy Father addressed to 300 young people from all around the world during the Pre-Synodal Meeting. These words gave me a strong impression of the intentional move of the Church in general to work together for the present and the future.

The meeting made me reflect if at some point, our church, The United Methodist Church, made a similar effort in the past or present to invite young people in all sectors and groups to meet together and talk about the real issues of young people today and how we could work together to address them. Out from the Pre-Synodal Meeting, young representatives from other Christian confessions met and shared the same goal to organize a similar event sometime in 2021!

On the other side, although the event was strongly for young people, the missing link was that it was mainly organized by adults. Perhaps, to move forward and to model this vision from the meeting, young people must be included in the decision making and designing of big international events like that! As the Pope shared, the old generations are the dreamers, but the young generation are the prophets and prophetess! We must work together--not for or to--but with young people!



***Joy Eva Bohol** is the Programme Executive for Youth Engagement of the World Council of Churches. Hailing from Cebu, she is now based in Geneva, Switzerland.*



AN AFTERNOON WITH FR. ROGEL

Eugene Parayaoan

Fr. Rogel: Fast Facts

- Birthdate: 13 April
- From Cebu City
- Entered the Society in 1994 and was ordained in 2005
- Served as 2005-2008 School Director at Loyola College of Culion, Palawan
- He completed his Licentiate in Systematic Theology (STL) in Rome (2008-2011)
- At present, he is doing his Doctorate in Biblical Theology in Rome

Teaching Background:

- Old Testament Visiting Professor at St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in 2010
- Taught the Old Testament and the Wisdom Literature at the Loyola School of Theology (LST) in 2011-2013

Since 2017, he is serving as Formator in San Jose Seminary

One of the changes that LST has witnessed this school year is the assignment of Fr. Rogel Anecito Abais, SJ as the Vice President for Academic Affairs. LST's Tinig Loyola is grateful to Fr. Rogel's gracing the following interview. Here he answered questions about LST and theologizing at the present time.

Tinig Loyola: What's new for LST Students this year?
Fr. Rogel: We started this year the Pre-Theological studies program. It is a two-year certificate program designed to give prospective theology students the necessary philosophical training. Unique to this program is its non-degree program design which caters those who are entering seminaries after graduating from a non-philosophy college degree so they will not need to take another college degree anymore but simply take the ecclesiastical requirements for philosophy before starting theology.

Tinig Loyola: What do you see as the relevance of theology in today's situation, particularly in the Church and the Nation?
Fr. Rogel: I think that the basic relevance of theology in today's Church and in the nation, and probably even in the world, is on the aspect of the human hunger for truth, for something spiritual—something that is not material. Thus, the training of people in theology viz. understanding God and the mystery of God, in the end, will be very helpful for those people who are searching for God and desiring to meet God. And it is a great service to the Church and the nation to have people who are well trained in theology, who are able to communicate and express the mysteries of God to the people.

Tinig Loyola: In particular, Father, what do you think can LST students contribute to this ministry of communicating the mysteries of God to the Church?
Fr. Rogel: They can contribute to this communication of God's mysteries to His people by being trained to think critically. So, critical thinking is an important skill. They will only become effective in their ministry of bringing God to the people when they are able, not only to reflect or be the face of God and His presence to people, to reason and think properly with regard to these mysteries of faith.

Tinig Loyola: Are there any other skills that an LST student should have?
Fr. Rogel: If there is something that LST, over the years, has been trying to inculcate in its students, it's the pastoral aspect of their training. Not just an academic LST, not just producing academically competent individuals, but an LST that forms individuals who are ready to go to the ministry, individuals who are able to deal with the pastoral situations that are set before them, and individuals who are able to respond to the needs of the people.

Tinig Loyola: What are the frontiers that LST respond to?
Fr. Rogel: The first is in the content where LST offers a wide range of elective courses that tackle different realities, for example, we have a rising number of students coming from other Southeast Asian countries where the majority of the people are non-Catholics, therefore their realities are either Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim; even the southern part of the Philippines also has that reality of Muslim population. Given that, LST tries to offer courses which may be relevant to those people coming from these areas with different religious realities. The second is the offering of the migration program. Especially for the Philippine reality, we know that there are many Filipinos working abroad to find a living. That dictates the pastoral responses we have to give, not just to those people working abroad but also to their families left behind. The other prong when talking about the pastoral response to the needs of the people is the inevitable talk about the curriculum. Such that in the curriculum there are various courses which are geared towards giving students certain skills necessary for the exercise of their ministries e.g. we train them to give counseling and to give good homilies. Then we also have the final program in the 4th year called pastoral management which trains future priests on the management of their parishes, churches, and local communities. These are the ways that LST is responding to pastoral needs by preparing its students for the pastoral ministry.

Tinig Loyola: What has the future in store for the academic programs of LST (and its students)?
Fr. Rogel: As you know, we are in the process of transitioning from the old curriculum (STB) into the new curriculum (STB and MA). So next year will be the last year for the implementation of the old curriculum, therefore, we will be fully operational in the new curriculum afterward. In another front, we are in the process of looking at other certificate programs which we can offer in LST. One or two programs are already in the pipelines: one has to do with the safeguarding of minors and another is on ecology and sustainability. But these are programs that are still in the planning phase.

Tinig Loyola: Lastly, is there anything else you want to say to the LST students?
Fr. Rogel: LST seeks to provide the basic tools or the necessary facilities which will help students in their learning process. Therefore, take advantage of whatever is offered by the school. Maximize the use of available facilities and the availability of various professors so that you may have a more holistic theological education.

Eugene Parayaoan is a second year theology student residing at San José Seminary. He belongs to the Diocese of Urdaneta, Pangasinan.



THEOLOGY FROM THE EARTH
AN INTERVIEW WITH SACRED SPRINGS

Mamert Mañus, SJ

Sacred Springs indeed serves as an apt name for a dialogue institute of spirituality and sustainability, with the purpose of assisting Loyola School of Theology in fulfilling its mission of theological formation and reflection in view of bringing justice to the poor and healing our earth. It is the inspired idea of a group of passionate individuals who found themselves seated one day, to discuss concerns about the world. Their main question was "How do we address these issues [on peace, the environment, on interreligious dialogue]?" After much discussion, brainstorming, and initial research, the group of Fr. Albert Alejo, SJ, Fr. Jojo Fung, SJ, Ruben Habito and MaritesGuingona-Africa finally proposed the idea of an institute to Fr. Jose Quilongquilong, S.J., with the intention of hitting the ground running and addressing these problems . Fr. Quilongquilong found the idea well worth pursuing and supporting, and graciously provided an office space to launch the institute . And with that, Sacred Springs Dialogue Institute of Spirituality and Sustainability was formed.

Joining the group later on were A lan Cajes, Honeybee Hubahib, Edna Manlapaz, Carissa Singson, and Kathrine Joy Sayam. As posted on their website (www.sacredspringslst.wordpress.com), Sacred Springs "draws from the collective wisdom of diverse communities, based on a common concern for safeguarding and sustaining the precious resources of the earth."

> It envisions "a world where peoples harness their collective wisdom and energies from their diverse cultures and spiritualities to nurture and sustain our shared future." With this as vision for a better future, Sacred Springs thus aims "to promote and foster the recovery of the sense of the sacred, restore our fragmented earth communities, and recover our ecological well-being."

The founders well had in mind that this is a concrete response to Pope Francis' call in Laudato Si' for all of us to care for our common home.

To gain a deeper understanding of the institute, its apostolate, and the involvement of the LST community, Tinig Loyola sat with Edna ZapantaManlapaz for an interview.

Tinig Loyola (TL): How does Sacred Springs address problems related to the care for our common home vis-à-vis peace, the environment, and interreligious dialogue?

Edna Z. Manlapaz (EM): If one takes note of the major terms, one immediately sees where we are. One, it's called a dialogue institute, which means to say that if people are prepared to dialogue, meaning it's a two-way conversation – you speak, I listen. I speak, you listen, then we can sit down and precisely do that, dialogue. So regardless of what difference there may be of opinions, beliefs, traditions, if you sit down in mutual respect and listen to one another, that's the way to go.

Two, spirituality, because there must be a spiritual dimension in all the work we undertake. Why? It's because it's the only thing that will sustain us in our efforts. Looking around at what's happening in our world today, we see that we are bombarded on all sides in this ecological crisis that Pope Francis has been repeatedly calling our attention to. As an institute in a Catholic school of theology, we need to be grounded in the scriptural basis for ecology, and we can go all the way back to the Old Testament, to Genesis, and all the way down through to Revelation, and we will find that the scriptures repeatedly speak about the earth. In other words, we really need a spiritual dimension in our motivation to do this thing, and not be simply worried about gross national product, how actions affect our investors, or tourism, but to think holistically of our common home as God's own gift to us, and we have a moral responsibility to care for this earth and sustain it for future generations, not just some civil responsibility that we have.

> Third, sustainability.But we want to be very clear that sustainability does not necessarily equate to just the environment. It's really the sustainability of human life, so that insofar as you have the physical basis for sustainability, you also have to achieve a well-being; as it were, mens sana in corpore sano, meaning we have to look at things holistically. So, as we care for the earth, we provide proper nutrition, we create less pollution; therefore, we raise healthier children who are not malnourished, who are able to go to school and study well. It's the entire connectivity of all life on earth.

That's why it's called a dialogue institute of spirituality AND sustainability, not simply of the environment, but really the broader term sustainability because it implies something more holistic, alongside with spirituality.

TL: And perhaps, because in truth, what is all our endeavoring and toiling if not impelled and driven by the Spirit?

EM: Exactly!

TL: Tell us, again, why dialogue [on our common home] is very important to Sacred Springs...

EM: It's because as Pope Francis said, the earth is our common home, there is no other. It has no geographical barriers, physically. These barriers and boundaries are all man-made constructs. So that goes to show that regardless of what region, religion, faith, culture, political, whatever, isa lang pag-uusapan natin[we only speak of one thing]: we all are inhabitants of the same planet. In other words, we are all in one Earth. And it's not as if we came to this realization only recently. What it simply means is that all through time, various cultures and traditions have lived in this common home! And consequently, each of these religions or cultures has developed ways of dealing with the environment. So, if you read the Qur'an, if you read the Bible, if you read any of the major texts, you find that all of these truth traditions are cognizant of the fact that nature is a gift that we need to care for, and they have different ways of doing that. Indigenous peoples don't have Bibles, but they live it! Their lives literally depend on how well they cultivate the earth, how well they make use of what resources they have, of what the plants, the sun, and the wind could provide. So the idea here is that – if in our concern for our common home, if we do in fact have this common concern – then we can sit together and dialogue and say "how do we help one another?" "What can I learn from your tradition that can be used here?" "What can you learn from our tradition?"

TL: You mentioned cultures and traditions that we need to dialogue with: please enlighten our readers some more.

EM: Well, for example, one very strong emphasis now that Fr. Jojo Fung is especially keen on, especially coming from his Shaman training background when he lived with peoples and tribes in remote areas, is that



he finds that the indigenous people have a respect for the earth that we urbanites don't have. When we urbanites need something, we go to the supermarket and it's there. But for the lumads, nature is not just something out there, it's what they live, it's what allows them to live!And so as Fr. Fung says, it is imperative that we listen to the indigenous people because they are the ones who literally live off the earth, who know the earth very intimately, and we should learn from them. So this is the particular vision of Sacred Springs, to dialogue so that we can pool together our resources regardless of country, culture, creed, to care for our common home, just as Pope Francis challenges us in Laudato Si'.

TL: So, concretely, given that Sacred Springs is embedded within the Loyola School of Theology, how do we intend to achieve these aspirations for dialogue on spirituality and sustainability?

EM: Well, concretely, one of the ways is that we are right now in the process of designing a certificate course along the lines of what Pope Francis refers to as caring for our common home in Laudato Si'. It's a non-degree program and we are hoping and envisioning that every single parish in this country should undertake a kind of program to implement Laudato Si', within the confines of its own parish, working with its own people... contextualizing it in their localities.

How this non-degree program works is, for example, you have a worker from the parish council who gets into this program which will cover five courses that are very easy, very practical, and you don't really need theology or philosophy units to qualify. So we're thinking of lay workers because as somebody pointed out, parish priests change roughly every three or six years, but the parish remains, which means to say that it's the parishioners who are the principal stakeholders.

We can talk all we want in our lecture halls, in our symposia, about care for our common home, but unless it goes down to the very basic units of the parishes where they have control and ownership of the "land" as it were, unless they take ownership of it, it will all be talk. It is the people in our parishes who suffer when there's no water, or there's too much because of the floods. So, with the parish as the basic unit of the Church, which in turn is composed of the families that make up a parish, that is where we feel that the call to care for our common home should really begin in, which at its very basic is really the Good News. And this is why we feel that tapping into the local parishes via their priests and lay leaders, is the way to go for this planned non-degree program.

> The hope is that bishops will encourage their parish priests, who will in turn encourage their parish councils and lay workers to undertake this certificate course. These parish councils and lay workers are the life-and bloodline of the parish, who are there from birth to death.

TL: Wow! If this gets off to a good start, it will certainly have far-reaching implications and impact. But aside from the bishops and their diocesan priests, who might the other key players be and how would you engage them?

EM: But of course, it's also understood that the Society of Jesus, through the Loyola School of Theology, will have an important role in responding to this present crisis. In addition, we also see how the Jesuit-run diocesan seminaries of San José [Seminary] here in AdMU and St. John Vianney [Theological Seminary] in Cagayan de Oro are critical partners in the multiplier effect that's needed to really get the work of caring for our common home going, and in fact, hit the ground running. This explains why it costs so much to form a Josefino or Viannista, because apart from the basic theological formation, there is the added component – the Magis – of Ignatian spirituality and the Jesuit brand of priestly formation. And to be very blunt about it, these seminarians are being formed to really become future leaders of the local church. But already, we have so many Josefinos and Viannistas who are currently working in parishes across the country, and this is a very good starting point in our rallying cry to respond to our present ecological and spiritual crisis. With their Jesuit-led training, they can eventually assume key positions as formators, rectors, [and] future bishops, and effect the positive changes that we need across different levels and sectors of our society.

TL: But, if we may add, so with all the other religious congregations who have students studying here in LST, right?

