JESUIT JUBILARIANS: AREVALO, DIAZ, FERRIOLS

MELISSA’S MAGIS
10 YEARS OF THE ATENEO SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH (ASMPh)

THE JVP JOURNEY

JESSIE LACUNA: OUT OF THE WATER

WAR ON DRUGS: THE CHURCH’S PROPHETIC MISSION
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JESSIE LACUNA: OUT OF THE WATER

REJOICE, THE LORD IS NEAR: AN ADVENT HOMILY

WAR ON DRUGS: THE CHURCH’S PROPHETIC MISSION

In Memoriam

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The past few weeks, I have been sitting in various meetings trying to make sense of the different events that have mired our country in such darkness. In these meetings out comes big words like “hero” or “extrajudicial killings,” “federalism,” “death penalty,” and the dreaded, dreaded phrase, “the lure of power.”

I sit in these meetings wearing many different hats but at the very core of my being I sit in these meetings as a woman of faith. It is still my fundamental occupation. I listen, deeply, because it is in my nature but also because it is my job. Don’t get me wrong, it isn’t all romantic; it’s administrative and operational, always.

And nowhere is it more operational than when we think about creating a kingdom of God on earth. In case you can’t hear these days, let Fabilioh! help you. In these pages are concrete ways people have chosen to be co-creators of this wondrous kingdom. What on earth would possess a man to spend a year of his life away from his family to teach the Tagbanuas in Palawan? What on earth would possess a young lady to shape her life to support sustainable farming after a stellar academic career, in what could be a simple life of privilege? What on earth would possess Ateneo to fight
this dark darkness, when it could easily look away or be hidden by the length of its perimeter fence? There is logic in the consequences that come from a life of belief. Belief brings with it action and therefore choices and strangely, or ironically; happily, sadly, or blessedly, these choices are often hard and tough. *Magis* demands even more *magis*; and excellence demands even more *derring-do*. Do not be naïve about the life you’ve chosen I repeatedly tell my students. To say yes to the invitation is the way of the foolishly in love with God.

As *Fabilioh!* celebrates its second year, let me thank you, our readers, for your wholehearted support. Our team reads all of your messages together and are heartened by your suggestions and your words of praise and criticism. We strive always to let you hear stories of the different paths Ateneans have taken since coming down the hill. But we continue to share with you as well, how things change here, on the hill, how we’ve grown and struggled, and yes made mistakes, as is our grace.

As a special companion to this issue, we are sharing the work of Fr. Manoling Francisco SJ and Fr. Jojo Fung, SJ, both from the Loyola School of Theology. It is a formidable piece, quite academic in nature and a difficult read because of what it attempts to map out for the
soul of the nation. We hope you will be able to find the space during the holiday, as we deepen our practice of Advent, to take the time to read this important piece. We hope that it will guide your own reflections as you pray over the future of our nation.

It seems I’ve written the word “hope” too many times, but it is a hope worth repeating. This issue, more than anything else, is a place of hope, in these dark, dark times. Let Fabilioh! be a place of light for you. There is always good in the world. And the good resides in us all. Maging liwanag sa dilim.

May you be blessed with the sweetest fruits of Advent.

Best,

Rica Bolipata-Santos, PhD
Editor-in-Chief
We feature jubilees and jubilarians in this December 2016 Christmas issue. Jubilees confront us with past memories when we began to dream bigger than ourselves and took steps to make them a reality. We envisioned and used our creative imagination to make our dreams come true. We remember our past struggles and how we hurdled them through effort and Grace. We learn from our failures and glory in our triumphs.

But jubilees are also about moving on. It was a courageous, committed, and discerned choice that we had done years ago, somewhat aligned with the “Will of God,” to make the world better for us and for our future children. It was a choice in communion with others who had the same ideals to love and serve God and others no matter what. The effects of our committed choices go even beyond our lifetime. No bleak future can impede us from more and more fulfilling our dreams.
National and international issues concern us today. From the pervasive drug problem in our country to extrajudicial killings to the scandal of burying the Dictator in the Libingan ng mga Bayani to the decrease of our peso value just to name a few. The problems of human trafficking, the refugee and migration problem, the extended war in the Middle East, terrorism, etc.—all man-made, not to mention climate change leading to record-breaking natural disasters.

But amidst all these, we cannot undervalue HOPE precisely because Hope thrives in an environment of uncertainty, chaos, and instability.

The Jesuit Volunteers of the Philippines (JVP) is celebrating its 37th year of service to various poor communities in the country. The program has changed many young lives to commit themselves to live for JUSTICE and PEACE. The Ateneo School of Medicine and Public Health (ASMPH) celebrates its 10th anniversary of training competent doctors and leaders in the public health sector. We also celebrate exemplary Jesuits who have made a mark in our hearts and minds—Fr. Catalino G. Arevalo, SJ; Fr. Jesus A. Diaz, SJ (+); and Fr. Roque J. Ferrion, SJ in their 75th year in the Society of Jesus.

This year’s Christmas theme at the Church of the Gesu is our “Return to Bethlehem." It is a calm and
solemn invitation to return to the roots of our spiritual birth—THE BIRTH OF NEW HOPE, FAITH, AND LOVE.

The Message of Christmas is predominantly a message of Divine Love—the Father sending His only Begotten Son into the world to save it, and the choice of the Son to be incarnated like all men. It is a Love that knows sacrifice. Here lies our Faith that gives us Hope amidst the sufferings of our present time.

This Christmas Season let us return to the Manger at Bethlehem and be inspired once again by the Love of the Father and the Son upon us—a Love that knows Sacrifice.

A Hope-Filled Christmas, Kapwa-Atenista!

Norberto Ma. L. Bautista, SJ
Director, Office of Alumni Relations

This Christmas Season let us return to the Manger at Bethlehem and be inspired once again by the Love of the Father and the Son upon us—a Love that knows Sacrifice.
FROM THE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT
On 14 October 2016, the 36th General Congregation (GC 36) of the Society of Jesus elected Fr. Arturo Sosa Abascal, SJ as the Society’s new Superior General. He is the Society’s first Latin American Superior and only the 31st since Ignatius Loyola founded the order 476 years ago.

In his first homily as Superior General, Fr Sosa delivered a statement which I think summarizes well the core apostolic mission of the Society. He said that the Society wants “…to contribute to what seems impossible today: a Humanity reconciled in justice, that lives in peace in a common home well cared for, where there is a place for all of us because we recognize our brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of the same and one only Father.”

That seemingly simple statement belies the numerous complex issues which challenge life in our world today. Fr Sosa directly refers to reconciliation, justice, peace, shared commons, inclusive development, environmental sustainability, human rights, and equality in that single statement. What sets it apart from similar pronouncements from political and developmental leaders is why we work for peace, justice, human rights, etc: because we are all sons and daughters of God.
Therein lies our core, our motivation and inspiration, our reason for being.

In the same vein, Pope Francis sketched the proper attitude that we must have in fulfilling our mission, in his address to the delegates of GC 36: compassion and joy. Both stem from an authentic, deeply personal realization of God’s love and mercy, resulting in an overwhelming gratitude that needs to express itself in acts of loving service. Pope Francis also reminded us that constant discernment—possibly the greatest gift of St. Ignatius to the world—is necessary if we are to faithfully and selflessly follow God’s will.

The articles in this issue of Fabilioh! commemorate and celebrate the many ways that Ateneans live out their faith and their love. Being a Jesuit volunteer, leading a financial institution that focuses on serving farmers and fishermen, training to be a socially responsible doctor, trying to improve the lives of our impoverished indigenous peoples, and being one of God’s earthly ministers are but a few of the countless paths which we tread with and for the Lord.

At the end of the magazine is the seminal work of Fathers Manoling Francisco SJ and Jojo Fung, SJ, of the Loyola School of Theology titled, “War on Drugs: The Church’s Prophetic Mission in This Challenging Time.” This piece is not for the faint of heart as it seeks to de-
scribe the current situation of the war on drugs, a war that continues to be waged relentlessly. This protracted war is brought under the lens of faith and Church doctrine. I urge you to read this important essay. I thank Manoling and Jojo for sharing their work with Fabilioh!

Amid the busy-ness of the Christmas season, let us pause to recall and reflect on one special person’s response to God’s call, a response that Fr. Sosa challenges us to emulate: that of Our Lady, the patroness of both the Society of Jesus and Ateneo de Manila, who once said, “May it be it done to me according to your word.” Her complete openness to God’s will paved the way for Christ to enter the world, just as our service to others allows them to discover the path which leads to God.

May the blessings of Christmas fill your hearts and homes this season and throughout the new year.

Jose Ramon T. Villarin, SJ
President, Ateneo de Manila University

Let us pause to recall and reflect on one special person’s response to God’s call: that of Our Lady, who once said, “May it be it done to me according to your word.”
Catalino Gomez Arevalo, SJ

Fr. Catalino Gomez Arevalo, SJ, was born on April 20, 1925. In 1941, as a young man of sixteen, newly graduated from the Ateneo de Manila High School as its class valedictorian, he informed his confessor, a Basque Capuchin priest, that he was entering the novitiate of the Society of Jesus. His confessor uttered words that, at the time, puzzled the youth: “God will ask you to do much work for the Church, in the Philippines and in Asia.” He entered the Society on May 30, 1941. After ordination on June 19, 1954 at the Fordham University Chapel, Fr. Arevalo studied Dogmatic Theology at the Gregorian University in Rome. After finishing doctoral studies in 1959, he became the first (and only) Filipino to teach at Woodstock College in Maryland, before returning home.

In 1963, Asia magazine named him, along with Ninoy Aquino, Gerry Roxas, Leandro Locsin, Arturo Luz, and Fidel V. Ramos, one of the “24 most outstanding young men in the Philippines.” He taught in San Jose Seminary until 1965, then moved to the newly founded Jesuit School of Theology (later renamed Loyola School of Theology) as its first dean, and later, its first president. In 1997, the Holy Father himself, John Paul II, bestowed on him the prestigious Papal Award, Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice; and Jaime Cardinal Sin, conferring the award and speaking in the Pontiff’s name, hailed him a “the Dean of all Filipino Theologians and the Godfather of Hundreds of Priests.”

For almost six decades as a teacher, he has profoundly affected generations of theology students. Numerous lectures and talks and conferences before lay-people, religious, priests and bishops here and abroad; membership in Vatican delegations; ten years editing the influential Loyola Papers series; countless homilies, recollections, and retreats preached with unforgettable fire and a seldom paralleled beauty of language; long hours of wise and compassionate spiritual guidance for diverse people, such as his former high school students and their families, nuns, seminarians and scholastics, priests, and a president of the Republic of the Philippines; all these forms of ministry have kept Fr. Revs, in his own words, “busy, busy, busy.” Yet in this dizzying diversity of activity, a unity of purpose and vision emerges: a lifelong effort to build up truly local churches—with “a new way of being Church”—in the Philippines and Asia.

Speaking of his own prodigious theological output, he simply says: “All this writing has been done, I trust, in the service of the Church. My Jesuit vocation places my life completely at the service of the Church: her people, her communities, her leadership, her works.”

— ADAPTED FROM A 1998 CITATION BY DANIEL PATRICK HUANG, SJ
WRITTEN FOR THE ATENEO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY’S CONFERRAL OF THE DEGREE DOCTOR OF HUMANITIES, HONORIS CAUSA, ON FR. AREVALO.
Jesus Abella Diaz, sj

FR. JESUS ABELLA DIAZ, SJ WAS BORN ON 13 DECEMBER 1923 IN NAGA, Camarines Sur. He finished his primary studies at Ateneo de Manila Grade School in 1937 and secondary at Ateneo de Manila High School in 1941. He entered the Jesuits in Sacred Heart Novitiate, Novaliches on 30 May 1941 with Catalino Arevalo, Amancio Borja, Lucio Codilla, Roque Ferriols, Santiago Gaa, Expedito Jimenez, Rodolfo Malasmas, Agustin Natividad, Gaudus Perfecto, Rustico Tagarda, and Antonio Ulgado. Later that year, Raymundo Echaus, Rafael Santos, Teodoro Arvisu, Federico Escaler, John Montenegro, and Vicente San Juan joined the batch. Due to the complications of World War II, they spent their Juniorate in various places: from 1 June to 2 July 1943 at Ateneo de Manila in Padre Faura St., Ermita; then, La Ignaciana, Sta. Ana until 1945; back to Novaliches in 1945-1946.

Fr. Jess studied Philosophy, first at La Ignaciana, 1945-1946, then at Novaliches, 1946-1948. In 1948-1951, he was missioned to Ateneo de Naga as regent where he taught Latin, English, and Religion. He was also assigned as librarian. Afterwards, he studied Theology at St. Mary’s College, Kansas City in 1951-1952 and at Woodstock College, Maryland in 1952-1955. He was ordained priest by Francis Cardinal Spellman on 19 June 1954 at Fordham University Chapel. He did tertianship at Our Lady of Martyrs, Auriesville, New York on 15 August 1955-14 June 1956. He professed final vows on 15 August 1957 at Ateneo de San Pablo and on 2 February 1978 at Xavier House, Sta. Ana.

His first assignment as a priest was at Ateneo de San Pablo in 1956-1958. There, he was minister, house historian, house consultor, teacher of English Grammar in High School and Catechism for 4th year, and confessor of students. He was also prefect of students and house prefect of health and historian. In 1958-1964, he was in the Generalate in Rome as Sub-Secretary of East Asian Assistancy; the first Filipino to be assigned in the Curia. In 1964-1969, he was Rector of San Jose Seminary, first in Highway 54, then at Loyola Heights campus. Simultaneously, he became the founding Rector of Loyola House of Studies in 1965. His longest assignment was in Xavier House as Province Treasurer for 26 years (1972-1998). After his stint at the treasury, he was assigned to pastoral ministries: 1999-2002, chaplain at Angono Retreat House and 2002-2012 at Mary the Queen Parish. He retired at Lucas Infirmary, Loyola House of Studies in 2012.

At 11:30pm of 9 August 2016, Fr. Jess passed on due to cardiac arrest secondary to renal failure on peritoneal dialysis at Makati Medical Center.

— FROM AN OBITUARY WRITTEN BY SCH. AMADO T. TUMBALI, SJ, ASSISTANT PROVINCE ARCHIVIST OF THE PHILIPPINE JESUITS
Roque Angel Jamias Ferriols, sj

Roque Angel Jamias Ferriols, sj has left his mark on several generations of philosophy students from the Ateneo de Manila University. Fondly known as “Padre Roque” to later generations of students, Ferriols can be credited with almost single-handedly promoting the teaching of philosophy in Filipino. More important and more lasting, however, is his determination to impart the necessity of pagmumuni-muni—of genuine thinking on one’s situation, to his students.

Born August 16, 1924 at the Philippine General Hospital, Ferriols grew up in North Sampaloc. In 1941, Ferriols joined the Jesuits. During the preliminary years of his formation, he distinguished himself as an exceptional scholar in Greek and Latin, while at the same time living through the Second World War and the Japanese Occupation of the Philippines. After the war, he was sent to study theology in Woodstock, Maryland, as was the custom then for the Jesuits in the Philippines. Nearly fifteen years after entering the Society, in 1954, he was ordained a priest in New York. Ferriols, called to philosophy, finished his doctorate at Fordham University in New York.

Upon his return to the Philippines, Ferriols first taught philosophy for three years at Berchmans College in Cebu, before returning to the Ateneo de Manila University—an Ateneo just beginning to settle into its new home in Loyola Heights. There, Ferriols, as chair of the Department of Philosophy, established the AB Philosophy program. Previously, philosophy in the Ateneo had been taught in the same scholastic tradition as in seminaries; this young department, on the other hand, was animated by the spirit of phenomenology that Ferriols encountered in his doctorate studies. His brand of philosophy was characterized by a return to “the things themselves,” to the lived experiences that become the trigger for philosophical reflection.

It was in 1969 that Ferriols began to teach Filipino, as part of a greater move towards Filipinization. At first, however, this method was not fully encouraged by the administration. After several attempts at preventing classes from being held, Ferriols was finally allowed to teach the classes. Word slowly but steadily spread, and as each semester passed the classes grew in size. Today, nearly half of all philosophy classes taught by the Department of Philosophy are in Filipino.

His efforts at promoting the study of philosophy in Filipino also led him to translate, edit, and write various books. Four of these—Mga Sinaunang Griyego, Magpakatao, and his original writings Pambungad sa Metafisika and Pilosopiya ng Relihiyon—earned him National Book Awards. In 1989, the Ateneo de Manila University conferred him with the Gawad Tanglaw ng Lahi. He retired from teaching in 2013.

— Pamela Joy Mariano-Capistrano
TULONG DUNONG: KNOWLEDGE NOT SHARED IS NOTHING

by Noel P. Miranda
Photos by Bok Nuguid.
“Knowledge not shared is nothing.”