EM: Of course! And you are correct in pointing that out. Our immediate concern is Laudato Si', which is really the impetus of this institute;

> but then again, if we really understand the deeper sense of Laudato Si' as sustainability in general, and not just the environment, then we realize that it actually involves everything and everyone else in the world, given the interconnectivity of everything that there is in the world.

TL: We've covered so much ground with just 15 or so minutes of conversation! But maybe just one final question: how may the LST student body get involved and help out in Sacred Springs?

EM: Very easy! It can be as simple as getting the word out that we are here in LST Room 305, that our door is always open and there's always some cookies, as well as coffee brewing, for anyone coming in. We are always looking forward to conversations and dialoguing on these important and critical concerns of ours.

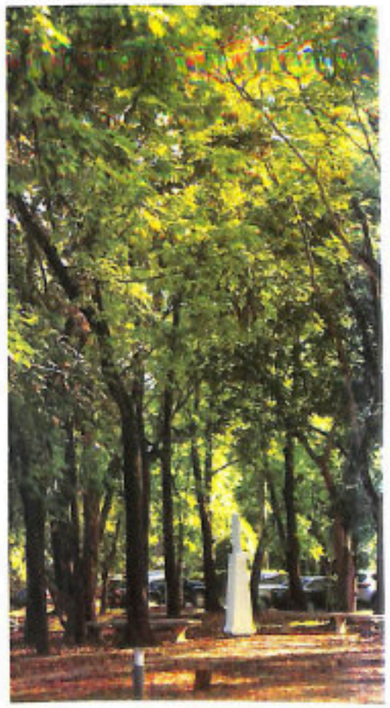
But also, raise awareness of this institute more and more! If you remember the "Season of Creation" activity that we had, it was actually an eye-opener event for the LST student body, making them realize of the existence of this institute, as well as the actual celebration of the "season of creation." During that time, part of the ritual was people writing down their resolutions and making an offering of the same. Now, I don't know how seriously the LST students are living out those resolutions, but one of the critical things that we should seriously be considering as an institution is hopefully, we don't use plastic bottles anymore.

Another thing would be proper waste segregation and disposal. Still another would be lessening paper consumption; or, can we even go more and more paperless in our transactions? Can we stop using disposable paper plates, cups, plastics utensils? In a manner of speaking, it's really going back to basics and firming up our foundations as it were.

TL: "Going back to basics..." That sounds simple enough, but we know it can also be the hardest and most complicated thing to do for the "modern person"; but yes, we should do that. Thank you, for your time, Ms. Edna!

EM: Thank you! Here's to looking forward to fruitful dialogues and engagements together with the LST community.

Mamert Mañus, SJ is a first year theology student. He belongs to the Society of Jesus and resides at the Loyola House of Studies.





POPE FRANCIS A UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION

Rev. Fr. James Kroeger, MM

Pope Francis has begun his sixth year as leader of the universal Church. He was elected on March 13, 2013, and was officially inaugurated on the solemnity of Saint Joseph on March 19. These past five years (2013-2018) have been filled with intense activity; recently released data from Rome illustrates Francis' very busy pastoral involvement.

Francis has made 22 international trips, traveling 154,906 miles—equivalent to six journeys around the world. He has made 18 pastoral visits within Italy and 16 parish visits within his diocese of Rome. He has canonized 880 saints, created 61 cardinals, led 219 general audiences which include catechetical reflections on various themes: sacraments, Church, family, mercy, faith, Christian hope, and the Mass. He has prayed the *Angelus* and *Regina Coeli* with visitors 286 times.

In addition, Francis has issued 41 major documents, including the encyclicals *Lumen Fidei* and *Laudato Sí*, apostolic exhortations *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Amoris Laetitia*, and the bull *Misericordiae Vultus*. He has called four synods of bishops and declared two special years on consecrated life and on mercy. He has attended or announced three World Youth Days (Brazil, Poland, and Panama). And, this list of activities (extending from March 19, 2013-2018) could easily be augmented!

However, one remarkable "achievement" that was *not* included in the statistics issued by the Vatican Press Office is that by October of 2018, Pope Francis will have canonized *three* popes: John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II. While this presentation does not delve into the merits of popes canonizing other popes, it does highlight a unique contribution of Pope Francis. And, in the mind of this author, it is significant that all these three pope-saints were active participants in the Second Vatican Council. This piece now turns to present a "brief glimpse" or "quick snapshot" of these canonized saints; it highlights their missionary contribution and illustrates the admiration that Pope Francis has for each of them.

SAINT JOHN XXIII: JOYFUL POPE

Pope John XXIII, along with John Paul II, was declared a saint on April 27, 2014, Divine Mercy Sunday. Over the years of his short pontificate (1958-1963), John XXIII became a beloved figure worldwide; he was popularly known as "Good Pope John." He is remembered for the convocation of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965); his annual feast day on October 11 is fixed to commemorate his opening of Vatican II on October 11, 1962. Each year as the Church celebrates this saint, we are asked to recall the pivotal role of Vatican II in the ongoing life and mission of the Church.

Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, the fourth of thirteen children of peasant farmers, was born in the village of Sotto il Monte in Northern Italy on November 25, 1881. He entered the seminary as a young boy. Significantly, at the tender age of fifteen, he began writing his spiritual diary, which was published as *Journal of a Soul* shortly after his death. Undoubtedly, Pope John's aim in life was to be a holy priest. One could validly say that he always tried to be a saint—and he made it!

Papal Contributions. Beginning his pontificate at age seventy-seven on October 28, 1958, Angelo Roncalli brought a whole new pastoral and personal style to the papacy. Describing the person and contribution of John XXIII during his visit to Bergamo on June 3, 2013 (50th anniversary of John's death), Pope Francis noted that John XXIII's life is a lesson in how obedience and trust in God lead to interior peace.

Pope Francis said: "The whole world recognized Pope John as a pastor and father, a pastor because he was a father.... It is so beautiful to find a priest, a good priest, filled with goodness." He was "an effective weaver of relationships and a solid champion of unity, both in the ecclesiastical community and outside it." He was always "open to dialogue with the Christians of other churches, with representatives of the Jewish and Muslim worlds and with many other people of good will."

Pope Francis said that John XXIII's decision to convoke Vatican II was the result of a "prophetic intuition" based on his "love for the Church's traditions and his awareness of the constant need for renewal." The Council and Pope John's "offering of his life for its success" Francis said, are "a bright beacon for the journey that lies ahead.... Let yourselves be guided by the Holy Spirit. Do not be afraid to take risks, just as he was not afraid."



Genuine Spirituality. John XXIII's outlook is, in fact, a spirituality that he communicated to the world. He took the call to holiness seriously throughout his entire life. His profound trust was evident in his simplicity, patience, gentleness, and affability, qualities manifested in all his varied writings.

John XXIII could be very forceful in asserting his conviction that the Christian faith should result in deep, joyful hope. In his opening speech to the Second Vatican Council, he said:

> "We feel we must disagree with those prophets of gloom who are always forecasting disaster, as though the end of the world were at hand" (quoted by Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* 84).

He believed that divine providence was renewing humanity and, through a perceptive reading of the "signs of the times" (cf. EG 14, 51, 108), one could discern that by God's designs a new order of human relations was emerging in the contemporary world.

Daily Decalogue of John XXIII. In his homily on October 11, 2006, commemorating the opening of Vatican II, Cardinal Bertone quoted what is widely known as the "Daily Decalogue of Pope John XXIII." The following are some excerpts: **(1)** Only for today, I will seek to live the livelong day positively without wishing to solve the problems of my life all at once; **(2)** Only for today ... I will not criticize anyone; I will not claim to improve or discipline anyone except myself; **(3)** Only for today, I will be happy in the certainty that I was created to be happy, not only in the other world but also in this one; **(4)** Only for today, I will adapt to circumstances, without requiring all circumstances to be

adapted to my own wishes; **(5)** Only for today, I will devote ten minutes of my time to some good reading...." Pope John's Decalogue continues: **(6)** Only for today, I will do one good deed and not tell anyone about it; **(7)** Only for today, I will do at least one thing I do not like doing; and if my feelings are hurt, I will make sure that no one notices; **(8)** Only for today, I will make a plan for myself; I may not follow it to the letter, but I will make it.... **(9)** Only for today, I will firmly believe, despite appearances, that the good Providence of God cares for me...; and **(10)** Only for today, I will have no fears. In particular, I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful and to believe in goodness...." We marvel at John XXIII's wisdom and seek to put it into practice—each and every day!

Saint John XXIII, a holy man with a great heart, radiated an infectious optimism and joy. Radically open to the Holy Spirit, he certainly helped renew the Church, seeking to transform us all into a truly joyful community of Jesus' missionary-disciples!

SAINT PAUL VI: POPE OF EVANGELIZATION

On World Mission Sunday in 2014, Pope Paul VI (1963-1978) was beatified in Rome. The choice of the occasion was significant! First, on Mission Sunday, the Church focuses on her missionary vocation and identity. And, when elected, the new pope specifically chose the name "Paul" because he saw himself preaching the Gospel to the whole world, following Saint Paul's missionary dynamism. Secondly, the date marked the close of a special Synod of Bishops on the family; it was Paul VI who established the synod of bishops in 1965 to assist the Church in both reading and interpreting the signs of the times. Rome has confirmed that the canonization of Paul VI will take place in October 2018 at the close of the next session of the Synod of Bishops that is devoted to the youth and vocations. Indeed, the parallels between the events of 2014 and 2018 are quite striking!

Missionary Initiatives. Aside from expressing his "core identity" with the chosen name "Paul," Giovanni Montini accomplished much to bring the Gospel message to contemporary humanity. Sharing John XXIII's vision of Church renewal, Paul successfully concluded Vatican II and systematically implemented its missionary vision. In addition, Paul VI presented his "dialogical" vision of the Church in his first encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964). He established the Vatican office, now known as the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, on Pentecost Sunday 1964.



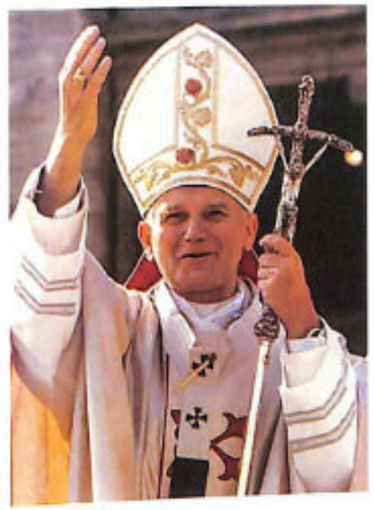
Paul, the missionary pope, initiated papal travels, literally covering the globe. His most extensive missionary journey in November-December 1970 brought him to Asia with visits to eight countries. While in Manila he met with 180 Asian bishops, a pivotal event in the foundation of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences. In addition, Paul VI vigorously promoted the growth of authentic, inculturated, local churches.

Evangelii Nuntiandi. Pope Paul will always be remembered for his 1975 apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN), *Evangelization in the Modern World*. This was the first papal document to flow from a synod (the 1974 world synod focused on the theme of evangelization). This beautiful document, as fresh today as when it was written, asserts that: (1) evangelization is the vocation proper to the Church; (2) the Church's mission continues the mission of Jesus; (3) evangelization is a multifaceted reality; and, (4) evangelization includes a commitment to full human development and social justice.

Paul VI asserted: "We wish to confirm once more that the task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church.... Evangelizing is, in fact, the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize" (EN 14). "For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all strata of humanity" (EN 18). EN became the *magna carta* for Catholic evangelization in the last quarter of the second millennium of Christianity. Without a doubt, EN is one of the most important ecclesial documents of the post-Vatican II era. EN boldly addresses the topic of evangelization in the modern world.

Pope Francis' Affirmation. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* is the most quoted document in Pope Francis' 2013 apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*; it is quoted on thirteen different occasions. One finds that Pope Francis, beginning early in his pontificate, regularly quotes and praises EN. In 2013 Francis said that EN includes words that "are as timely as if they had been written yesterday" (May 17); he called EN "a very full text that has lost nothing of its timeliness" (June 13). As Francis described evangelization, he asserted that EN was "that basic point of reference which remains relevant" (July 27). The pope went even so far (June 22) as to describe EN as "to my mind the greatest pastoral document that has ever been written to this day."

Pope Francis reiterated his great admiration for Paul VI and EN on June 16, 2014, when he opened the pastoral convention for the Diocese of Rome. In reference to EN, Francis stated: "Still to this day it is the most important post-Conciliar pastoral document, which hasn't been surpassed. We should always go back to it." Undoubtedly, EN is the fertile soil from which Francis drew much as he authored his *Evangelii Gaudium* (as well as using other material from Pope Paul VI). Francis appreciates Paul VI because he affirms that the



testimony of Paul VI "feeds us the flame of love for Christ, love for the Church, and gives us the momentum to announce the Gospel to the people of today, with mercy, patience, courage, and joy" (June 22).

Parallel Insights. Popes Paul VI and Francis share several common perspectives. "Let us preserve the delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing" (EN 80); "let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the joy of evangelization" (EG 83). All Christians are challenged to be "evangelized evangelizers" (cf. EN 15) who are truly "missionary disciples" (EG 120); their spirituality must reflect "the fervor of the saints" (EN 80) and emerge from "a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ" (EG 3). Popes Paul and Francis are truly "kindred spirits"—aflame with the fire of evangelization. We try to catch the same "Gospel Fire"!

SAINT JOHN PAUL II: GLOBAL MISSIONARY POPE

The Catholic Church worldwide rejoiced as Pope John Paul II was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI on May 1, 2011, and then canonized by Pope Francis on April 27, 2014, in Saint Peter's Square in Rome. Catholic and secular media covered the events from a wide variety of perspectives, emphasizing the many and diverse contributions of this 264th pope of the Catholic Church whose pontificate extended over 26 years (1978-2005).

Startling Statistics. When John Paul II died on April 2, 2005, the Reuters News fact sheet noted some remarkable statistics regarding his pontificate. He traveled a total of 775,231 miles around the world; this is 3.24 times the distance from the earth to the moon. John Paul II read aloud, before audiences in the millions, more than 20,000 addresses. As pope, he issued more than 100 major documents, including 14 encyclicals, 45 apostolic letters, 14 apostolic exhortations, and 11 apostolic constitutions. John Paul II beatified 1,338 and canonized 482 people, more than all of his predecessors in the last four centuries combined.