“The best exercise for the heart is reaching down and lifting someone else up.”
IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS where our Tulong-Dunong (TD) kuyas and ates tutor, every bit of space is an opportunity to learn something. Stairs are decorated with formulas in math and science, walls are adorned with posters, and classrooms are filled with colorful visual aids. Even the rafters along school corridors are not spared, quoting timeless sayings for teachers and students to ponder on as they move from room to room.

On one such rafter in Concepcion Integrated School is a saying that is weekly proven true by the tutors and kids who are part of Tulong-Dunong. The rafter quotes, “Knowledge not shared is nothing.” No other quote perhaps best captures the essence of TD.

Once a week, this adage outshines all the other quotes that decorate the school because it is the one affirmed by the Senior High School students who work hard to teach Math and English lessons to their TD kids. Once a week, this saying is proven true when the TD kids share with their tutors their understanding of what it means to work hard, to live simply, and to have a dream. Once a week, knowledge is NOT nothing because of Tulong-Dunong.

Throughout the year, Grade 11 & 12 students go to their TD schools armed with tutoring materials to wage some sort of war. For some, TD may seem like a righteous battle against ignorance or the weaknesses in our educational system. For others, it is a battle against their kids’ apathy, stubbornness, or distractions from studying.
ing. Still others may view TD as a battle to simply stay awake during those warm afternoons in order to get a good grade in the course.

Through it all, the most important battle that is waged, but no one sees, is the war between being a person-for-oneself and being a person-for-others. Every tutoring day, the battle rages on and often, the fight is so close. In the end, by God’s grace, it is always generosity and giving and love that win.

At the end of the year, both tutors and tutees realize that they have grown in many ways. TD tutors discover a nurturing side to themselves, while TD kids discover the joy in learning. The amazing thing about TD is that despite their shortcomings, the tutors and kids are empowered by Christ to give of themselves—fully or imperfectly—so that others may learn a little something, be it a concept in math, a vocabulary word, or the certainty that God’s mercy lives on in the world.

Today, Tulong-Dunong is in 16 out of 17 Marikina public elementary schools and continues to raise funds for over 70 scholars studying in Ateneo de Manila, Miriam College, and St. Scholastica’s Academy Marikina.

Knowledge not shared is nothing. Whether Fr. James O’Brien, SJ, founder of Tulong-Dunong, knew this quote or not, he lived by it, as a witness to the transforming power of generosity and service.

To support the scholars of Tulong-Dunong, you may donate through the following:

- ADMU DCB ACCOUNT 400-079-001 / TDEF (Tulong-Dunong Emergency Fund)
- BDO ACCOUNT NUMBER 357-800-36-50 (Tulong-Dunong Foundation Inc.)
MONEY WOES PERSIST FOR ATENEO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARS

by Paul Daza

Tulong Dunong photos by Bok Nuguid.
Photo of Ralph Joshua Macarasig courtesy of Paul Daza.
IN ITS LANDMARK DECISION on 7 February 2015, the Ateneo de Manila University’s Board of Trustees approved the creation and opening of the Ateneo de Manila Senior High School (SHS) in School Year 2016–2017. The Board further stated that 300 slots would be open to male and female applicants from public schools, parochial schools, and other schools that do not offer SHS, and that “100 scholarship grants would be offered to academically gifted but financially challenged students.” Thus was the Ateneo Senior High School Scholarship Program born.

One such recipient of a full scholarship is math wizard Ralph Joshua Macarasig of the class of 11-Owen, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) strand. A transferee from Rizal National Science High School, Ralph first dreamt of becoming an Atenean two years ago when he attended the Loyola Schools’ Summer Programming Camp in 2014. And so, when it was announced that Ateneo would accept 300 transferees to grade 11 for school year 2016-2017, Ralph threw his hat into the ring and applied. Despite the fact that he’s one of the trainees of the Mathematics Trainers Guild-Philippines, the humble Ralph wasn’t even sure he’d make the cut. One day last February, however, when he arrived home from school, Ralph’s parents surprised him with the news that not only was he accepted into the Ateneo SHS, he was also granted a 100% scholarship.

For many Ateneo SHS scholars, life isn’t smooth sailing. For them, a partial or full scholarship doesn’t end all their financial woes.
Two months into the current school year, Ralph became an instant celebrity when he won a bronze medal for the Philippines at the prestigious International Mathematics Competition (IMC) held in Singapore from July 29 to August 1, 2016. The news about Ralph’s achievement spread quickly via the University’s website, social media, and electronic led screens. Ralph’s proud classmates even took “groufies” of themselves posing in front of the led screen as his photo was being displayed. And now, seven months after he became an Atenista, Ralph says he will remain forever grateful for the gift that was his full scholarship.

For many Ateneo SHS scholars, however, life isn’t quite as smooth sailing. For them, a partial or full scholarship doesn’t end all their financial woes, despite the persistent but naive perception that a scholarship is a magic wand that makes all money problems vanish.
into thin air. Some applicants who were given partial scholarships, for example, did not enroll at the Ateneo because their parents couldn’t afford the balance of the tuition and other expenses associated with enrolling their children here. And when school year 2016-2017 began last June, the Ateneo SHS teachers and the Office for Admission and Aid were alarmed to discover that some of the scholars who did enroll could not afford the school uniform, PE uniform and textbooks. Even more alarming were reports that there were also scholars who weren’t eating while they were at school because they didn’t have money for food. Some teachers immediately responded by giving their daily meal allowance to the scholars, while some parents of our homegrown Ateneans offered to pay for the uniforms and textbooks.

Perhaps the most heartbreaking story of all is that of Dino (not his real name), a boy who moved from his parents’ home in Manila to the residence of relatives in Quezon City when he was given a full scholarship by the Ateneo de Manila. Just a few days into the schoolyear, the Ateneo SHS found out that Dino didn’t have money for food, transportation, and textbooks. With the generous help of some members of the Ateneo SHS community, these problems were solved. And then, Dino began to get sick...repeatedly. He once even fainted in class and had to be brought to the hospital, where he was told he needed to undergo a series of tests. Somehow, enough money was found to shoulder Dino’s medical expenses. But with all these things happening in quick succession, the school began to pay closer attention to Dino. One day, a teacher of Dino’s offered to give him a ride home when she found out that Dino lived in the same general area of Quezon City where she resided. The teacher, however, didn’t know that Dino in fact lived in a community of informal settlers. Worse still, the boy

Some of the scholars could not afford the school uniform, PE uniform, and textbooks. Even more alarming were reports that there were also scholars who weren’t eating while they were at school because they didn’t have money for food.
told her that the house he was staying in was in danger of being demolished! Frantic phone calls were made, and more financial assistance was sought. And once again, thanks to the help of not just a few individuals, the school was able to relocate Dino to a house much closer to the Ateneo early in November. Even better still, Dino now resides near the home of one of the Ateneo SHS’ office staff, a friendly guy whom many students affectionately call “Kuya.” This “kuya” now keeps a close eye on Dino and sometimes invites him over for dinner. Dino is now reportedly looking happier, is better rested, and not getting sick as often as he used to.

But while Dino’s story seems to have a happy ending for now, the sad and sobering reality is that our scholars’ need for financial assistance is constant, especially for daily expenditures like food, transportation, and even photocopying materials for school. Karen Ong, Coordinator for Admission and Aid of the Ateneo Junior and Senior High School, estimates that the minimum cost of commuting to and from the Ateneo for our scholars is ₱100 daily, and that a nutritious meal and snack per day would set them back an additional ₱150. That’s a daily expense of at least ₱250 that an Ateneo scholarship doesn’t cover.

And then there are the one time, big time expenses for school uniforms and textbooks. Three sets of school
uniforms would cost about ₱3,000 while two sets of PE uniforms- consisting of two shirts and a pair of jogging pants- would cost ₱900. As for textbooks, Karen estimates that a set of textbooks for the STEM strand costs between ₱5,000–₱6,000.

With such additional costs for non-tuition expenses, the school through its Principal, Dr. Carmela Oracion, welcomes donations for scholarships and scholars’ non-tuition expenses. As of this writing, there are nine donors sponsoring the tuition and fees of 16 scholars. One batch, the AHS Class of 1986, has been able to raise enough funds to provide monthly allowances for 14 scholars for their two years in the Ateneo SHS.

The annual Katipunan Fund Drive (KFD) was also tweaked to help Ateneo SHS scholars. In previous years, KFD’s primary beneficiaries were the victims of natural disasters. When the KFD for the Ateneo Senior High School was launched last November 18, Christian Service and Involvement Program (CSIP) Program Head Erick Salonga informed the Ateneo SHS community that the KFD, which runs until December 16, will also help to fund the Ateneo Senior High School Scholarship Fund.

While support from different members of the community has helped ease the financial need of some SHS scholars, much help is still needed, particularly since the SHS will be accepting more scholars to Grade 11 next school year. The school remains hopeful though that with the values it has instilled in its students, more alumni can share in the school’s goal of providing quality basic education and leadership formation to bright yet financially challenged students.

To donate to the Ateneo Senior High School Scholarship Program, kindly email kong@ateneo.edu or call 426-6001 extension 6291/6292 for more information.
by Crismel Yparraguirre

Photos courtesy of Melissa Yeung-Yap.
Ever since she could remember, Melissa was taught how to respond with generosity. No, not just with random acts of kindness but with a ceaseless stream of compassion embedded in her.

**MAGIS**

is an Ignatian value ingrained in the heart of every Atenean. From the moment a student walks into an Ateneo campus, he or she is encouraged to follow the path that St. Ignatius laid more than 450 years ago. The Latin word for “more,” magis symbolizes one’s commitment to not just have a generous spirit but live a life that God has intended for us—filled with love, compassion, and grace. Integral to Ignatian spirituality, magis inspires one to respond to God’s call to do more and be more.

**THE HEART OF MELISSA**

Melissa Yeung-Yap, founder and executive director of Got Heart Foundation—an organization that strives to help marginalized communities by giving them opportunities to help themselves—understands the magnitude
of embracing magis. Ever since she could remember, Melissa was taught how to respond with generosity. No, not just with random acts of kindness but with a ceaseless stream of compassion embedded in her.

“My parents have amazing hearts. They pray a lot and always remind us to give thanks to God and be generous with our blessings. My mom volunteers in church and is very active in various organizations. My dad has a soft heart for employees and always looks after their comfort and well-being in the best way he can,” she says.

FIRST ‘COMMUNITY’

The youngest and only girl among three siblings, Melissa would tag along with her mother in some of these activities. The elder Yeung was, and still is, passionate in looking for opportunities to engage with disadvantaged communities. Melissa remembers a time when her mom would go to a market to teach children how to pray. Then eight years old, Melissa would wait for her mom to finish so she could play with the children. The constant interactions not only helped Melissa become more affable, but accepting of others as well. These were turning points in her life—inspiring Melissa to always choose goodness and open her hearts to others. Then again, her parents have always instilled in her and
her two brothers the importance of showing kindness towards others. “They taught us to always see the face of Jesus in the people we encounter, whether rich or poor, old or young.”

She decided to expand her “community,” as Melissa would call it, and volunteer at Concordia Children’s Services, Inc. (CCS) in Sta. Mesa, Manila. Founded in 1983, CCS is a non-government organization that looks after neglected and abandoned children. It addresses children’s health through nutrition and feeding programs. The organization also provides educational assistance and scholarships. In CCS, Melissa found an opportunity to give her wholehearted service to those in need.

“I’ve always wanted to have a younger sibling. When God didn’t bless me with one, I decided to go and volunteer at an orphanage where I got to meet 90 new brothers and sisters,” she said with a laugh.

Melissa looked for ways to bond with her newfound siblings. It did not take too long for her to find a common ground: arts.

“The CCS kids wanted to learn how to draw so I taught them the lessons I learned from the art workshops I attended,” she recalls. At 13 years old, Melissa held her first ‘art class.’

Teaching proved to be daunting for the teenager. Melissa recalls, “I was running on saved allowance

“They taught us to always see the face of Jesus in the people we encounter, whether rich or poor, old or young.”
money so I had to be resourceful and creative in gathering materials.”

Buoyed by the experience, Melissa continued to teach at CCS every summer. She even managed to persuade not just her friends but also her high school English teacher to tutor the children.

‘TEENAGERS AREN’T APATHETIC’

Melissa’s generosity of spirit continued to grow in high school.

While most teenagers seemed to be more susceptible to distractions, Melissa became more perceptive of the growing gap between the poor and the rich. “I learned that God has blessed me abundantly not to keep those blessings to myself but to share with those in need.”

Together with her classmates at the Immaculate Conception Academy (ICA) in San Juan, Manila, they organized Concerts for Charitable Causes (C3). The teenagers arranged various shows to raise funds for marginalized communities. Organizing a fund raising event is already intimidating, how much more if the organizers are high school students?

“The hardest part was balancing time and getting sponsors,” she admits. Undeterred, the group turned to their classmates, teachers, and friends from other
“It made me realize that people have hearts, that teenagers aren’t apathetic.”

schools. The results were astounding. C3 generated more than ₱200,000 per concert. When they finally gave the proceeds to their chosen beneficiaries—CCS and the Pediatric Ward of the Philippine General Hospital, their emotions ran high. It was, after all, not common to find teenagers go out of their comfort zone and open their hearts to strangers. Selfishness is a problem that has plagued humanity since the beginning of time. It is also a typical attitude attributed to children which some say worsens during adolescence. Melissa’s experience, however, proves otherwise: “It made me realize that people have hearts, that teenagers aren’t apathetic. The experience made me optimistic and hopeful that the world can be a better place.”

Indeed, it was becoming a better place for Melissa and as she entered college, she continued to look for ways to help others.

At the Ateneo de Manila University, Melissa initially took up BS Management of Applied Chemistry; a decision, she admitted, was done to please her parents. “I was being groomed to continue our family business—a pharmaceutical company.”

A year and a half into her studies, Melissa realized that her heart did not belong to nanotechnology, drugs, cell factories, or biotransformations. She was yearning for more—a deep desire to create ripples of positive
change in her surroundings. When she could no longer fight the “deep longing to understand more about the meaning of life,” Melissa turned to her peers for advice.

“I wanted to understand poverty and how I can possibly make use of my life to create better opportunities for people. I talked to my friends and all of them said that AB Development Studies would be the best course for me,” she recalls.

Shifting to a different course, however, was not that easy. Melissa’s father was firm in his desire to have his only daughter be involved in the family business. To convince her father, Melissa got down to business and worked on what had been the most important MS PowerPoint presentation a 19 year old could ever make. It included her life goals and how moving to a development studies track could benefit her. She does not remember much of the presentation but she recalls crying in front of her father.

“The tears worked much better than the PowerPoint!” she says.

With a clear path ahead of her, things started to fall into the right place.

In Ateneo, Melissa learned about the theoretical, practical and even ethical dimensions of social and economic development. She also signed up as a volunteer for various non-government organizations, among them
Gawad Kalinga (GK), Philippine Association for Intercultural Development, and Non-Timber Forest Products. Melissa helped promote GK in Ateneo and other schools around the Philippines. Volunteering helped Melissa apply her learning in real life: “It helped me frame situations and manage projects better.”

In her journey to find real solutions, Melissa met different people—individuals who stirred up her spirit of generosity, one of whom was Fr. Bienvenido “Ben” Nebres, SJ. Fr. Ben, at the time, was the university president.

“The biggest lesson I learned from Fr. Ben is to be on the ground with people. What I admire most about him is that despite his stature, he is extremely humble. He really goes to the grassroots and listens to people. By doing so, he is able to engage projects and programs that actually work,” she says.

Inspired by Fr. Ben, Melissa organized workshops for out-of-school youth she met in GK. She engaged her fellow students to help out, collaborating with Ateneo student organizations like BlueRep, Ateneo Musicians’ Pool, and Company of Ateneo Dancers, among others.

GOT HEART’S FIRST BEAT

After receiving an AB Development Studies from the Ateneo in 2007, Melissa went on to take a Masters in

“The biggest lesson I learned from Fr. Ben is to be on the ground with people. He really goes to the grassroots and listens to people.”
Entrepreneurship degree at the Asian Institute of Management. It was during this time when Got Heart Foundation had its first beat.

Born out of a desire to help others, Melissa established Got Heart Foundation eight months after her college graduation. “I wanted to have a space where I can try out my different theories on how to help get people out of poverty,” she says. Got Heart was created to give “opportunities for the marginalized to help themselves.” It aims to help these communities become “sustainable, holistic, independent and dignified or SHinDig.”

“Got Heart is my commitment to God, my way of honoring the creator who is the source of love and to honor all those who have shared their heart to me—family, my friends, classmates, volunteers, communities and me. It is also a reminder and a call-to action for everyone to share their hearts to those in need.”

Melissa would go around communities looking for products to sell. Making rounds in the communities, she found that the presence of brokers made it difficult for everyone to reach the markets. “This is the gap that Got Heart tries to fill in. As long as they want to help themselves and they have products and services, we try our best to either help through the enterprises that we have or by connecting them with others.”
Melissa initially envisioned Got Heart to help at least 100 communities and now, after almost a decade, Got Heart’s partners now number to more than 200 across the country.