Undoubtedly, one of the major emphases of John Paul II was his focus on the renewal of the Church in her missionary identity and commitment. When his mission encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (Mission of the Redeemer: RM) was published on December 7, 1990 [25th anniversary of the mission document of Vatican II, *Ad Gentes*] Cardinal Daneels of Brussels wrote: "this document best exemplifies who this pope is; it is the fruit of his mission in every continent. There is nothing better to define his pontificate than to say: he is a missionary pope."

Commitment to Missionary Evangelization. In RM (1) the pope described his missionary commitment: "From the beginning of my Pontificate I have chosen to travel to the ends of the earth in order to show this missionary

concern. My direct contact with peoples who do not know Christ has convinced me even more of the *urgency of missionary activity...*" John Paul II echoed his explicit pastoral choice in his Message for World Mission Sunday in 1981 [the year of his first visit to the Philippines]: "My trips to Latin America, Asia, and Africa have an eminently missionary purpose." Everywhere he went John Paul II emphasized a central point: "I wish to invite the Church to *renew her missionary commitment*" (RM 2).

The pope was concerned that "missionary activity specifically directed 'to the nations' (*ad gentes*) appears to be waning.... For in the Church's history, missionary drive has always been a sign of vitality, just as its lessening is a sign of a crisis on faith" (RM 2). John Paul II made the faith-mission link very explicit when he noted: "*Mission is an issue of faith*, an accurate indicator of our faith in Christ and his love for us" (RM 11).

Saint John Paul II did everything in his power to renew mission because he continually asserted that mission is at the heart of the Church: "the Church here on earth is missionary by her very nature" (AG 2). He was deeply convinced that "missionary activity renews the Church, revitalizes faith and Christian identity, and offers fresh enthusiasm and new incentive. *Faith is strengthened when it is given to others!*" (RM 2). Pope Francis said of John Paul II: "I think of him as 'the great missionary of the Church'," because he was "a Man who proclaimed the Gospel everywhere."

Missionary and Saint. The choices of the dates for the beatification (May 1, 2011) and canonization (April 27, 2014) were certainly not accidental; both are the Feast of Divine Mercy. John Paul II had a deep commitment to this devotion as it was propagated by Sister Faustina Kowalska, a fellow Pole. One can also note the intimate link with mission. Is not missionary evangelization all about proclaiming God's abundant love, compassion, and mercy? Mission is grounded in being so filled with God's loving mercy that one wishes to proclaim it to the world. Mission makes God's merciful love contagious.

One might assert that for his missionary commitment and insights John Paul II "deserved" to be declared a saint! However, the canonization process is not quite that simple! Yet, the Church celebrates the life of this saint, because she has been gifted with an extraordinary apostle of Jesus Christ, who used *every opportunity* to spread the message and person of Jesus.

We recall those challenging words spoken by John Paul II to Filipino Catholics during his 1981 visit:

"I wish to tell you of my special desire: that the Filipinos will become the foremost missionaries of the Church in Asia."

We rejoice to pray: Saint John Paul II, renew our missionary hearts as members of Christ's Church!

LIVING IN A REMARKABLE ERA

As Catholics today we are truly privileged to live in a fascinating time of the Church's history. We recall that it is precisely six decades ago (1958-2018) that Saint John XXIII was elected pope (October 28, 1958). In less than 100 days after his election, he announced the Second Vatican Council on January 25, 1959, the feast of the conversion of Saint Paul. Certainly, the Council, considered by many as the most significant Church event since the Council of Trent in the 1500s, opened an age of marvelous transformation in the Church—all guided by the action of the Holy Spirit. In addition, this "Vatican II Era" has been characterized by several holy popes: Saints John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II.

How did these saints regard Vatican II? John XXIII said that he was offering "to the world the gift of a new Ecumenical Council" and prayed to the Holy Spirit: "Renew your wonders in our time, as though for a New Pentecost." Paul VI said: "One may say that the Council leaves itself as a legacy to the Church that held it." He asserted: "The first need of the Church is to always live Pentecost." John Paul II noted: "The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council has been a gift of the Spirit to his Church." He affirmed: "The Conciliar documents ... have not lost their value nor their brilliance.... In the Council, we have received a sure compass to guide us."

Our hearts overflow with gratitude for God's abundant blessings, showered upon the contemporary Church through two very special gifts: Vatican II itself and the three "pope-saints" of the Council. Indeed, the Spirit has renewed the Church in our times; we have experienced a "New Pentecost"!

Fr. James H. Kroeger, MM, has served mission in Asia (the Philippines and Bangladesh) since 1970, working in parishes and serving mostly in the education-formation apostolate of seminarians, catechists, and lay leaders. Currently, he teaches Christology, Ecclesiology, Missiology, and "Asian Theology" at Loyola School of Theology, East Asian Pastoral Institute, and Mother of Life Catechetical Center in Metro Manila.



FORMATION FOR MINISTRY IN 21st CENTURY ASIAN CONTEXTS

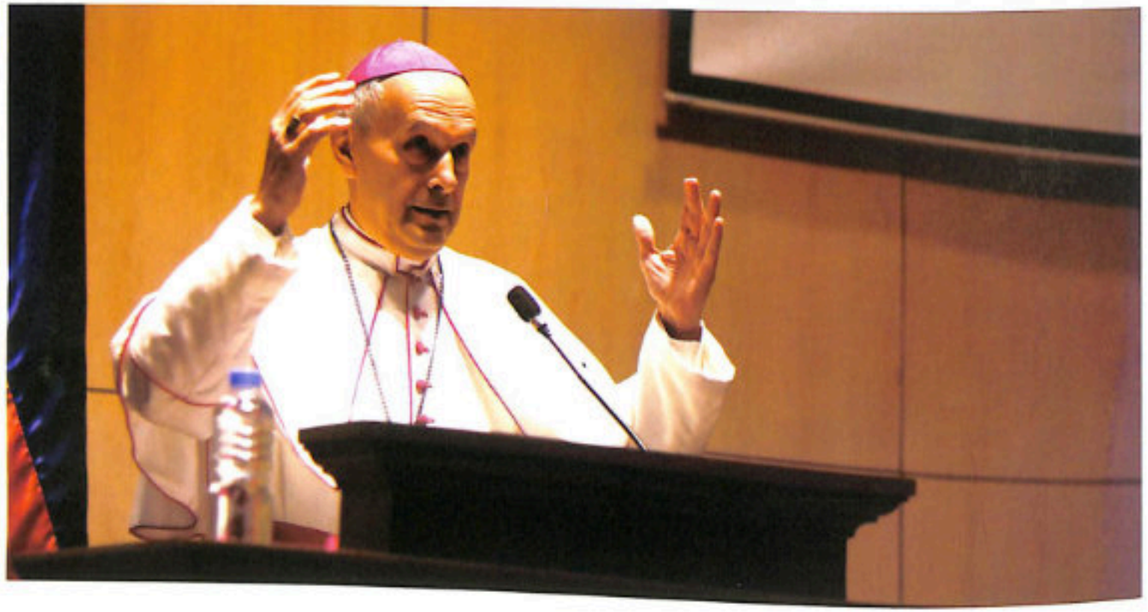
Archie Dei Magarao, Sch.P.

In line with the CBCP observance of the Year of the Clergy and Consecrated Life, Loyola School of Theology conducted its annual International Theological Forum (ITF) last 15-16 March 2018, with the theme "Formation for Ministry in 21st Century Asian Contexts." The event was graced with speakers from different disciplines and figures in the Church hierarchy, such as Patricio Abinales, Ph.D., Most Rev. Pablo Virgilio David, D.D., S.Th.D., Most Rev. Gabriele Giordano Caccia, D.D., Gabriel Dy-Liacco, Ph. D., Most Rev. Gerardo Alminaza, D.D., and Ms. Eva Galvey. They explored different issues and contexts pertaining to the formation. They also invited participants to think of ways of responding to formation needs in the Asian contexts.

On the first day, two important discussions were held, namely "On Ministry to the Frontiers" and "On Formation of Seminarians and Religious vis-à-vis the new Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis (The Gift of the Priestly Vocation)." Dr. Abinales opened the session on the sociological context of Asia. There are four rising contradictions in the sociological context in Asia today. His first point is that in Asia, there seems to be strong economic growth and an expanding middle class, together with a decline in poverty and longer life expectancies; however, he also pointed out the great impact of technology and the degradation of the environment at a quite rapid rate.

Second, he showed the emergence of post-authoritarian constitutional systems versus extremely depoliticize citizenry. And third, he discussed the existence of state-populism-national sentiment against millennial individualism. Fourth, he pointed to the growth of spirituality versus prosecution and fundamentalism and how they are in play in Asia.

Demographically there has been a significant movement of people towards the urban centers of Asia. Along with this is the population growth of 60 percent from Asia in the global population growth of 2015.As population increases, production also increases. This is shown in the rising number of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) bringing home remittances. Abinales, nonetheless, posed a caveat: the environment suffers at the expense of economic growth. More and more forests are destroyed in Asia with the Philippines, as one of the countries that denudes its forests. More than



this is the environmental nightmare, specifically the aggravation of pollution where 73 percent comes from Asia.

With the rise of technology, employment of the younger generation seems to still be perceivable. However, technology will eventually eclipse the need for human force. It seems that younger generations are still under threat as robots start replacing human manual labor. Learning institutions e.g. the liberal arts, will see a decline of students as more young people crowd towards IT-related courses.

Asian debts are also on the rise today. The Philippines alone has rising corporate debts. The indissoluble gap between the rich and the poor remains the same as less and fewer people are in control of the nation's wealth. Corruption is another concomitant factor to this which remains on the rise in the country.

Moreover, governmental use of violence is rising in many Asian nations. This violence, surprisingly, comes through the use of law; in turn, it is also used to silence opposing voices in a rather arbitrary manner. Populism and cult personalities, on one hand, where leaders with mass appeal and convince people that they are one with them is growing in Asia. Fake news dissemination, technology, etc. here are employed. To these threats, Abinales proposed small but consistent resistance, and this is where the Church's vital role comes in. She is called, through its religious activities and persons, to be the moral compass the society should follow; moreover and at the same time, She is called to be faithful to her mission to reach out to the marginalized.

The forum's second speaker is the Papal Nuncio to the Philippines, Archbishop Gabriele Caccia. He delivered a testimonial for the Year of the Consecrated Life vis-à-vis areas of conflicts. He stressed the importance of the Church's mission, especially its ministers, on a life dedicated to God and reconciliation. That we are called to reconcile and become the means of reconciliation.

Caccia reminded the ITF participants that Christianity is not a European matter. Besides, it is shared not by coercion but by attraction, quoting Pope Francis. Conflict exists in the religious life, especially among persons. Hence, he offered three notions to overcome such conflicts i.e. with, over, and for. He further said, quoting Pope Paul that we must recognize and respect the other. On the other hand, a comment from Fr. Nguyen Cong Doan, S.J., surprised the crowd in the open forum as he shared his own experience of witnessing to the Word in Vietnam. He emphasized that love could change everything; love is the only real revolution in the world, and that there is power in witnessing to it.

Bishop Pablo Virgilio David, D.D. of the Diocese of Kalookan came next, as he talked about "Bridging Theology and Pastoral Care Amidst a Culture of Death and Violence."

He opened his talk arguing that the present government promotes a culture of death and violence, particularly the rise of extrajudicial killings (EJKs). The current Philippine administration's so-called drug war is illegal, immoral, and anti-poor.

While about 3,967 had already been killed in the legitimate drug-related police operations, 16,355 were killed by unidentified assailants, and 118,000 were jailed. These killings, he declared, victimize no less than the poor. It is immoral because it disrespects the dignity of human life; it further labels drug addicts as non-human and it makes no room for criminals' reform.

Killing, he stressed, begins with labeling resulting to othering (making those labeled as others or separate from us). The Drug War is grossly illegal, Bishop David continues, as the notorious "tokhang" does not really operate as it is named. It searches and arrests without warrants, summarily executes, and plants evidence specifically in slum areas. And with the granting of power to the PNP and CIDG to issue subpoenas, they now can legally take those under the protection of the Church's sanctuary. This endangers the lives of suspected drug users and witnesses to the EJKs. Sadly, death and violence are now accepted as quick solutions to criminality, a form of practicing the law of retaliation.

In all these, how can we resolve the gap between theology and pastoral care? David claims that only if pastoral care is made as the locus for doing theology. One has to first avoid what Pope Francis calls "theological narcissism," that the Church must not be self-referential.

Still quoting Pope Francis, David further defines it as keeping Jesus within herself and not letting Him out. This leads to the gaps—gaps of apathy and indifference—between theology and pastoral care. These gaps prevent us from seeing the needy, thus preventing us from seeing the Lord. Removed from pastoral care we cannot do theology, we cannot love God. Outside it theology is meaningless and self-serving. The Church should not just be a community of the saved but a saving community. David added that if one cannot love Jesus, one should not even bother coming near His sheep. Being "the Body of Christ;" Christ's work is the work of His body, the Church. The Church hence should bear the "pain of compassion" that enables the Church to be inclusive and attend to the need of others.

"Stop the killing and start the healing" is David's slogan vis-à-vis the culture of death and violence. Criminals should be seen as victims, he declared. In carrying out EJKs, authorities are killing the victims, not the suppliers. Substance abuse should be addressed as a health issue than as a crime, he asserted, as many of them are needing psychiatric help. In-house rehabilitation as used by the government is less effective than the community-based rehabilitation (citing the Rat Park Addiction Study) in treating addicts. In all these, David said that we need discernment, the real fruit of a prayerful person.

After a brief post-lunch icebreaker, the afternoon session kicked in with Dr. Gabriel Dy-Liacco on the topic "Challenges of Integration in the Formation of Seminarians and Religious Today." He said that primarily formation is the ongoing configuration of the person to Christ. Thus, the subject of formation should be the integration of humanity and spirituality, citing the new Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis (RFIS, III.a.28-29) of the Congregation for the Clergy. The challenge of formation, as he observed, is the lack of maturity among the candidates for the priesthood and religious life. He noted that if the person has a call, it is presumed that he/she hears it and decides to respond to it consciously. For this reason, we expect the person to learn how to mature affectively. There are bundles of challenges in today's environment vis-à-vis the formation to consecrated life, especially in the digital-online world where questions of being truly human and authentic are challenged, the redefinitions of family structure as effects of migration (e.g. OFWs) are raised, and attitudes toward sex, work, authority, and asceticism are brought into the fore. He remarks that today, there has been a struggle of formands towards the correct understanding of authority. They demand that trust and confidence to the superiors be first established before they cooperate. The ascetical practice suffers today due to its waning popularity. Similarly, work, according to Dy-Liacco, became highly dependent on young people's interest, thus, it is no longer perceived as a form of commitment.