Got Heart currently has three stores in the country: two in Quezon City and one in Davao. Products sold at these stores include edible items like mountain rice, vegetables, fruits, herbal teas, and other organic farm products. There are also non-food items like accessories, sarong, and even potted plants.

In these challenging times, the social enterprise movement has truly gained traction but social entrepreneurship cannot be fueled by good will alone. It takes a lot of work, perseverance, and sacrifice. As Melissa recalls, “It was very challenging because while I knew the purpose of the foundation in my heart, translating it in a way that other people will understand was another thing.”

The young social entrepreneur persevered and eventually, Melissa was able to link up with communities. Others also started to notice Got Heart: in 2011, Got Heart received the Zonta Award for Poverty Alleviation as well as the Outstanding Philippines Organic Agriculturists Awards. Two years later, Melissa was also presented with the Outstanding Young Persons award from the Junior Chamber International Osaka. It would have
been easy to rest on her laurels Melissa knew that she had only scratched the surface and that more is needed. The spirit of magis pressed her on. Thus Earth Kitchen was born.

**MAGIS HAS NO BOUNDARIES**

A farm-to-table restaurant in Quezon City, Earth Kitchen is a collaboration among Got Heart, Hizon’s Catering, and Chefs David Hizon and JR Trani. Also located in Quezon City, Earth Kitchen’s goal is simple: highlight the fresh produce and ingredients of Got Heart partner communities.

“My vision is to develop Earth Kitchen into a commis-sary that would process local ingredients into a ready-to-eat line so that when farmers have bumper crops during harvest time, they do not have to worry about prices going down and losing income,” Melissa says.
Got Heart has also teamed up with Katinko Ointment and the Ateneo Center for Educational Development to run a supplementary feeding program for public school children in Tarlac.

Magis grows and expands and Melissa—no longer eight years old but a wife and mother to an eight-month-old boy—knows it has no boundaries.

“I see myself as one person trying to do my job and help God in the best way I can. I am far from perfect. I make tons of mistakes and sometimes get confused. I am happy most of the time, but I can also get depressed. I go through life’s roller coaster, but at the end of every day, I know that I try my best, and hopefully, my Master is pleased.”

Magis is a challenge for everyone but Melissa Yeung-Yap has proven that sharing our gifts with each other, whether they be objects, time, attention, or even money, affords us the opportunity to truly live a life that our Creator intended—filled with love, compassion, and grace.

“I go through life’s roller coaster, but at the end of every day, I know that I try my best, and hopefully, my Master is pleased.”
Photos courtesy of Jesuit Volunteers Philippines Foundation, Inc. (JVPFI).
Sharing one’s self through service for His glory
In September 1978, Fr. Joaquin Bernas, SJ, Provincial of the Philippine Province; Fr. James Meehan, SJ, of the Loyola School of Theology; and Fr. William Bill Kreutz, SJ, College Chaplain of the Ateneo de Manila University, gathered for lunch at a small outdoor eatery in Washington, DC.

Fr. Bernas told Fr. Bill, “Bill, I’ve heard of this Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC) here in the USA. Will you please look at it? It may be good for us.” Fr. Bill replied that he already had an appointment with the local JVCs in Washington at their place of mission that very afternoon. It seemed that the Jesuit Volunteer program would be a good idea to bring to the Philippines so that graduates of our Jesuit schools and other schools could share something of their gifts with people especially in need.

It was a bit of time before the group got organized and permission was given to go ahead with the project. By mid-1979, a team was formed to bring into reality the Jesuit Volunteers Philippines. Fr. Noel Vasquez, SJ and two former Jesuits, Vic Labao and Jemy See joined Fr. Bill and helped make everything work. Jemy went to Bukidnon to scout places for assignment for the JVPs like parish work, rural church schools, Jesuit colleges
and universities, and any other groups like NGOs that would want someone with talent to help for a year.

By June 1980, nine pioneer volunteers joined for Holy Mass and a blessing at the chapel of St. Ignatius at the Loyola House of Studies, went to North Harbor and were off to Mindanao for a year. There was no preparation, no orientation seminar, just simple conversation and some tears. By October 1980, Fr. Bill visited the volunteers in various parishes in Bukidnon, Xavier University and the Ateneo de Davao University. By May 1981, the volunteers had their wind-up (year-end) gathering in Davao City. Thus began the JVP. So simple, so fast, but such a wonderful start by God’s grace.

Jesuit Volunteers Philippines Foundation, Inc. (JVPFI)

By 1984, Timothy “Tim” G. Gabuna (JVP Batch 3) became the first Executive Director of JVP taking care of Batch 5’s thirty-eight (38) volunteers up to Batch 15 (JVP Batch 16). Funding then was provided by the Misereor (German Catholic Church) Foundation. Realizing the need to become a formal organization, JVP applied for and formally became the Jesuit Volunteers Philippines Foundation Incorporated (JVPFI) by 1994, with Tim Gabuna as its first Board Chairperson and President.

JVPFI has a vision of a just society that celebrates the fullness of life realized with the help of a community embodying Ignatian Spirituality. The foundation’s mission is to form a community of volunteers and associates who nurture and live out the principles and values of Ignatian Spirituality embodied in and realized through individual vocations characterized by the core values of service, social justice, simplicity, solidarity, and spirituality. JVPFI is a community dedicated to nation-building by promoting volunteerism and serving as
development workers in under-resourced institutions helping local communities. We focus on development work that increases literacy, creates more equitable access to social services for the marginalized and under-privileged. We are also a network of leaders in our own communities and field of concerns.

JVPFI recruits, trains, and forms young men and women for others, and sends these volunteers to under-resourced institutions which play crucial roles in the development of Philippine society. The foundation prepares and assists JVP volunteers in developing necessary skills for them to effectively serve as educators, capacity builders, and youth formators.

Oman Q. Jiao (JVP Batch 9) took over as Executive Director from 1995 to 1999 shepherding batches 16 to 19. Rose M. Cabrera (JVP Batch 10/11) took over from Oman in 1999 but joined the Creator in 2001 after serv-
ing batches 20 and 21. Fr. Mark Lopez, SJ (JVP Batch 17) succeeded her as the Executive Director from 2001 to 2004 with batches 22 to 24; followed by Josephine G. Maribojoc (JVP Batch 13) from 2004 to 2006 with batches 25 to 27; Edlyn Y. Kalman (JVP Batch 18) from 2006 to 2010 with batches 28 to 31; Martin R. Perfecto (JVP Batch 9) from 2010 to 2013 with batches 32 to 34; Nathaniel George A. Hipolito (JVP Batch 22/23) from 2013 to 2016 with batches 35 and 36; while the current Executive Director is Benjamin Roberto G. Barretto (JVP Batch 5).

Currently, there are twenty-three (23) volunteers in Batch 37 serving all over the Philippines. Overall, there are nine hundred forty-seven (947) JVP alumni or network of leaders that serve over one hundred and forty-four (144) partner institutions.

At this point, JVPFI is looking for possible donors and sponsors for JVP volunteers. If you wish to donate, kindly send to any of the following accounts, and send the scanned deposit slips to jvpadmin@gmail.com or jvpfirdo@gmail.com.

- **Bank of Philippine Islands (BPI)**
  
  **ACCOUNT NAME**
  Jesuit Volunteers Philippines Foundation, Inc.
  **ACCOUNT NUMBER** 9600-0045-11, (current)

- **Banco de Oro (BDO)**
  
  **ACCOUNT NAME**
  Jesuit Volunteers Philippines Foundation, Inc.
  **ACCOUNT NUMBER** 3570-0131-91 (savings)

- **Security Bank**
  
  **ACCOUNT NAME**
  Jesuit Volunteers Philippines Foundation, Inc.
  **ACCOUNT NUMBER** 0662-032090-002 (current)
by
Bok Arandia, SJ
(JVP BATCH 32)

Photos courtesy of the author.
It has been five years since I made one of the biggest leaps of faith in my life—joining Batch 32 of the Jesuit Volunteers Philippines (JVP) to be sent to Culion, Palawan to organize and implement an adult education program for the indigenous Tagbanua coastal communities.

I continue to carry close to my heart those ten months in Culion not just as a consoling memory of how we were able to provide our Tagbanua brothers and sisters access to education, but more significantly, as a shining reminder of how God’s limitless grace makes all things possible. Initially, I thought that in deciding to volunteer I would necessarily have to sacrifice, give up so much of what I had, who I was in order to be of service to others. But God would not just allow that He be outdone in generosity. The truth is in losing myself in service, in
giving up comforts, in parting from family and friends, the Lord filled me up to an overflowing. In the end, it was I who received much, much more than what I was able to give. I was tremendously blessed more than what I deserved, more than what I had sown. We indeed have a God who is Magis.

In those ten months of “island hopping,” regularly visiting our Tagbanua communities through a lent pump boat, God never failed to manifest his indefatigable love and grace. We experienced Him in our partner Tagbanua communities who dreamed of a better life for their families, seeking to rise above poverty and ignorance. They persevered to learn reading, writing and counting despite the daily challenges of making ends meet to ensure that they will be better equipped to support and provide for their families. One of our heroes was Ate Warlita of the Alulad Tagbanua Community who was tireless in learning and reviewing the lessons taught to her so that she could pass on the knowledge to the rest of her community as a teacher. They taught me to hope, to trust that all things shall be well. They selflessly shared the little that they had, welcomed me to their huts, and treated me as family. Away from everything that was familiar to me, they embraced me and gave me a home.

The Lord was also intimately present through all of those who accompanied me during my volunteer year. The volunteer teachers of our program—Nanay Nitz, Nanay Lilia and Kuya Jojo endured intense difficulties and inconveniences in order to fulfill the mission of providing education to our Tagbanua brethren. They selflessly and passionately offered their time, skill and devotion in teaching in the islands. Never did I hear them complain or call attention to themselves. The Jesuit fathers and St. Paul sisters of Culion patiently guided and
directed us in designing and implementing our project. They were always available to lend a helping hand. Cartwheel Foundation, the partner institution of JVP in Culion, stalwartly provided the necessary resources and administrative support to pursue the engagement. They made sure our needs were provided and that we were well-equipped to address the issues that we encountered. My JVP formators and batchmates were abiding sources of encouragement and consolation in every aspect of our mission, especially in moments of great challenge and frustration. We were truly a community in every sense of the word, sharing each other’s struggles and triumphs, always there for each other even if we were physically apart.

Five years after, my JVP experience continues to define my identity and mission. I took my next leap of faith principally because of those ten months in Culion
as I responded to the call to enter the Society of Jesus and pursue religious life. It seemed to be the most logical step after experiencing the Lord’s abundant and never-ending grace as a volunteer. Now as a Jesuit, I remain a volunteer who seeks to give without counting the cost, fight without heeding the wounds, toil without seeking for rest, labor without asking for any reward. I continue being awed and gratified by God’s outrageous goodness and compassion in the lives of the people I encounter. Many have said that you get “ruined for life” after being a Jesuit volunteer. You never are the same person after your ten months of service. For me, the words of the Lord have been fulfilled through my JVP experience: “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” Because of JVP, I now have new life, and live it in abundance! Deo Gratias!
The Founding and Beginnings of the Ateneo School of Medicine and Public Health

by Marife Yap, MD, MSc (co-founder, ASMPH)

Photos courtesy of the Ateneo School of Medicine and Public Health (ASMPH)

SERENDIPITY

AUDACITY

GENEROSITY
What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I to do for Christ?

Versions of these three reflection questions that lie at the heart of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola could have as well been the continuing spirit that animated and led to the founding of the Ateneo School of Medicine and Public Health (ASMPH).

It would be quite difficult to pinpoint a specific month or year when the seeds of the dream and vision of what is now the ASMPH were planted in the hearts and minds of the people who worked to make the dream come true. The life journey and experiences of the men and women who contributed to the setting up of the ASMPH served as early teachers that somehow led us to reflect on the call and invitation and to say yes to the call.
The opportunity and gift of a possibility of setting up a medical school for the Ateneo de Manila University came about in a very serendipitous manner sometime in 1996–1997, when Dr. Alfredo R. A. Bengzon, after having completed his 6-year term as DOH Secretary under the Cory Aquino administration assumed the post of President and CEO of The Medical City hospital and concurrently became Vice President for the Professional Schools and Social Development and Dean of the Graduate School of Business of his beloved alma mater, the Ateneo de Manila University.

The Medical City, at that time, was in search of land to expand and build a bigger facility in a new site. This led Dr. Bengzon to explore possibilities with Mr. Geny López, Jr., then Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the López Group of Companies. In the course of discovering and learning about each other and the organizations they both led, Dr. Bengzon and Mr. López realized similarities both as persons, professionals and Filipinos—the desire to uplift and improve the lives of fellow Filipinos, particularly those who have limited access to fundamental and basic services.

All these led not only to the gift of land on which the expanded and new facility of The Medical City stands but also a gift of land to the Ateneo de Manila, on which
the Ateneo School of Medicine and Public Health now stands.

I truly believe that the spirit that drove both Dr. Bengzon and Mr. López to see and appreciate the synergies that led to the gift of land was inspired and driven by versions of the three-fold questions that led both of them to search for ways to respond to a call to serve the poor and the marginalized through providing possibilities to influence basic sectors—health, utilities, infrastructure, telecommunications among others, so as to contribute to an enabling environment that will allow people to grow and develop to be the best of themselves.

And so, after audaciously presenting the unauthorized proposal to the Ateneo de Manila University Board of Trustees by Dr. Bengzon in 1997, a unanimous decision was made to approve the setting up of a “different kind” of medical school. From the outset, the proposal was never to build just “another medical school”, similar to the other existing schools in the country but to set up a school of future leaders for the health system that would eventually bring about the needed change in mindset and heartset in the way health care is understood, felt about, accessed, and delivered. As to how this was to be carried out, was not yet very clear at that

In 1997, a unanimous decision was made to set up a “different kind” of medical school.

ABOVE. ASMPH reaches construction milestones.

UPPER LEFT. Oscar Lopez receives a plaque of appreciation from Ateneo de Manila University officials and board of trustees led by Manuel V. Pangilinan. Looking on are (from left to right) Dr. Alfredo R.A. Bengzon, Fr. Bienvenido Nebres, sj, and Manolo Lopez.

LOWER LEFT. Fr. Lito Mangulabnan blesses the time capsule.

RIGHT. Fr. Bienvenido Nebres, sj lowers the time capsule.
time. What was very certain only was that there was a need for this school of leaders for the health sector.

*From whence came the audacity and inspiration?* I believe the seeds were planted by God as His customized plan for Dr. Bengzon and all those who embraced the invitation to be fellow travelers in the journey. The formative years of schooling at the Ateneo de Manila and the mentoring of beloved Jesuits served as foundations that shaped the person who constantly strives to do more, and to apply his God-given talents to help develop people to be the best of who they are meant to be.

This, I would like to think is a common thread that binds all of us who accepted the invitation to contribute to the fulfillment of the dream that is ASMPH.

It took a few years before any concrete steps were taken after the prodigious Board of Trustees approval for the setting-up of the school. Meantime, the new facility of The Medical City started to be built and many important milestones were also reached by the then Health Unit of the Ateneo Graduate School of Business where Dr. Bengzon was also appointed Dean.

Every step of the way, as life’s twists and turns unfolded, answers to the three reflective questions—rephrased and asked in various ways—provided the guidance and courage to embrace paths unknown and to
pursue the dream despite not having a model to follow and unsure about what important first steps to take.

Among the challenges confronted in the early years was a very practical one of where to get the needed funds to build the building. Added to these of course was the search for kindred spirits who would help to operationalize the dream and to put flesh to the desired school of physician-leaders.

And, just as the conversation between the two gentlemen led to the gift of land, more conversations and opportunities unfolded allowing the entry of kindred spirits like myself, who by some happy coincidence also shared similar aspirations and dreams for the health sector that Dr. Bengzon nurtured.

Having also received an Ateneo education during my pre-med years, I, too, learned reflection and discernment—asking the same three questions in an effort to become a socially responsive health professional. It was in this spirit that I accepted the invitation and with much trepidation, embraced what appeared to be God’s customized plan for me as well.

Dr. Bengzon and I engaged in many conversations in the course of working together both at the Ateneo Graduate School of Business as well as in The Medical City. We brought to bear our own learning and experiences from our own life journeys—his, much more rich
and vast than mine. In different ways, we were happily (and sometimes problematically) exposed to the Philippine health sector and all of its challenges. Through the paths we had chosen or where we had been led, we realized how truly fragmented and disconnected the health sector was, both public and private sector, not only of our country but the world over.

On several occasions, we grappled in frustration with trying to understand why health and access to rational, affordable health care, a fundamental human right, was so inaccessible and absent in the lives of a significant number of Filipinos. We reflected on the meaning of the opportunities and staging areas that were given to us and how these can be brought to bear on addressing the inequities and inequalities in health.

And as the years of working together unfolded, suddenly in 2003, the decision made in 1997 was again brought to fore and despite the challenges of funds and know how, it was time to take concrete steps towards setting up the “different kind of medical school”.