What formation should target, said Dy-Liacco, is the integration of affective maturity and healthy intimacy. The person is in this process of achieving integration if the following indicators are visible: self-awareness, internal control, self-acceptance, self-esteem, healthy identity, listening ability, capacity for change, relational flexibility, healthy solitude, sharing of authentic self, trust and mutuality, self-care, sexuality integration, capacity for work, and the capacity to use the means of formation i.e. spiritual direction, psychotherapy, mentoring relationships, among others. These are in contrast to the person's past

hurts in the form of deprivation, abandonment, neglect, abuse/trauma, "parentified childhood", vulnerability, exposure to addictive behaviors, lack of play, cruel punishment, and exploitation.

Quoting Dr. Kevin Mcclone, Dy-Liacco said that growth in healthy intimacy and affective maturity involves naming, claiming and embracing old hurts and negative scripts from families of origin and making conscious decisions to act with integrity. Added to this is the power of accepting, but not controlling, the person.

Finally, he held that 80 percent of formands experienced some form of abuse while growing up. For this reason, decisions regarding formation timeline, standards, and evidence-based method for healing abuse and psychological maladies should be taken into consideration. Digital technology, he added, is part of the affective landscape of today's young vocations. Alongside this is the prominent difficulty with silence and waiting among young vocations in their prayer life. But what is important, stressed Dr. Dy-Liacco, is not what is needed to be done but what is needed to see the Lord.

Bishop Gerardo Alminaza, bishop of the Diocese of San Carlos, served as the last speaker of the first day of the Forum. His topic was "Configured to Christ: Forming Priests and Religious for the 21st Century Ministry." His opening words were: renewed clergy is needed for a renewed Church and a renewed country. He made use of Pope John XXIII's methodology called see-judge-act from the encyclical Mater et Magistra.

He motioned that one should see the category to where one belongs: do I belong to those who make things happen, to those who wait for things to happen, to those who are against what is happening, or to those who don't know what is happening? Given the 12 million Filipino people living in poverty despite the GDP growth of the country, has the Church failed in its mission of evangelizing and forming people, or has it lost its prophetic voice? He further admitted that the National Congress of the Clergy had humbly acknowledged the shortcomings of the clergy viz. succumbing to personal weakness, materialism, deficient transparency, and honesty in managing Church's resources. Thus, there is a greater need for the sense of shepherding, acceptance of responsibilities, and owning of mistakes among the clergy. The outdated model of Catholic priesthood for formands, the fuga mundi (flight from the world) spirituality, compounded the issue as action and contemplation were dichotomized. Besides these are the "subcultures" such as machismo, clericalism, sense of entitlement, code of silence, obsession toward material properties, gay culture, and many others which block and deform seminary formation and priestly ordination understood as the terminal point of formation. Alminaza, then, proposed a lifestyle inventory as a point of discernment and solution to these issues.

The formation of priests means following a singular journey of discipleship which begins at baptism, quoted Alminaza. Helpful to this is the integration of the four pillars of formation: human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. Nevertheless, priestly formation's communitarian dimension must not be forgotten and its means of formations through personal accompaniment, such as spiritual direction and community accompaniment (cf. RFIS, 44-49 and 50-52). Formation likewise has a clear missionary character. Seminaries, therefore, should form missionary disciples who are in love with Jesus and shepherds with the smell of the sheep. Consequently, RFIS no. 3 urges that every priest should always feel that he is a disciple on a journey, constantly needing an integrated formation, understood as a continuous configuration to Christ. Thus, in the process of formation, talents and gifts should be integrated. The formand should therefore be a person of discernment. For the ongoing formation of priests, it should be noted that pastoral charity is the heart of ongoing formation. And in the face of challenges in the ministry such as personal weaknesses, allurement to power and wealth, and maintaining celibacy, priestly fraternity should be the primary setting where ongoing formation takes place.

Incarnation spirituality, according to Alminaza, is a better act on the formation of the 21st century priests and religious. It is where real care is given, for a cure without care makes us into rulers. It is where a Damascus experience is permitted to happen and the crisis is addressed.

Ms. Eva Galvey, on one hand, responded to the remarks of Dy-Liacco and Alminaza. She asked, "How do we bring affective maturity in a person?" Her answer is that the formand must be true to oneself and others. A safe environment for being real should be created and secured by formators to make this happen, so that authenticity would lead not to embarrassment but acceptance. Only in this situation is where redemption and healing of the person take place and conformity to Christ begins. Accepting the weakness of the person does not mean condoning the person. Moreover, the relationship of intimacy in prayer results in transformation, for one's constant exposure to God makes one understand Jesus more. Only in this way that we can say that we are truly transfigured.

The second day of the International Theological Forum was held at the Cardinal Sin Center in LST. The theme of this day was "Testimony of Ministers of Reconciliation in areas of Conflict in Asia." It was graced by Sr. Anita Borbon, RGS (the program coordinator of Ruhama Center for Women), Ma. Lourie Victor (Consultant, DepEd and CBCP Episcopal Commission on Indigenous Peoples), Fr. Heru Prakosa, SJ (professor of Islam at Sanata Dharma University, Indonesia), and a read speech of Charles Cardinal Bo, Archbishop of Myanmar.

Sr. Borbon highlighted the great tragedy of human trafficking, which, according to her, is an organized crime. Worse, others see it as a business such that it has been legalized in some states, thus aggravating the situation. This is one reason why it is a challenging mission. Statistically, about 82 percent of trafficked persons are women and children, and many of these are prostitution-related. Poverty is no less the culprit of all these. Adding to the problem are the slow court process and conviction of suspects, re-trafficking, lack of community support, and deficient funding. The RGS sisters, of which Borbon is a member, takes on the mission of the welfare and protection of women and children, especially those who are trafficked, prostituted, and forcibly migrated. They support women's rights through protection, prosecution (of abusers), prevention of abuse, and partnership with other organizations. During the open forum, she invited the future ministers of the Church to help protect women and children.

With the topic "Remembering and Reconciliation: Ministry among Indigenous People," Lourie Victor stressed on the wounds created by the past and their healing today. She asserted that colonization in the country occasioned the marginalization of particular indigenous people (IPs) by marking them as uncivilized. This created division between those who are Christian and those who are pagan. Unfortunately, this mentally crept into the government policies even after colonization. IPs until today, therefore, experience discrimination and Christianity, sadly, contributed to this. At some point, Christianity accused the IPs of not having a God. What is true, however, is the opposite. The strong and stewardship to the land of IPs served as their recognition of God's presence among them. Now, in the process of recovery from these wounds of division, IPs see the Church as their partner. In her final words, she invited everyone to reflect on the dialogue of life and faith with the IP and the recovery of the IP perspective within the Judeo-Christian tradition. She hopes that in the future, religious people no longer perceive the IPs as pagans.

The third testimonial came from Fr. Heru Prakosa, SJ. His primary claim is that "to be religious is to be interreligious." It means that harmony among faiths in Indonesia is possible and it has to start with the education of the youth. He found out that interreligious activities can deepen the faith. These can take place at the level of reason (theological reflection), heart (spirituality), and physique (social praxis). The 2018 International Theological Forum ended on a positive note and challenge that future ministers are formed enough to heal wounds, to protect human rights, and to keep the faith alive.

Archie Dei Magarao, Sch.P, belongs to the Order of the Pious Schools. He is in his second year of theological studies.





BEING NICO

Robbie Paraan, SJ

Editor's Note: Fr. Adolfo Nicolás was elected as the 30th Superior General of the Society of Jesus on 19 January 2008. During the 36th General Congregation held in Rome, he tended his resignation. He has since lived in the Philippines at the Arrupe International Residence inside the Ateneo de Manila Campus.

"You decide, I obey." This was Fr. Nico's response to Fr. Tex Paurom, his attending doctor at the Jesuit Health and Wellness Center where he was staying temporarily to address a painful back. Fr. Tex was giving instructions for his short stay at the Center. "You decide, I obey." Fr. Tex seemed not to know what to make of what the former Jesuit Superior General said. But my companion and I knew what was coming next. On Fr. Nico's face a sly grin had begun to form. It evolved into a naughty smile as he continued, "It's easier to obey one man than sixteen thousand Jesuits." We all had a good laugh.

Together with fifty or so other Jesuits who are mostly in formation, I have been living with Fr. Nico for more than a year. When asked to write this piece on him I was secretly terrified. I have written about other people before, even Jesuits. Each would take so much time, effort, and energy because I would always hesitate at the thought of encapsulating a person's story in a thousand words. But to write on the former general?

What finally convinced me to get started was a memory of Fr. Nico addressing us scholastics in one of our monthly community meetings. What he said has remained with me since: "Be yourself. You will never go wrong with being yourself. But let Christ touch you and enter into your life." I had expected him to tell us to study harder—which he never said explicitly. (Rather he advised us to form habits of study.) Or maybe mention his constant refrain as general to be persons of depth. But his first official message was startlingly simple yet, knowing who said it, was of great wisdom: be yourself but let Christ touch this self.

In his own unassuming way, Fr Nico strongly encourages us to be ourselves by being genuinely himself to us. And who is this genuine 'self'? An extremely humorous, humble, and holy person.

Not a few formation houses are marked by a culture of ribbing or teasing, sometimes to the point of being irreverent. I was quite shocked the first time Fr. Nico joined in on the chorus of banter directed at a Jesuit scholastic. Right after delivering his own line—what he said escapes me now—there was a much pregnant pause before everyone broke out in hysterics, including that scholastic. If there was any illusion that we would have to act differently around our former general it was shattered at that moment.

We would soon learn that his jokes, his friendly teasing, and that infectious laughter which seems to come from a very deep part of him, are very much who he is. He is never offensive, not even a tad bit imprudent. He never runs out of jokes and, if he does repeat them, he says them with as much passion and excitement as the first time.

But many times, really, what elicits so much laughter and joy from us is not so much the joke itself, but how he says it. On several occasions he will not even get to delivering his actual punch line, because he struggles to conceal his own laughter. How can one not find joy in someone who is elated even by his own jokes?

"Humor is most important in the life of a priest and in religion. We tend to take ourselves too seriously and lose perspective." This was his response when asked why he seemed to be thrilled anytime a joke was shared whether over meals or in greeting one another in the hallway. Like his good friend Pope Francis, Fr. Nico seems to know how central laughter, humor, and joy are in religious life, but also how it is not accidental. It requires a decision. As the pope says, it takes courage to be happy, because it takes courage to choose Christ and swim against the tide. Fr. Nico has taught us that to be a person of humor takes courage and a focus on what is truly of value: "We need to relativize ourselves and see that before God things are all relative and only love is supreme. The Pharisees can be a very serious bunch."

If there is anything Fr. Nico is serious with it is not wanting to be treated any differently from the rest of us. He loathes any special treatment. He always wants to be called plainly "Nico." (Of course, being rather disobedient Jesuits, all of us do give our former general special attention, but we do so discreetly.) He always stops to greet whomever he meets on the corridor—whether priest, scholastic, employee, or even the cats lying around Arrupe—and he does so with a smile, a gentle gaze, and—at least for the human beings—an occasional joke. His humility shows forth not only in our community but outside. He insisted on joining the Arrupe scholastics in their apostolate areas: a public hospital, a home for cancer patients, a center for indigent children with disabilities, or the many chapels and homes we visit in urban poor communities. And his manner of interacting with simple people was the same way he would speak and talk to anyone else. If I could enter into his prayers, I'd bet he relates with God in the same way. He was and is the same humble and truthful person all throughout.

Very soon Fr. Nico will be leaving us to go back to Japan. Arrupe will never be the same without him. The dining room or the chapel will never be the same without Fr Nico in his usual place eating or praying, laughing out loud or quietly smiling in prayer. For the past year we have gotten used to having this humble and happy Jesuit accompany us in our formation. And it will take some time to get used to not having him close, this "saint-next-door" who has mirrored for us God's presence simply by being as true to himself as he can. We will miss Fr. Nico's holy presence but what he taught us through his example will endure as long as we continue to be as true to ourselves and to our Lord as he has been true to us and to his God.

Robbie Paraan, SJ, belongs to the Society of Jesus. He is in his second year of theological studies and resides at the Arrupe International Residence.

Photo Credits: Harry Sunaryo, SJ



"HACKING" THE GOSPEL

MOST REV. HONESTO ONGTIOCO, D.D.

Editor's Note: This homily was delivered during LST's Holy Spirit Mass last 23 August 2017 at the St. Ignatius Oratory.

Rev. Fr. Jose Quilongquilong, President of Loyola School of Theology, distinguished professors, students of theology, staff of LST and guests. Being the bishop of the diocese where you are, allow me to welcome you all!

You are here at Loyola School of Theology not primarily to get a degree in theology or a diploma in whatever particular course or specialization you are taking but because of the man JESUS CHRIST. You desire to be enlightened more about Him in view of the mission ahead. And in our meager attempt at trying to understand Jesus, we hope to fall in love with Him. And in the end, as our gospel reading points out, understand that "No one knows the Father except the Son and to anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal Him" (Lk 10:22). Knowing the Father is our ultimate goal and purpose.

Do we not define theology as "*fides quaerens intellectum*?" Faith seeking understanding.

And who is this man we are trying to understand in faith? What does our faith proclaim about Him? Jesus Christ is the begotten Son of the Father born of Mary, the Immaculate Virgin.

The life of Jesus, His passion, death and resurrection is the source of hope amidst the hopelessness all around.

If we are to know, understand and love Jesus, the key to unlocking the mysteries of Jesus Incarnate is the Holy Spirit, who is love between the Father and the Son.

If we go through the Scriptures, we can see the actions of the Holy Spirit in three movements. The Holy Spirit illumines, purifies and inspires.