This gargantuan task was then given to me to think through and operationalize. And so, just as I have been taught in the Ateneo, I sought divine intervention and human assistance. Friends and colleagues from past encounters and engagements were called upon to collectively brainstorm and explore possibilities.
At the outset, each invitation extended only had a promise of a good meal, profound and enriching conversation among ourselves and with Dr. Bengzon and assurances of much laughter. Happily, a group of friends and colleagues said yes to the invitation and formed the brain trust, meeting in the evenings and weekends when we were done with our day jobs. We jokingly referred to these sessions as our “plotting and scheming” sessions.

Surely, there must be something more to life than what we are doing now.

I would like to think that this realization must have crossed the minds of everyone in the brain trust, despite being in different stages of our personal and professional lives. And even if not everyone had gone through an Ateneo education or were exposed to the Ignatian spirituality, versions of the three-fold questions and the answers to these were and continue to be the disposition that allowed all of us to reflect and draw upon our own education and work experiences as basis for what we believed to be the appropriate curricular content and methodology for the envisioned school.

As more and more ideas started coming together to craft the framework of the curriculum for the ASMPH, the seemingly insurmountable challenge of looking for the funds to build the physical structure still needed to be addressed.

Although the Ateneo de Manila Board of Trustees had unanimously approved the proposal to build the school, the University leadership, for valid reason, was very hesitant to push through with setting up of a medical school due to the seeming trend of many doctors leaving the country instead of practicing and serving in the rural areas of the Philippines. In addition, the state of public health care in the Philippines was such that

We grappled in frustration with trying to understand why health and access to rational, affordable health care, a fundamental human right, was so inaccessible and absent in the lives of a significant number of Filipinos.
there was indeed a need to address this gap and produce leaders in the health sector who are knowledgeable and conversant in addressing issues and challenges that confront and impact on the public’s health (and perhaps not as much need for clinically-trained doctors).

We were naturally sometimes disheartened because of this. Yet we forged on with discussing and brainstorming about how we were to set up the school, unrelenting in our belief and trust in the correctness of the vision and dream, energized also by the friendships that were forged and deepened as fellow travelers of the journey.

Once again, remaining faithful to constantly reflecting on events and opportunities, more gifts, material and spiritual started coming.

A generous donation of funds from Mr. Benjamin Ching and his family was made available for the building of the school. In addition, Mr. Anthoni Salim and Mr. Manny Pangilinan generously provided funds to help complete the facility. The University leadership, having arrived at a deeper appreciation of the significance of the envisioned graduate also provided much needed support and assistance, harnessing the various units of the University to help set up systems and processes for the running of the school.
Finally then on March 24, 2007, 10 years after the Board of Trustees approval, we were able to break ground and set the foundations for the building of the ASMPH.

In the meantime, the work of curriculum development started to become more focused. The ASMPH Doctor of Medicine–Master in Business Administration (MD-MBA) curriculum framework started to take shape after some of us in the Brain Trust devoted an entire weekend taking stock of all the research, conversations, reflections and learning that we had accumulated over several months.

Looking back now at that experience, I recall that it was very natural and easy to agree among ourselves in the Brain Trust that the MD-MBA curriculum scaffold should draw inspiration from the themes of the four weeks of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. These themes became the guide that allowed us to cluster the different subjects across the five year levels.

Once this curriculum framework was presented and discussed with Dr. Bengzon, we then started identifying other possible co-venturers in order to expand the circle of fellow travelers. Colleagues and friends whom we knew and felt had an understanding and shared the same hopes and aspirations were invited to a presentation and conversation of the ASMPH vision and dream. At
the end of these “exposition” sessions, the all important question was raised about whether they were in agreement with the vision and mission of this school seeking to produce physician-leaders. Happily, most felt very excited and generously accepted the invitation, "giving without counting the cost".

In addition, we wanted to subject the curriculum framework to more scrutiny and feedback and thus, we created a Circle of Experts, composed of leading scholars and experts in the field of academic medicine, clinical medicine, public health, management, hospital administration and social sciences to critique and comment on the ASMPH vision and proposed curriculum framework. The conversations among the experts were truly enriching and heartwarming with most of them affirming the correctness and validity of the vision and curriculum.

The journey then was wrought with challenges and roadblocks, some of which were so difficult that many times, relationships and friendships were in danger of being severed and the temptation to give up was strong. And yet, all these were overcome not only because of the deep trust and recognition of each other’s goodness and openness, but also because of remaining faithful to always going back to asking and searching
for the answers to the all-important three-fold reflective questions.

Moreover, many of the roadblocks, near-misses, and challenges always faded when juxtaposed with the bountiful graces, blessings, friendships, and joys that many of us received and continue to nourish in the work of founding and running the ASMPH.

Thus, on November 23, 2007, an unprecedented 8 months after we broke ground, we blessed and dedicated the new ASMPH building. The schoolyear had officially opened on July 2, 2007 with 70 eager pioneers taking a chance on the then unproven dream.

Now, we fast forward to 2017, ten years after seeing fruitition of a dream and vision that also took ten years to materialize from board approval to operationalization.

Certainly, there have been many changes and modifications through the years. As it should be. For after all, Ignatian spirituality, which undergirds all of what and who we are as ASMPH, is a practical spirituality that invites each one to be disposed and responsive to the call of an ever active God always inviting us to an “ever deeper walk” and to respond to what Christ asks us to do “at the crossroad of the world (of health) and church.”

Many of the roadblocks, near-misses, and challenges always faded when juxtaposed with the bountiful graces, blessings, friendships, and joys.
by
Louella Fortez

Photos by Joji Lapuz, courtesy of the Ateneo Sports Shooters (www.fabilioh.com).
Having made his Olympic dream come true not once but twice, Jessie Lacuna wonders about what he’ll plunge into next.
Finding an Olympian swimmer in the midst of the chaos in the Loyola Schools Swimming Pool is not that easy. There’s rap music blaring from the radio and everyone is either running to the water or hurrying to change into the proper attire. Someone suddenly screams and that’s precisely when Jessie Lacuna shows up (to clarify, it wasn’t a scream for him or for anyone). People race to the pool, coming right at him, but no one gives him a wide berth. Instead, he pauses to let them pass first.

He looks strong and solid, with broad shoulders and a wide chest. The smile is a little lopsided but friendly, the handshake is sure. In a t-shirt and baggy shorts, he looks just like any other student. Maybe he’ll take it as a compliment, as throughout the interview, he gets wistful about trying to be just that, a normal student. But here’s the thing: not all college students have participated in the Olympics. Twice.

Much has been written about Jessie. From interviews in the college paper and profiles in websites and newspapers, there appears to be nothing more to say about him. He easily debunks this with thoughtful, candid answers that show there’s more depth to cover than initial expectations.

First, the basics. Pulilan, Bulacan remains home for him, where he began learning to swim in the pool of a nearby resort. “Sabi nga ng parents ko ginagapang ko
lang daw papunta doon!” He jokes. He’s in his third year of Interdisciplinary Studies, concentrating on an Education and Communications track, for when and should he venture into coaching someday. He comes from a family of swimmers, though it is only him and a younger brother who still do it competitively.

Ask him how he feels about swimming and he gives a direct answer: “It’s a love-hate relationship.”

Most athletes say that the sport they compete in is either a first love or the great love. No one doubts this with Jessie but since he has been swimming for a long time, he knows the upsides and downsides. He doesn’t freeze as if suddenly realizing it is something better left unsaid, but neither is he apologetic.

“May moments na gusto mo nang mag-rest pero babalik at babalik ka din.” It’s a sentiment that has resonated strongly in the weeks following his participation.
in the 2016 Rio Olympics. “(Pero) Tingnan natin kung kaya ko pa. Di ka naman bumabata eh.”

Twenty-two years old is young in the eyes of the world, but not for athletes of certain sports. Having started swimming competitively at five years old, Jessie has been adhering to the strict discipline and commitment the sport demands for more than half his life. Swimming is a fun activity for the weekender but his regimen is swimming twice a day, ten times a week. The schedule only eases during exams, but sparingly. “The coaches adjust. We’re given (a) one-day rest to study. One day lang kasi (sa) swimming, mag-off ka lang ng three days back to zero ka na. You really have to be consistent if you want to be good. Mental preparation is important too.”

Discipline and mental focus brought him to his ultimate dream when he first started wading in the pool: the 2012 London Olympics. “It was exciting. First time kong hindi kinabahan. Yung feeling ko lang kasi talaga is I’m so happy to be here representing my country. It was the biggest world stage.”