Illumination is simply defined as light that shines on something. If you are familiar with the painting of Caravaggio about the Conversion of St. Paul, he uses the style called *Chiaroscuro* that shows the scene illumined by a source of light that comes from outside the painting but is still a part of the whole picture. Everything is dark in the painting except for the light focused on the subject, in this case, St. Paul blinded by a bright light. It is because of this illumination amidst the darkness, the interplay of shadows and light, because of such contrast and focus on the illumination, we see a greater meaning. Yes, St. Paul was blinded by the bright light. But it is also because of it that he received the illumination, the understanding that he needed to recognize who Jesus really is. Our illumination in Jesus will be more of a journey rather than a destination. But we need to constantly remind ourselves during the journey that "all of us have this power, this ability, to see so much more, to see more than what is just physically present." In our study of theology, we can easily lose focus and not achieve the illumination needed.

Our illumination must always come from Jesus and His Spirit guided by the Magisterium of the Church. This requires a good amount of self-emptying, reading and praying so one can let go of our inflated self-regard, arrogant opinions and spiritual amnesia and the deafening noise all around.

These establish the beginnings of our illumination and rootedness in Jesus. If you are not illumined in this manner, how can you open the eyes of the blind? If you are not illumined by the Spirit, how can you lead? If you are not illumined, how can you dispel ignorance nor speak in behalf of the voiceless? Illumination, in the end, is our deep encounter and experience of God!

The second and third movement of the Holy Spirit is to purify and inspire us. In the Liturgy of Pentecost Sunday, before the Alleluia is sung, the Sequence as it is called, is either sung or recited. It honors the Holy Spirit as the poem declares: "Bending the stubborn heart and will.... Melting the frozen and warming the chill." The stubborn and frozen heart cannot understand Jesus at all. A melting and defrosting experience of the mind and heart is necessary. In the book of the Prophet Isaiah, two images of the Holy Spirit as the purifier are given to us: Fire and wind or breath of air. These two images on the Holy Spirit were used by Pope emeritus Benedict XVI in his Pentecost Sunday homily.

He said:"The First Reading and the Gospel of the Pentecost Sunday offer us two great images of the mission of the Holy Spirit. The reading from the Acts of the Apostles speaks of how, on the day of Pentecost, under the signs of a strong wind and fire, the Holy Spirit sweeps into the community of the disciples of Jesus who are in prayer, thus bringing the Church into being... The Holy Spirit gives understanding... the Spirit opens borders... Indeed, from the first moments the Holy Spirit created her as the Church of all peoples, she embraces the whole world, surmounts all distinctions of race, clas and nation; tears down all barriers and brings people together... Since the beginning the Church has been one, catholic and apostolic: this is her true nature and must be recognized as such. She is not holy because of her members' ability but because God Himself, with His Spirit, never ceases to create her, purify her, and sanctify her."

It's a lengthy quote but it helps us recognize the purification that we need to work on and the inspiration needed to accomplish it. The "fire" of the Holy Spirit purifies what has become polluted within each disciple, within the Church and our country as well. Our country today is polluted by political division due to the campaign against drugs by the present government. In the current bloody and deadly environment we're in, the recent death of the 17-year old Grade 11 student Kian Loyd De Los Santos, becomes a glaring truth of this division.

Thus we need the third movement of the Holy Spirit, inspiration, to contribute to our personal and national purification. The inspiration brought about by the gifts of the Holy Spirit as mentioned in the first reading today reminds us of this truth.

The pastoral letter issued by the Archbishop of Manila is a good point for reflection to all especially the LST

community. Cardinal Tagle points out the importance of coming together in dialogue but at the same time condemning the senseless killings taking place and that it must stop. Here in the Diocese of Cubao, we have started in some of our parishes working with UBAS (acronym for collaboration of local gov't and the Church), the barangay, police stations and city government through lines of action and coordination. We are not naïve to its complicated and at times slow and sometimes, exasperating lack of sincerity of some groups involved. But for us to be true to the purification that the Holy Spirit brings and the unity it established in the Church, we have to work on being a Church that embraces everyone, tears down barriers and labors on bringing people together. "Unity is what the Spirit brings." As we celebrate the Year of the Parish as a communion of communities, it is an important challenge for us to contribute to the effort. How can the LST community provide inspiration to our parishes toward building a communion of communities in the light of the extra judicial killings especially when persons and families go to the parishes and ask for protection and help? What illumination and inspiration can you provide as a theological learning community, reflecting on the word of God and how it affects our current situation?

To end, let me leave you an image that you can take home from this homliy, as you begin another year of theological studies. One of my priests in the diocese shared with me something he saw on the internet about a book that is soon to be published. The title of the book is HACKING THEOLOGY. Most of us know what hacking means. Sometime ago my email was hacked. My personal information was stolen, details of my personal identity was taken over by someone else, and the specific data about me was discovered by this persona and used it for his own purpose, mostly to extort money. That's what hacking can do!

As wrong and unethical hacking is, it's a very apropos and powerful image to use about what you need to do as you study theology and come to understand who it is you want to know deeper. To paraphrase Jesus, Go and hack the Gospel!

With the illuminatiin, purification and inspiration from the Holy Spirit, may you accept the challenges you discover in your hacking process. Pope Francis has done his own hacking the Gospel and puts it this way: The world needs men and women who are not closed in on themselves, but filled with the Holy Spirit. Closing oneself off from the Holy Spirit means not only a lack of freedom; it is a sin.

There are many ways one can close oneself off to the Holy Spirit: by selfishness for one's own gain; by rigid legalism—seen in the attitude of the doctors of the law to whom Jesus referred to as "hypocrites"; by neglect of what Jesus taught; by living the Christian life not as service to others but in pursuit of personal interests; and in so many other ways. The world needs the courage, hope, faith and perseverance of Christ's followers.

The world needs the fruits of the Holy Spirit: "love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal 5:22). The gift of the Holy Spirit has been bestowed upon the Church and upon each one of us, so that we may live lives of genuine faith and active charity, that we may sow the seeds of reconciliation and peace. Strengthened by the Spirit and His many gifts, may we be able to uncompromisingly battle against sin and corruption, devoting ourselves with patient perseverance to the works of justice and peace. AMEN. (Pope Francis, May 24, 2015, Radio Vaticana)

Bishop Ness Ongtioco received his Bachelor in Sacred Theology from LST in 1973 while residing at San José Seminary for his priestly formation. Ordained to the episcopate on 18 June 1998, he is currently the bishop of the Diocese of Cubao.



ALL I REALLY NEED TO KNOW, I LEARNED IN LST

Rev. Fr. Roberto Yap, SJ

Editor's Note: This homily was delivered during the LST Alumni Homecoming last 15 November 2017 at the Oratory of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

My brothers and sisters, today we come home to LST. We return home to our school. The etymology of the word, 'school,' from the Latin schola has various meanings: "intermission of work; leisure for learning; learned conversation; erudite debate; meeting place for teachers and students; disciples of a teacher ..." Does coming home to LST bring back memories of: intermission of work? leisure for learning? learned conversation? erudite debate?

Whatever our memories, surely we remember LST as a schola in the sense of 'meeting place for teachers and students, disciples of teachers.' Hence, it is proper and fitting that during this homecoming, we remember our LST teachers who taught us 15, 25, 30 years ago. Some of them are with us this evening. But allow me especially to mention some of those who have already gone home to the Lord: Fr Joe Smith, Fr Pete Sevilla, Fr Ed Hontiveros, Fr Carlos Abesamis, Fr Nil Guillemette, Fr Phil Calderone, Fr Jim Meehan, Fr Jack Schumacher, Fr Pedro de Achutegui, Fr Ralph Gehring, Fr Tom Green, Fr Gerry Healy, Fr Cal Poulin, Fr Archie Intengan. I invite you for a few moments now, silently to remember them and in the quiet of our hearts, murmur words of gratitude for them. Sa lahat ng aming mga propesor sa LST, maraming maraming salamat pò. Daghan kaayong salamat.

In 1986, a book was published which became a best seller, selling 7 million copies, titled "All I really need to know, I learned in Kindergarten" by Robert Fulghum. As the theme of my homecoming reflection, I would like to borrow and paraphrase Fulghum's title, "All I really need to know as a minister of the Gospel, I learned in LST." LST schooled us to become ministers of the Gospel, serving Christ and his Church. I would like to evoke three images that LST espoused for her students: to be persons for others, persons of prayer, persons of joy. Hardly new images; still, images that need revitalizing with the help of Pope Francis, because they are frightfully important for the spirituality of our people during these trying times, the success of our ministry, a resurgence of vocations, and our deep happiness.

The first image: LST taught us to be persons for others. We aspire always to be for others. As with Jesus, we strive that

this be the motivating force of our entire existence. You may remember the famed German Lutheran Dietrich Bonhoeffer, hanged in 1945 in a concentration camp for conspiring to overthrow Hitler. In his letters from prison, Bonhoeffer spoke of Jesus as 'the man for others.' And in parallel fashion he wrote that the Church is truly the Church only when it exists for others. Just as Jesus lived his life completely for others (even unto death on the cross), so the Church is to serve God by serving the world of need.

We are called to be for 'others' in the widest sense possible – in our relationships not only to humans but also to all of creation. Love every human person as an image of God, a child of God, like another self, especially the poor and the downtrodden. Touch each created 'thing,' each reality that is not God or the human person, with respect, with reverence, even with awe, as a gift of God not to be clutched possessively but shared generously. In Laudato Si', Pope Francis teaches "how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society and interior peace (LS#10)." And Papa Francisco challenges us to hear "both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor (LS#49)."

The second image: LST taught us to be persons of prayer. Of course, we all are or try to be persons of prayer. I do not simply mean a mediator between God and God's images, indispensable as this is – one who, in the age-old saying, "brings God down to men, men up to God." I do not even mean the symbolism for priests in the words of consecration: Jesus took us, blessed us, broke us, and gave us. I am much more concerned for a personal relationship, a relationship of love, a relationship that is a living experience, a relationship of ceaseless living in God's presence. So rich an experience of the living God that it cannot be imprisoned, must burst the bonds of my individual self, tells others mutely or eloquently that I love God with all my soul and strength, love the crucified images of Christ as he himself loves them.

Persons who pray or more accurately, persons who try to pray ... who struggle to pray. Because genuine discipleship is expecting the unexpected, responding to the unexpected in total openness to a Spirit who like Augustine's Beauty is ever ancient, ever new. Our God is a God of surprises. Mary, our Blessed Mother lived her life as an open-ended yes to life as it unfolds. The mother of Jesus reveals to us that our spirituality, our life with God is a fascinating adventure in which we can predict only two things with certainty: one, the Holy Spirit will ceaselessly surprise us, and two, however unexpected or even crucifying the event, God will always be there.

The third image: LST taught us to be persons of joy. In his talk to his brother Jesuits at the 36th General Congregation last October 2016, Pope Francis' first counsel was, "to ask intensely for consolation." Jorge Mario Bergoglio said, "In the Exercises, Ignatius asks his companions to contemplate 'the task of consolation' as something specific to the Resurrected Christ (SpEx 224) ... (the task) to console the Christian faithful and to help them in their discernment so that the enemy of human nature does not distract us from joy: the joy of evangelizing, the joy of the family, the joy of the Church, the joy of creation ... Let us never be robbed of that joy, neither through discouragement when faced with the great measure of evil in the world and misunderstandings among those who intend to do good, nor by letting it be replaced with vain joys that are easily bought and sold in any shop. ... Asking and begging for consolation is our main service of joy." Pope Francis exhorts us that in the midst of difficulties, discouragement, misunderstandings, and adversity, we should ask intensely for consolation.

Saint Ignatius describes consolation as "every increase of hope, faith, and charity and all interior joy. (SpEx #316)" Bergoglio elucidates, "From this interior place comes the strength of the Spirit that guides, frees, and renews. We are called to be servants of the joy of the Gospel. And this joy of an explicit proclamation of the Gospel – by means of the preaching of the faith and the practice of justice and mercy – is what moves us to go the peripheries."

As lifelong learners trained by LST, slowly but surely we are learning that joy is different from pleasure or fun which depend on many conditions – good health, a good job, a happy family, lots of possessions, power and prestige. The only condition for joy is the presence of God. Joy is an inner sense of God's presence and God's abiding love for us. It is a profound belief that God will have the last word; it is a still point in the storm of life.Joy depends on the confidence that God is present even in pain and deprivation. As Pope Francis beautifully wrote in Evangelii Gaudium, "Joy adapts and changes but it always endures, even as a flicker of light born of our personal certainty that, when everything is said and done, we are infinitely loved. (EG #6)"

Persons for others, persons of prayer, persons of joy – such is our privilege and our responsibility as ministers of the Gospel educated by Loyola School of Theology. Indeed, "all we really need to know, we learned at LST." To LST, thank you. For LST, thanks be to God.

Fr. Bobby Yap, SJ finished his Bachelor in Sacred Theology from LST in 1992. He currently serves as the President of Xavier University—Ateneo de Cagayan.



DOING THEOLOGY IN THE "THIRD WORLD"

Rev. Fr. Alexander Zammit, MSSP

The memory of the scorching heat of April upon my arrival in the Philippines, while hopelessly looking for familiar faces waiting for me at the airport, is probably the clearest memory of my first weeks in the country. Looking for familiarity is probably an immediate instinct when "otherness" hits us in the face. It took me some quiet time to stop looking for familiarity and to start embracing the newness and uniqueness of the Philippines.After spending four years living and studying here, I find myself in a privileged space to appreciate the view.

Coming from Malta, a small European country the size of Quezon City, I was confronted many times at the beginning of my experience at LST with the question:

> "Why on earth would you come to the Philippines to study theology, when you have so many well-established universities closer to home?"

I admit this question haunted me for a while. However, I can now appreciate how important it was for me to "leave home" in order to do theology. Upon reflection, there is something subtly similar between our claim in theology to articulate in human words the indescribable mystery of God in our life, and the force of impact of being uprooted and rooted again on the other side of the world. After the struggle and resistance, we find ourselves on our knees, touching ground. Like Jacob after his night-long wrestle, we feel blessed but still "limping" from the experience.

What is it about my experience in the Philippines that has enriched me and my studies beyond my expectations? If I had to sum it all up in one overarching experience, I would say that the Philippines has invited me to hold in a fruitful tension seemingly irreconcilable realities. I have found a culture that has taught me how to hold in a more fruitful tension, honesty and harmony, justice and mercy, deep-seated hope in tragic narratives, and hidden beauty in the midst of poverty. I would consider this fruitful tension

as a necessary ingredient to do a more holistic theology.

Living in the Philippines and being given the privilege to engage meaningfully with its people and their stories, has allowed me to witness what values Filipinos hold in the highest regard.

Such values like hospitality, a deep sense of community and resilience have enriched my theological journey, and allowed me to find God who embraces His people in the gentle manner of a compassionate mother, or the suffering Son in whom Filipinos are able to see God as a faithful companion who shares in their sufferings.

Studying theology in the Philippines has made me more sensitive to how the mystery of God is truly inseparable from the mystery of our life. I have come to see how God is more than just the object of my theological studies, He is a God who is at work in our midst. I have come to learn that doing theology is to contemplate with child-like wonder how the people of God experience Him concretely, even and most especially in the most dramatic moments of their life. In a few words, I have been given the grace to experience a truly incarnate theology.

The inescapable manifestations of poverty in the Philippines, specifically in Manila where I have lived and studied, had a considerable impact on me. I have to admit that witnessing poverty so closely triggered in me on various occasions a sense of protest, anguish and disbelief at how human beings could live in such a state of misery. There were feelings and questions which would not have been triggered had I been studying in a context more familiar to home, where poverty more generally hides in plain sight. For once, however, I have had the opportunity to escape the almost inescapable temptation of seeing myself as a "provider" of sorts, and the poor as mere recipients. My limited experiences with the poor were a very humbling theological class, where I found myself being taught by God's people and not the other way round. These encounters have brought me to ask myself how the poor can experience God and can speak of Him as a Savior despite or rather because of their situation.

My more direct experience within LST has been especially enriching because of a variety of cultures that come together as faculty and students. What has made my theological formation "Catholic" i.e. universal, is that of discovering how one shared faith, expressed in a unique manner by every culture, and how no single image or concept is enough to express our rich theological and spiritual tradition. In the midst of such diversity I have come to value more the attitude of attentive listening before jumping in with my own experience or perspective. Allowing "otherness" to simply be "other", and gradually becoming grateful for it, is an attitude that I have received as a gift in these past years, and I carry it with me on my way back home.

My last months at LST have been a kind of journey in retrospect, like taking a few steps back to look at a canvas in its entirety. This canvas is not and shall not be framed at the end of my theological studies, because at LST I have come to see that theology is for life.

As I embark on my journey back to Malta, it feels like leaving "home" again. I can humbly say that that which looked so foreign to me now feels somehow "familiar," to such an extent that I can carry it gratefully in my heart as an experience of grace.

Fr. Alex Zammit, MSSP is from Malta and belongs to the Missionary Society of St. Paul. He recently defended his thesis titled "A Matter of Grace: Imago Dei from the Perspective of Corporeality and Other Essays."



PHILOSOPHY, THEOLOGY & CURA PERSONALIS

Adrian Jeric Peña

"This is not a philosophy school, but a formation house for those interested to become a diocesan priest." These were the words I got from the secretary of San José Seminary when I started inquiring about the application process for admission there back in 2015. Her reply made me wonder: did I give off the vibe or impression that I was more interested and eager to study Philosophy than to be formed as a future diocesan priest? So I had to explain to her that, indeed, I was hoping to be admitted as a seminarian and not simply as a philosophy student. In fact, if given a choice, then I would rather proceed to theology right away than to endure philosophy. But I knew then that Philosophy is one of the crosses that I had to embrace after deciding to leave law school and enter the seminary.

I entered San José Seminary in 2016 under the "special philosophy" program. It is San José's program for those who have already completed a Bachelor's degree and would just need a few philosophy and other preparatory courses to be able to do theology. After two years, I never thought that this program would really live up to its name of being "special." And as I look back, I think being special—or sui generis—has been the over-all theme of my formation so far.

I first felt the "special-ness" of my formation during my first semester of studies in Loyola School of Theology (LST). At that time, there was no Pre-Theological Studies (PTS) program. It was simply unheard of and LST had no "proper" philosophy program to speak of. Given the philosophy units I needed to complete, I was just then asked to take up elective courses that are somehow philosophy-centered like John Paul II's Acting Person and the one called The Philosophical Plausibility of Christianity. The experience of taking these courses brought me to the intersection of philosophy and theology. While this sounds intellectually satisfying, the learning curve proved to be tough. I

immediately felt the inadequacy of my prior dealings with philosophy back in college. I did not have enough foundation to be able to competently use philosophical concepts to discuss or explain theology. But the saying that "philosophy is the handmaid of theology" proved to be true at that time. These classes were safe spaces where one could easily philosophize about God without igniting a seemingly-endless debate on whether or not God exists. One also need not feel guilty talking about doctrines, dogmas, or making biblical references in these courses because, ultimately, the goal was to show where philosophy and theology meet.

The second semester brought me yet another feeling of "special-ness." After being in a dilemma on the future of my intellectual formation, the truth had finally dawned on my formators, the LST administration, and myself. I cannot simply live off LST's philosophy-centered elective courses to be able to complete the admission requirements for Bachelor in Sacred Theology (STB). I had to move. I found myself in the college department of Ateneo de Manila University to take up mainstream philosophy courses—from the historical survey courses to other branches like epistemology. I thought that being in a class with philosophy majors and taking the usual philosophy courses would bring some normalcy in my student life. But, lo and behold, being enrolled both in LST and Ateneo made me feel the opposite. This arrangement made me sprint from LST to the college department just so I could make it to my classes on time. And mind you, being in a class full of young, eager, and intelligent students pushed me out of my comfort zone. I had to learn the rigors and discipline of doing hardcore philosophy in Ateneo—from reading voluminous primary texts, coming up with comprehensive papers, taking oral examinations, and enduring terror-but-revered professors. I had to come into terms with the fact that I could not simply be mediocre and act as if I was merely completing units in philosophy. I had to step up and perform like I was a philosophy major full of grit in order to meet the expectations of my professors. Despite feeling that I was spread too thinly that time, the whole experience was rewarding. I had a foretaste of Ateneo's philosophy program, which is considered as one of its premier programs. And more importantly, it made me appreciate philosophy as a discipline, as an end in itself and not merely as means.

The opening of the PTS program signaled my full return to LST. And yet my "special-ness" remained. Some may find it odd to learn that a theological school is offering courses in philosophy. Other may see it as redundant because the nearby Ateneo has a very good philosophy program.

> But LST has a distinct mission of its own and offers a unique flavor of philosophy. This is very evident in my courses right now where it is refreshing to see that reason and revelation are not at odds with each other but are actually intertwined. The praxis is to employ philosophical reasoning and language in order to look into theology.

It is using philosophy to make better sense and better grasp of what has been revealed to us. It is faith seeking understanding.

As I end my philosophy studies this May, I could not help but be amused at how my intellectual formation had also been very much Ignatian-inspired so far. I may have shifted from one program to another, transferred from LST to Ateneo and back again, but one thing is for sure, this is what I needed. I realized that there was simply no cookie-cutter or one-size-fits-all formation program. What I experienced firsthand was that my formators, LST administration, and myself labored to come up with a "special" program—something that is actually responsive to my formation needs. Some may call this "special philosophy" while others may consider it as "pre-theology", but what I experienced is certainly cura personalis—the care for the individual—at its best.

Adrian Jeric Peña is a second year pre-theology student of LST and residing at San José Seminary for his priestly formation. He belongs to the Diocese of Kalookan.



YES, 'TIL THE VERY END

Roel Joe Abonal

Editor's Note: This piece was an undelivered eulogy for Fr. Moises Mel Campo, Jr. of the Diocese of Borongan who died in a tragic car accident on 13 Febraury 2018.

After a three-hour ride from Borongan to Guiuan, I felt a sigh of relief since I have conquered once again the bumps and humps of the road. The hunger and uneasiness I felt during the ride faded away as I saw the town plaza, the busy people finding their way home and the smell of the air that shouts "You are in Guiuan! You are home!"

As usual, it would be a sacred task to report to important people signifying that I am home. First, to my parents. Second, to my parish priest. After leaving my things at home and having shared some snacks with them, I took a shower, changed my clothes and brought my soutane with me. I went to the temporary church we had after Yolanda struck down our beloved one. I hurried up to the rectory and looked at the white board where the daily assignments were posted. Good thing, it will be Fr. Moses, the newly-installed Moderator of the parish team ministry, who will celebrate mass.

I waited for Fr. Moses from where servers would usually sit near the altar. Viewed my watch, 5:13 on it. Seconds later, he stepped down from the stairs from the parish office. The sacristan readied to ring the bell. I stood up in anticipation. But instead of processing immediately to the altar, Fr. Moses first knelt down at the kneeler on the side of the altar, held his hands together and closed his eyes. I froze for a moment not only because I felt humiliated since I was the only one standing but also since I saw a deeply prayerful man, a priest of Christ getting himself ready to meet the Word-Made-Flesh.

After the Mass, I went upstairs to formally say hi and of course, report. And to my surprise, again, he invited me to have dinner with them. Fr. Bernard and Fr. Kim, the members of the team ministry, started to come out of their rooms in time for dinner. Fr. Moses asked for another plate to be placed for me. I felt unworthy and at the same time, honored. The dinner conversation, the first I had on that seemingly sacred and untouchable table, was so memorable. The priests asked me about my stay in the seminary. Am I doing well? Am I giving headaches to my formators?

How are my co-seminarians? How is our community? Then they would usually talk of the day's activities in the parish and also surmise some funny moments from the past worth sharing at the moment. After supper, I started collecting my things and bade goodbye. But, Fr. Moses asked me, "RJ, do you want to stay here in the rectory? We have a room designated for seminarians. You can use it." It was the surprise of all surprises of that day. Who would have thought that I'd be invited to stay and eventually live in the rectory? As a minor seminarian, I just saw our kuyas then stay in one of the rooms and we mga sagutyo, little ones, simply don't. And now, this time, I was offered to do so. To my excitement, I said yes, went back to our house, gathered my things and went back to the rectory. I didn't mind how hard the plywood bed was nor how the mosquitoes feasted on me nor how I would brush my teeth the next morning since I forgot to bring my toiletries. What mattered to me then was the new priest in town actually showed care and concern to me, how he invited me to not only see and look but most important to share and take part in the life of the parish.

On that fateful day, 13 February 2018, a Tuesday, with Basyang's tail delivering howling winds and unceasing rains to my home province, eve of Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day, two shocking news hit me hard. First, Fr. Edmel Raagas, on his way home to Guiuan, driving his car slammed to an electric post. His car immediately caught fire and was locked to his seat. His left body was already burning when a bystander handed him a knife so he can cut himself from his stuck seatbelt. With second and third degree burns, he still managed to run for his life away from the burning car. Help came more than 30 minutes later.

Second, more or less an hour apart, Fr. Moses was hit by a rushing dump truck along a slippery curve. His car was pushed aside. The roof blown away. His seat was shoved to the back. He sustained an injury in the head, popped his left eye out, deformed his cheek. Such injury caused him his life. The truck driver with no intention obviously to help him whatsoever immediately turned the wheel and stepped on the gas. He abandoned the truck in a remote barangay and left no trace as to where to find him.

It was a sad day for our parish. It was a sad day for the Diocese. It was a sad day for me. As much as I would like to join the Mardi Gras with the community, I couldn't help but be filled with much pain and sorrow and grief. The men I call fathers in my second home have been placed in danger with one taken by death. I cannot fathom how this could happen in one day.

> I cannot understand why Fr. Moses. I cannot reconcile how a good priest, a kindhearted pastor, a simple man who just turned 50 years old can be taken from this world just that. There were a lot of questions running inside my head, conflicting questions which sucked the life out of my marrow.

As I cried in the darkness of my room, I started recalling him. I still could remember his voice. I still could remember his face, how he laughed, how he prayed, how he told us his jokes, how he turned serious when important matters were discussed.

In one of the wakes for Fr. Moses in their home, I was asked by Fr. Mike Gadicho to give the sharing during the Mass. He told me that he already had exhausted everything he could say and all the tears he could shed. And so, I obliged. But with much trembling and fear. I shared with the people gathered three takeaways I have as I reflected on Fr. Moses' life.

First. He was truly a father. I still can remember how after the initiation as a first year in San Jose, I texted him and told him that it was over and I have been "baptized" as a Joséfino. He replied welcoming me to the Joséfino life and tradition and congratulating me for enduring the initiation. And whenever there are significant moments in the seminary, I would oftentimes text him. *"Father, tapos na ang finals"* to which he would reply *"Congrats! Tapos na ang mga gabi ng pagsusunog ng kilay."* I always ask him about events in the parish and one time he said, "Uli na ngadi, patron na!" (Come home, it's already fiesta over here) to which I would reply *"Sige la padre, ligis la anay ak yana. Next week pa ak mauli"* (It's ok Father, I'll miss the fiesta this year. But I'm coming home next week). To all my text messages, he would reply which for me is truly a sign of care and concern. Even if I was away from the parish, he saw to it that I was doing well with my stay in the seminary. That is why, oftentimes, since we were the first two to eat breakfast, he would always ask me about how I was doing in the seminary, what was new about San José, how is the community and many more. When my maternal grandma died, he told me not to worry about the masses to be said, he would take care of it. He asked instead about how Mom and Papa were doing and told me to just look after them and help them in whatever way I could. I was also moved at how he showed care to the people serving in the rectory. At one time, he told us over dinner that the sacristans whose education he sustains would go with him to Tacloban so they could at least be bought new pairs of pants and sets of t-shirts for the new school year. His fatherly concern has inspired me to become more appreciative of the fatherly aspect of the priesthood. That we do not father one single person but to everyone we are.

Second. He loved his family so much. I noticed in him that each time opportunity allows him to do so, he would go home to Llorente. Our priests in the parish have this days off and he would take that time to spend it with his mom and his siblings. He would even still manage to drive his nephews to the seminary during arrivals or go to Tacloban to watch movies with them during vacations. This example of his has truly taught me a lot. Back then, I thought that when one becomes a seminarian and even a priest, one has to really and literally abandon his family. But no. With Fr. Moses, his family was important. They play a crucial role in his ministry.

> I believe that his source of strength apart from God is his family. And indeed, when parish life becomes toxic and problematic sometimes, we run to our families for consolation. When we feel lost and lowly, we return to our families to recover our sense of identity. When we feel exhausted and fed up, we go to our families to catch breath and redisover some meaning.

And rightly so with Fr. Moses, his last stop before that life-taking curve along the highway was their home in Llorente. The last people who saw him alive were his family.

Third. To appreciate the simple joys of life. Fr. Moses was not a complicated man. In fact, I never saw him rattle when we have parish events. He always had this calm demeanor. That's why his classmates in San Jose described him as *"magaan na katrabaho"* (easy to work with). Perhaps this attitude comes from his deep appreciation of the realities of life with all its sorrows and joys. For him, mas simple, mas maganda. His joys come in small packages. Just to have the sun shining brightly in the morning, he was already happy to drive his bike to the farthest barrios of Guiuan. Just to know the latest movie, he would find time to watch it in Robinsons and share the story with delight to us when he returns. Just to have simple, lighthearted conversations over lunch and dinner, he slept peacefully for a goodnight's rest.

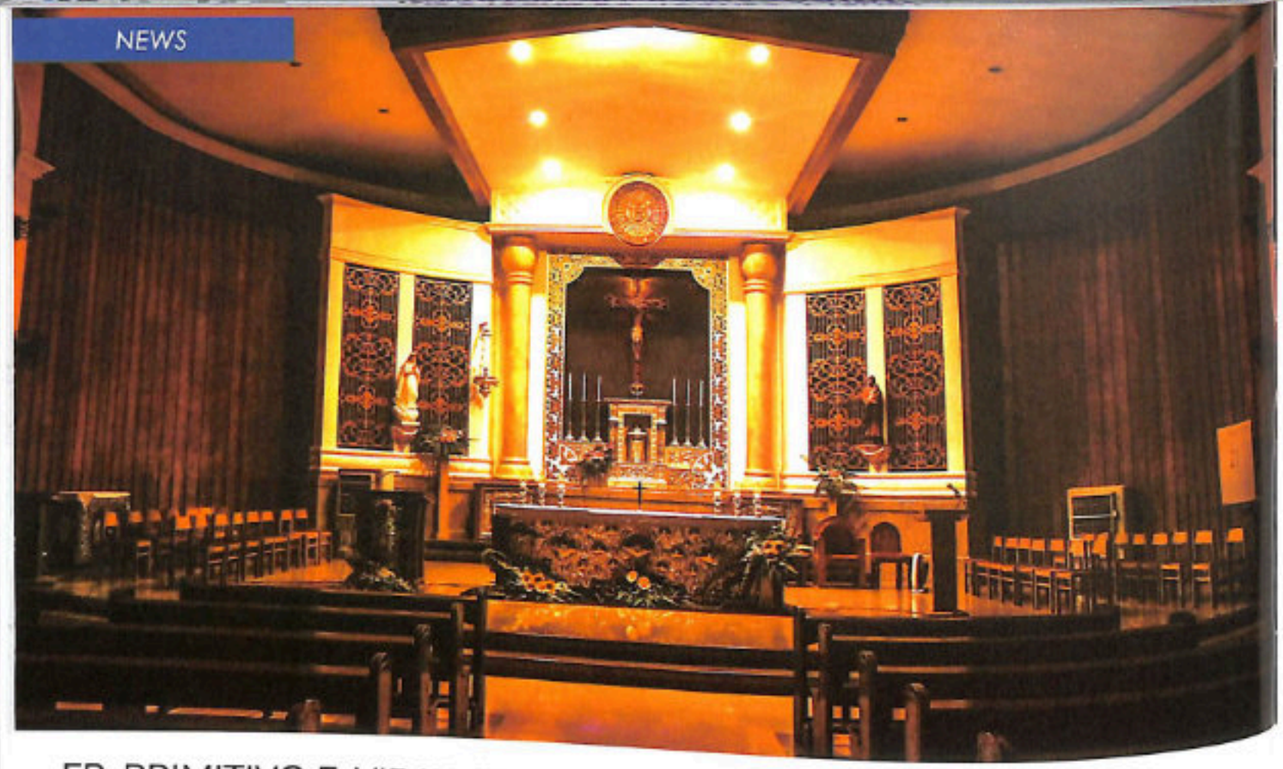
During Fr. Moses' funeral, there was no dry eye in the church. It was my first time to see personally my bishop cry and question God why. We were all in tears as he bestowed the final blessing with a cracked voice. And from then on, I knew, it was really hard to let go. But we must. As the people of my parish grieve and the whole Diocese mourns, we remember Fr. Moses with a grateful heart. We thank him for the 22 years of selfless service to the Church as a priest. We thank him for the legacy he has given us. I thank him for the overwhelming support, the fatherly guidance, the trust and confidence he gave me and the love and care he generously showed. With him gone, I have now one less listener in my radio programs.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines has declared this year as the Year of the Clergy and Consecrated Persons. Perhaps, it is good to reflect on the life of our pastors and those who work tirelessly for God's people. Their selfless service and undying commitment are true treasures of the nation and of the Church. By choosing to side with the least, lost and last of society, they are truly reliving Christ's mission of embracing all, of welcoming everyone, of accepting each of us. Their commitment to the Good Shepherd is worth emulating, worth thanking. Their love for the sheep finds it source in their love for the Good Shepherd no matter what it cost them. Until the very end. Yes, 'til the very end.

+Fr. Moises Mel Campo, Jr. received his Bachelor in Sacred Theology from LST in 1994 while residing at San José Seminary. He was Moderator of the Team Ministry of the Immaculate Conception Parish in Guiuan, Diocese of Borongan until his death on 13 February 2018.

Fr. Edmel Raagas received his Bachelor in Sacred Theology from LST in 2014 while residing at San José Seminary. He is currently undergoing rehabilitation from the injuries he sustained from the accident. He is a member of the Parish Team Ministry of the Immaculate Conception Parish in Guiuan, Diocese of Borongan.

RJ Abonal is currently a second year theology student of LST while residing at San José Seminary for his priestly formation. He belongs to the Diocese of Borongan, Eastern Samar.



FR. PRIMITIVO E. VIRAY, SJ 12TH PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR OF THE PHILIPPINE JESUITS

Appointed by the Superior General of the Society of Jesus Rev. Fr. Arturo Sosa, SJ as the 12th Provincial in the post-Restoration period, Fr. Primitivo E. Viray, Jr., SJ took the helm of the Philippine Province last 17 November 2017.

A Cebuano, Fr. Jun (as he is fondly called) did basic education at Sacred Heart School for Boys, Cebu, and obtained a bachelor's degree in Business Economics at the University of the Philippines before entering the Society in 1984. As a Jesuit, he completed his M.A. in Rural Development Studies in 1998 and his doctorate in Development Studies in 2003, both at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, U.K.

Fr. Jun's most recent assignments before becoming Provincial were as President of Ateneo de Naga University, Superior of the Jesuits in Naga, and Chairman of the Jesuit Higher Education Commission. In the early stages of his Jesuit life, he was Assistant Director and later Director of the Candidacy program in both Haggerty Hall (1989-1991 in Cagayan de Oro) and Arvisu House (1992-1994 in Quezon City). Ordained to the priesthood in 1995, he served as Assistant Parish Priest and later Parish Priest in Ipil, Zamboanga Sibugay. He then taught Economics at the Ateneo de Zamboanga University, where he became the Local Superior and, from 2006-2009, was the Delegate of Regents. After Zamboanga, Fr. Jun became the Rector of Loyola House of Studies, functioning too as the Delegate for Formation and Vice-Superior of the Theologians sub community.

In an interview conducted a few days before his installation, Fr. Jun was asked about what he would bring into his mininstry as provincial considering all his previous assignments, as well as about his tentative vision for the Jesuits and their apostolates in the next five years or so. Portions of that interview are reprinted with permission for the LST community to get to know Fr. Jun better.

On what he would bring with him from his previous assignments: "My experience of being able to dream with people, to walk with them, and to be able to plan with them so that we have a common vision, is something that I think I'll continue to do as Provincial with our men, with the different individual Jesuits, as well as the Jesuit friends in ministries. I think those are important things. Of course, as I said earlier, one does not bring simply a few things, but I think one brings one's total self... [For example, when] you are preparing a homily, you would think that you are reading certain references from scripture scholars or some commentaries. But in truth, when one prepares it, one brings one's total self into the reflection of past experiences; everything goes into the preparation of a homily. So, I think that is the same way into whatever work that we are given: all our experience, all of our past, and our learning, do come into play when we're doing that."

> On his tentative vision for the Jesuits and their apostolates: "I think there are many guideposts already in place as to where the province is going. I will certainly not overturn the province roadmap that was crafted by the province but we'll continue to push for that, though we are quite aware that the province roadmap is as well very tentative. We are trying to get there.

Let me just say that my own...very personal reading [of the] GC 36...documents, [is the striking] call for a renewal of Jesuit life. That was really very clear in the pre-GC 36 and again in the GC 36 documents.

The question is:

- "What does the renewal of Jesuit life mean for the Society as a whole and for the Philippine province [and its ministries] in particular?"
- "How are we to renew our Jesuit life [and the lives of our partners-in-mission]?"
- "How do we go about it?"

And of course, Pope Francis in his exhortations to all of us also says that we need to continue to discern. Again that's our gift of discernment so that we can push to the frontiers again, to row into the deep as GC 36 says. But we need to pray—I think very hard—to try to find concrete ways by which we will renew our Jesuit life, renew our lifestyle, and renew our commitments to where the spirit is calling us. Will we be continuing certain ministries or shall we begin new ones in spite of our diminishing manpower? All of these are very challenging questions but I am optimistic that if we start with trying first to pray hard and to discern where the Lord calls us in terms of a renewal of our own Jesuit life, [then we can't go wrong with prayers]. That is my simple take on it." (See http://bit.ly/2Dr4EyY for the full text of his interview.)

FR. ANTONIO F. MORENO, SJ PRESIDENT, JESUIT CONFERENCE OF ASIA PACIFIC

In a letter dated 22 April 2017, the Jesuit Superior General Fr. Arturo Sosa, SJ, appointed Fr. Antonio F. Moreno, SJ to succeed Fr Mark Raper as the next President of the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific. Fr. Tony, as he is fondly called, is the third in a string of Philippine provincials to be assigned to a region-wide or universal post within the Society of Jesus, after Fr. Daniel Huang, SJ (General Counselor and Regional Assistant for Asia Pacific) and Fr. Jose Cecilio Magadia, SJ (General Counselor for Formation). In the same letter conveying his decision, the Fr. General expressed his gratitude to the Philippine Province and asked that its members accept his decision "in the spirit of generosity and trust in God's Providence," further adding that "[the] fact that the Society relies so much on the Philippine Province at this time is surely an indication of the maturity and quality of the Province, which is itself the product of so many fine missionaries from other Provinces who were sent to, began and built up the Philippine Province."

Ordained in 1993, Fr. Tony taught briefly at St John Vianney Theological Seminary and did pastoral work in Culion, Palawan which at one time was the world's largest leper colony ministered to by the Jesuit missionaries and SPC sisters. After that, he served as Assistant to the Novice Master for three years. Immediately after his assignment at the novitiate, he went to study in the United Kingdom spending five and a half years completing a doctorate in Development Studies focusing on the socio-political engagement of the Church with post-authoritarian Philippine society.

Prior to becoming the Provincial in 2013, Fr. Tony held the presidency of the Ateneo de Zamboanga University for six years. Before that, he was appointed in 2005 as the Dean of Arts and Sciences and Vice President for Social Development at the Xavier University, Cagayan de Oro.

Fr. General Sosa has indicated that he now wants the Presidents to be increasingly engaged in the discernment and planning for the whole Society of Jesus. As the new JCAP president, Fr. Tony will be working with the major superiors in the Jesuit Conference on implementing the decrees of the 36th General Congregation.

THEOLOGICAL HOURS

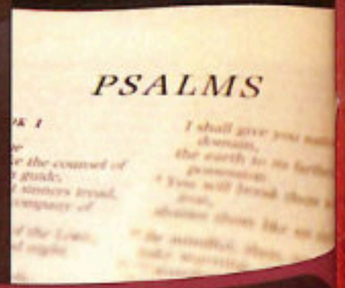


Living Together with Muslims: A Journey towards the Other
30 August 2017

In an engaging personal narrative of living as a Jesuit in Turkey, Fr. Jean-Marc Balhan, S.J. told various pieces of his daily experience; in doing so, he led the students and guests of LST toward different insights on dealing with similarities and differences as the foundations of everyday encounter and dialogue.

Shaped by Song: The Transformative Power of the Psalms
6 September 2017

Fr. Francis Alvarez, S.J. explored the intersection between biblical theology and various educational theories in religious education as he showed that the Psalms, more than as verses found in bookmarks or in the pages of the Divine Office, tells us more about ourselves and our hopes and innermost desires. Ultimately, as Fr. Francis concluded, the Psalms are "holdingenvironments" that lead us to take a look at our lives and put some aspects of it into question,toward transformative thinking and learning and thus a life that is more attuned to the self in relation to others and to God.



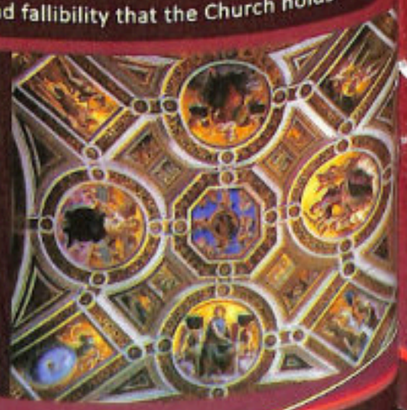


Believing vs. / & Thinking? Do we have permission to engage in critical thinking with the Church?
20 September 2017

Through the use of technology for more effective learning, Fr. Johnny Go, S.J. answered the age-old question of the possibility of thinking with (as opposed to "against") the Church and Her Magisterium. Fr. Go illustrated various ways of understanding the relationship between faith and reason, and then proceeded to the conclusion that critical thinking is not only allowed as believers, but also, and more importantly, necessary for believing. However, it must be stressed that, since the Church is a believing and thinking community, one must also note that there is a proper attitude toward questioning and engaging the elements and articles of our faith, depending on the degrees of certainty and fallibility that the Church holds.

Raphael's Stanza della Signatura: The Great Conversation
25 October 2017

The significance of and the genius behind Pope Julius II's library, which eventually became the room where papal documents are signed and sealed, were elaborately discussed by Fr. Richard Edward Lamoreaux, A.A., one of the leading scholars on religious art. He walked the audience of the LST through the details that make it up and the relations that exist between details. He pointed out that the whole room is in fact a great summary of the relationship between faith and reason, which culminates and reaches its fullness in Christ as experienced, celebrated, and remembered in the Eucharistic bread and wine.



THE "WOMEN" TRILOGY



For the second semester, three Theological Hour sessions were focused on women and the Christian faith. Women Doing Theology, held on 31 January 2018, was a panel discussion on the role of women in the Church's theological enterprise of the Church. The members of the panel were Agnes Brazal, Ph. D., of De La Salle University, Patricia Lambino Ph. D., of the Ateneo de Manila University's Formation Institute for Religious Education (FIRE) Program, Bernardita Dianzon, F.S.P., S.Th.D. and Helen Graham, M.M., Ph.D., both of Loyola School of Theology. These four tackled certain topics such as the gift that women can bring in theology and the need for more participation in the hierarchy by women, among others. A brief response and reaction was then given by Dr. Edna Zapanta-Manlapaz, PhD of Sacred Springs Dialogue Institute of Spirituality and Sustainability.

This was followed by a session on The Divine Feminine in the Book of Wisdom, given by Rev. Fr. Rogel Anecito L. Abais, S.J., S.Th.D. Cand., the Vice President for Academic Affairs of the LST and Academic Dean of San José Seminary, on 21 February 2018. He elaborated the rich characterization of the figure of Wisdom (Hokhmah / Sophia) in the book of Wisdom and how it influenced the early Church in her thought and worship. A reaction and elaboration by Dr. Brazal, on the equivalence of Logos and Sophia in Christ, followed.

The last Theological Hour was sponsored by the Emmanuel Mission Community through Jocelyn Martin, Ph. D. of the Ateneo de Manila University's English Department. Dr. Marc Timmermans, STD, of the Jesuit Theological Institute at Brussels, Belgium, gave a talk on Jesus and the Feminine Genius in the Gospel of John. With St. John Paul II's Mulieris Dignitatem as a starting point, he elaborated an understanding of women based on Jesus' encounters with women in the Gospel of John.

These three were very meaningful intellectual and pastoral discussions, meant to foster theological reflection on women, femininity, and the participation of women in the Church.

NEWSBITS



The LST community gathered to have the Holy Spirit mass in the LHS oratory. Bp. Honesto Ongtioco, DD of the Diocese of Cubao was the main preside and homilist, with some faculty members concelebrating (read: Hacking the Gospel). In the mass, the faculty members also professed their faith and swore an oath of fidelity to teach in accord to the Church.
The Student Council Executive board for SY 2017-18 were also inducted in office. After the mass, a simple lunch and an acquaintance party followed. **23 AUGUST 2017**



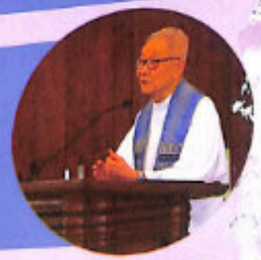
Some LST Students went to Sitio Sandugo in UP Campus, QC for an interaction and outreach with Lumads and other Philippine minorities. Bai Aida, a Bagobo from Southern Mindanao, shared about her experiences and struggles. They also interacted with some students of Save Our Schools Network. This activitiy was made possible by the Social Advocacy committee of LST.
18 SEPTEMBER 2017



As part of Seasons of Creation, a prayer service led by Fr. Joe Quilongquilong, LST President, was held in the Laudato Si Terrain, at 10:30 in the morning. Seasons of Creation is a program spearheaded by Sacred Springs to promote awareness for the care of our common home. The prayer service echoed the main elements of Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si: communal responsibility for the Earth and God's goodness manifesting in Creation. **27 SEPTEMBER 2017**



Fr. Romeo Intengan, SJ: Doctor, Former Provincial Superior, Political Activist, Moral Theologian, Jesuit. He joined the Creator the morning on this day. Wake masses were held in memory of him from 10 to 13 October in the LHS Oratory. Relatives and friends came to pay their respects and remember their memories of him. **10 OCTOBER 2017**



A Eucharistic celebration was celebrated to celebrate the Centennial of the Miracle in Fatima. Fr. Jose Quilongquilong, SJ was the main presider and Fr. Catalino Arevalo, SJ gave the homily. After the mass, the image of Our Lady of Fatima was venerated publicly. **11 OCTOBER 2017**



LST Students held their own Living Rosary in the Cardinal Sin Center, 10:30am. The theme is "The Mysteries of Mission in Celebration of the Month of Mission and Month of Indigenous People", In line with the celebrations of Mission Sunday and Indigenous Peoples' Sunday.
18 OCTOBER 2017

Fr. Ambrosio Flores SJ wins the Best Thesis Prize of the School of Humanities, Loyola Schools



The Theology and Ministry Program (TMP-LST) of the School of Humanities congratulates Fr. Ambrosio Flores, S.J.. for the selection of his Master of Arts in Theological Studies Thesis entitled, "**TOWARDS 'INCULTURATING' THEOLOGY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE UMAJAMNENS OF BUKIDNON IN THE LIGHT OF THE FABC VISION OF INCULTURATION**" as one of the co-recipients of the Dr. Manuel B. Dy Best Thesis Prize in the School of Humanities, Ateneo de Manila University. Fr. James Kroeger, M.M., D.Miss. served as Thesis Adviser.

The awarding ceremony will be held on October 22, 2018, Monday, at 5:00 p.m., at the NGF Conference Room, De La Costa Hall, Ateneo de Manila University. As a co-winner, Fr. Bros will deliver a brief talk based on his thesis during the awarding ceremonies.

The Theology and Ministry Program also offers other civil degree programs, namely, Master in Pastoral Ministry, Master in Spirituality and Retreat-Directing, Master in Family Ministry and Counseling, Doctor of Philosophy in Theology and Doctor of Ministry.

Abstract: Pope Francis' direct apology in Bolivia in July 2015 for the Church's complicity in the suppression of the local culture and the oppression of the indigenous peoples of Latin America during the age of discoveries provides a compelling context for the Church's work of evangelization among the indigenous peoples today. The thesis builds on Pope Francis' apology and exhortation by exploring the Christianity-culture encounters in Church's past and present work of evangelization. The future of evangelization particularly in Asia, as ioned by the Federation Asian Bishops' Conferences, is presented as its vision of inculturation.

h has been written and discussed about the work of inculturation in Asia. The challenge, however, is on the vision can be put into practice in a specific setting. What steps need to be taken to realize this vision? an these documents be translated into action? By providing a specific face to the Indigenous Peoples in ajamnèns of Bukidnon, Philippines, this paper provides a three-step process of doing theology-in- xt which is a fundamental facet in the work of inculturation.



Heeding the call of Abp. Socrates Villegas, LST students and other groups attended in the Heal Our Land prayer rally. The prayer rally was organized as an effort to pray for the nation torn by fake news, impunity, partisan politics, and violence. After a mass presided by Abp. Villegas and concelebrated by some bishops and priests, the crowd of more than five thousand prayed as they walked from EDSA Shrine to the People Power Monument. The program culminated with a rite of blessing and prayers for the nation's healing. **5 NOVEMBER 2017**



LST alumni, lay and religious and clergy alike, went back for a homecoming. The activities included an open house, a panel discussion on the conclusion of the year of the Parish, facilitated by Fr Dennis Cagantas of the Diocese of Maasin and Msgr. Daniel Sta Maria of the Diocese of Cubao, mass presided by Fr. Roberto Yap, SJ (read: All I Really Need to Learn I learned from LST), and a dinner program and a short homage to the jubilarians. The Silver jubilarians are from batch 1992 and the Golden jubilarians are from batch 1967. **15 NOVEMBER 2017**



LST Students got physical in their annual Sportsfest. It was held in the Loyola Schools Covered Courts. After some preliminary exercises and Zumba, the students were teamed according to their year level and played basketball, volleyball, badminton. In the end, the combined third and fourth year students won overall, followed by the first years, second years, and pre-theology students. **5 FEBRUARY 2018**



LST Students participated in Walk for Life held at the Quirino Grandstand. The walk was organized as an effort to show that the Church condemns the unjust killings in the country and its underlying causes. Other than the walk itself, some religious leaders shared their testimonies and messages regarding the value of human life, like Manila Archbishop Luis Antonio "Chito" Tagle and Caloocan Bishop Pablo Virgilo "Ambo" David. **14 FEBRUARY 2018**



St. Joseph Jesuit Scholasticate in Ho Chi Minh, VietNam had its first STB graduation as an affiliate of LST. This is the fruit of a decree dated 23 January 2018 that allows LST to grant ecclesiastical degrees to St. Joseph graduates. Fr. Eric Eusebio, SJ, Chair of Commission on Affiliation, represented LST and attended the said event. A total of thirty degree holders of various courses graduated on this day. **23 MARCH 2018**



LST students gathered and celebrated Easter with a mass and lunch. The mass presider and homilist was Fr. Ron Bagley CJM at the LHS Oratory. **11 APRIL 2018**

LOYOLA SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Demographics | 2017-2018

199 Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology
- Theological Studies, Pastoral Ministry

36 Licentiate in Sacred Theolgy
- Systematic, Dogmatic Theology

8 Doctorate in Sacred Theology
- Spiritual, Pastoral Psychology

94 Master of Arts in Theological Studies
- Systematic, Moral, Sacramental Theology

12 Doctor of Ministry
- Spirituality and Retreat Direction

82 Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry

17 Doctor of Philosophy in Theology
- Biblical Exegesis, Religious Education

40%
178 Foreign Students

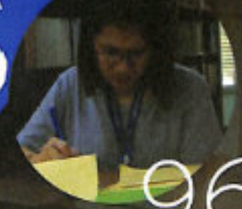
Vietnam, Indonesia, India, Myanmar, Kore… China, Thailand, East Timor, Cameroon, Kenya, S… Lanka, Congo, Zimbabwe, Fiji, Tonga, Malta, Mexico, Pa…istan, Lesotho, Singapore, Brazil, Switzerland, Peru, Be…n, Angola, Canada, Tanzania, USA, Uganda, Portug…l, Italy, Sierra Leone & Papua New Guinea



60%
270 Filipino Students



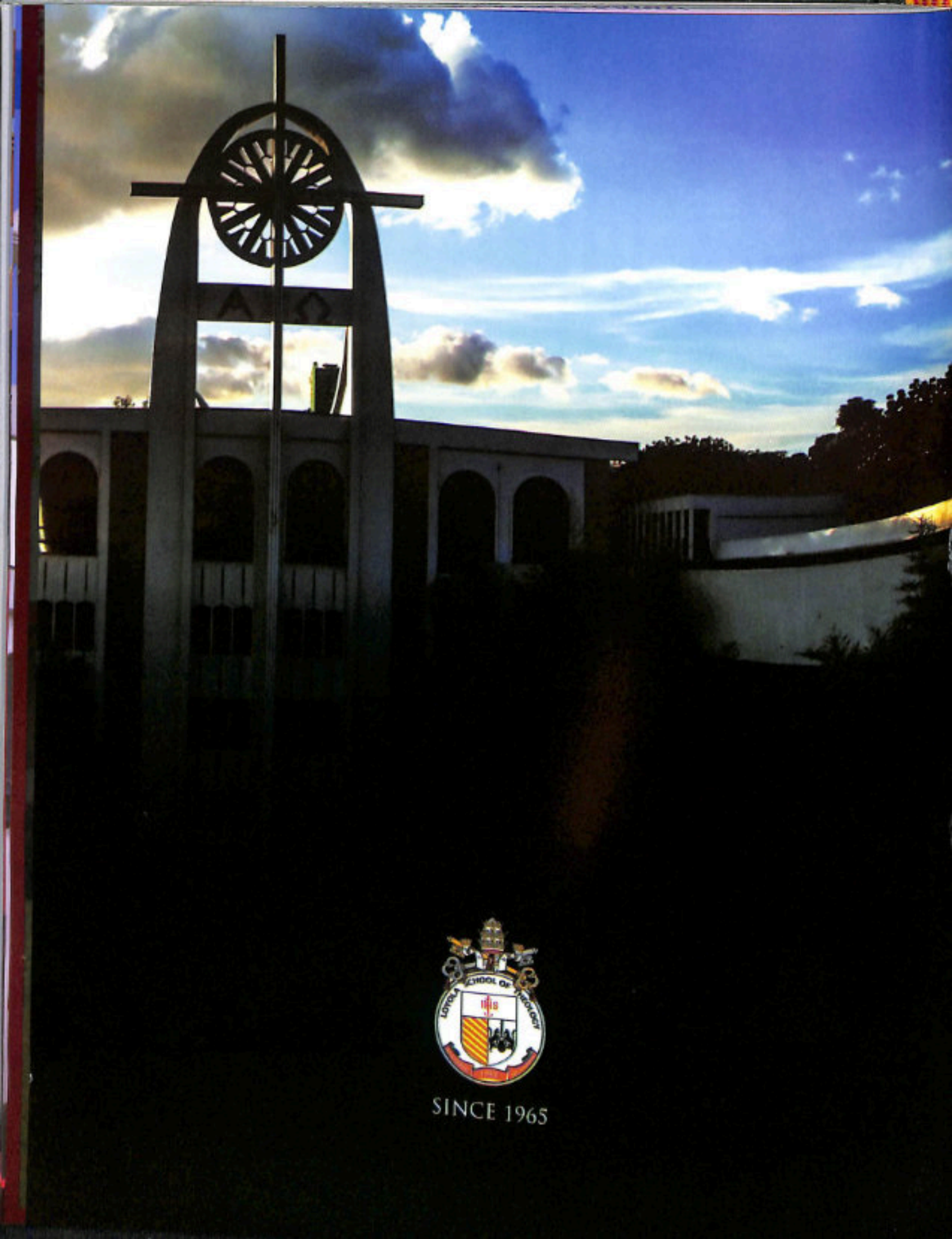
74 Diocesan
26 Priests,
6 Seminarians,
42 Josefinos



96 Lay Students
49 Women
47 Men



278 Consecrated
36 Consecrated Women, 26 Priests, 3 Deacons,
199 Seminarians, 14 Consecrated Men



SINCE 1965