He explains the absence of anxiety in an event that would probably have most people too overwhelmed to perform: “Iba-iba yung feelings ko sa local, sa SEA (Southeast Asian) Games. Sa Olympics wow talaga eh. ‘Pag SEA Games and Asian Games, iba yung kaba eh. They’re smaller, tsaka friends na kayo. Magkakakilala kayo.”

Reminiscing on his first Olympics reduces Jessie to, “Wow talaga. All the superstars, lahat ng nakikita mo sa TV, the people. I was starstruck. Dun talaga sa first umiyak kami sa opening ceremony.”

The Olympics is the pinnacle for athletes. Getting to participate there once is more than enough. He’s more than happy with this but he’s also a “let’s-see-how-far-I-
will-go” kind of guy. Thus, he thought to try for another shot at the 2016 Rio Olympics.

“The standards for getting in the Olympics get tougher and tougher. Sobrang hirap ang pinagdaanan namin towards Rio. You need to join regionals, continental events like the SEA Games, world championships, so that the qualifying committee will recognize your name. Kumbaga, nasa radar ka nila. ‘Di ka puwede i-recognize ng IOC (International Olympic Committee) if you don’t join events like that.”

According to him, a year before the Olympics, the IOC would release information and other details regarding the qualifying meets. “There are more than six. Madaming, madaming meets.”

Sacrifices are second nature to athletes but for Jessie’s Olympic dreams, it demands more than the usual.
The 2016 Rio Olympics required him to make the biggest sacrifice he has made in his career.

"I filed for LOA (Leave of Absence) for one semester," he says. This meant moving to Australia for four months to prepare. Contrary to popular belief that it meant vacation time, Jessie admits, "I was alone. It was draining."

The sacrifice did not yield a medal but he was guaranteed a place in Olympic history. It’s an achievement unlike any other ("My brothers are glad one of us made it to the Olympics.") yet once Rio was over, real life came rushing back. He still swims to remain in peak condition but now there’s school.

"(It was) back to zero. Start from scratch. Siempre, iba na ang mga ka-batch ko. (The) first two weeks (back), nalulungkot ako (kasi) wala (na)akong kakilala. Iba na ang set of friends ko. Pero kailangan mong tanggapin kasi ito ang pinili mo." He says. "It took me a while to catch up, na parang, ‘Uy, nasa school pala ako.’"

He is honest with the struggles about being back in school. "All of the subjects are difficult!" He says dramatically before bursting into laughter. "Kababalik ko lang eh." On the day of the interview, he just came from his History midterms. Does he think he did well? He bites back a smile and shrugs. "It was answerable."

"Mahirap. Mahirap ang buhay ng student athlete. (For example,) Laging huli sa groupwork. I’m trying my best to be a normal student. Pero mas nag-e-enjoy na ako ngayon. I’m a student first before an athlete."

He may not easily take to the rigors of school as he does in the water but this struggle is welcome. Though he has achieved much for someone so young, he remains true and close to his roots by visiting his family in Bulacan as often as he can. "I have this ritual. One week or three weeks before a competition, I go home just to see my family. Di kami ganon ka-yaman. They can’t"
afford to go with me (when competing) sa ibang bansa.”

He also gives advice to his younger brother, who is a swimmer with UP. The comparisons between them are unavoidable so he makes sure to emphasize that they are different. “I tell him we have different goals. Kung goal mo makatapos ng pag-aaral sa pag-swimming, that’s fine. Kung gusto mo Olympics, that’s fine too.”

His first trainer gets a visit too when he’s home. “Gusto ko kung saan ako nanggaling, kung saan ako nagsimula, pinupuntahan ko pa din. At sobrang natutuwa sila kasi ‘di ako nakakaligtas. (Kaya) gusto ko talagang bumabalik sa Bulacan.”

He is also well aware that no matter the sacrifice and the insane amount of hard work do not guarantee victory every time. “I was disappointed (about Rio) but ang sabi ko (sa sarili), ang importante ay yung pag-participate. Win or lose, what matters is nag-participate ka. Malungkot kasi ganoon ang result but that’s life. That’s swimming. It’s not an easy sport.”

And it’s becoming more difficult for him despite his young age. “I told my brothers nahihirapan na ako.”

namin na there's another chance. So (I) might as well (go for it).” Thus he how ended up in Rio, and the rest is history.

Or maybe not yet. Is he interested in trying for the 2020 Olympics?

“Ngayon, ‘di ko alam talaga. Gusto kong magpahinga lang muna. There’s another meet, in Japan, a championship in November, then another in Canada in early December. My coach asked me if I want to still join and I said, ‘No na, I’d like to take time some time off.’ I’m really drained. (Gusto kong) maka-rest lang, get some quiet. May buhay outside of swimming.” Aside from the need to take it easy for a while, he also worries about becoming “a robot.” As he requested, he was given one week off. “After that, nagkakaroon unti-unti ng fire, masaya ulit ako. May one month na ako na tuloy-tuloy mag-swimming. Sabi din ng coach it’s good for the team. Na kahit hindi ka nagsasalita pero basta yung aura mo is, ‘I want to be here,’ it helps the team.”

During this interview, Jessie says his focus at the moments is his midterms and the approaching end of the UAAP season. “Matapos ang UAAP, I can rest and take other sports, siguro. Running, biking. Para maiba naman….” When he’s not contemplating a new sport he might like to try, he dabbles in photography.

Getting some rest is becoming more and more important but Jessie isn’t ready to completely leave swimming behind and pursue something else. “I asked for some time off para lang ma-miss ko ang swimming. Kasi definitely, I’ll be back. It is a love-hate relationship,” he emphasizes, grinning as he reiterates his early statement regarding his feelings for the sport. “After Rio, I trained for one week and I was not happy. Lumalangoy ka ng pilit. It’s hard. I had no emotion in the pool. Nag-
paalam talaga ako (to the coaches) na just give me one week off."

Jessie realizes that getting to take part in the Olympics is something extraordinary but he is the first to scoff at questions and claims that he’s best swimmer in the Philippines. For example, when asked if he’s the fastest swimmer in the country, he’s quick to say, “No. There are different events in swimming. There are, like, seventeen events. I would say I might be fast in 200 meters but that’s it. For the rest of the events, no.” The distinction of being a two-time Olympian means there’s also the baggage of being perceived as arrogant or, as he describes it, “di ka na ma-reach.”

“Most of my friends are athletes, so ganyan ang loko-han.” He strives to reach out to non-athlete students to debunk the myth of the privileged, entitled jock. “Ayaw mong makaranig na may magsabi, `Mayabang yan.’”

Whether he would try for the 2020 Olympics or not remains up in the air. “Tingnan natin!” He says. But what he can promise in the future is this: “After my swimming career or college, plano ko talaga bumalik ng Bulacan.”

Because after all the glory of his experience in the Olympics, all Jessie Lacuna wants is to go home. To go back where he began and, if given the opportunity, nurture the dreams of the next Olympians.

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by Jojo Magadia, SJ

Photos by Vic Baltazar, SJ featuring Rene Javellana, SJ’s 2015 belen display at the lobby of the Jesuit Residence at the Ateneo de Manila University Loyola Heights Campus.
The Presepio

Displays in the churches of Rome during the advent and Christmas seasons is a tradition that many have grown to love. The presepio is simply what we would call the belen, the nativity scene whose basic characters are Mary, Joseph, and the Infant Jesus lying in a manger. In the most expanded form we know in the Philippines, it would also include angels, the Magi, shepherds, sheep and sometimes even a donkey. Often, the star of Bethlehem would figure prominently, especially since for Filipinos, this translates into the powerful symbol of the parol.

But there is something distinct about the three-dimensional presepi of Rome. The basic characters are the same. But it is the setting that varies from presepio to presepio, the composition of place. One can be set inside the ruins of a church, or on top of a rock, or by a mountainside, or in a rustic village dotted with houses and inns. Each setting would bring with it a distinct set of new characters beyond the usual belen personalities—a young boy drawing water from a well, an old woman with a lantern looking out into the dark, a group of friends chatting in a piazza, a little girl watching from a balcony.
The most interesting setting for me is the crowded market place. An intricate tableau is presented: a farmer carrying his produce in a sack, vendors at their booths with fruits and vegetables and hams and cheeses, wives outside their houses washing clothes, a young lad holding a chicken, a soldier on his horse, well-dressed shoppers looking for good bargains, an old man with crutches begging, some oxen, some dogs, many street lights, houses of red brick and gray shingles. On the faces of these statuettes of wood or plaster or terracotta, you might catch a smile, or a look of surprise, or worry, or just boredom! In some of these presepi, you might even see some battery-operated characters in motion: a sheep raising its head, a little boy waving to friends, a worker lifting a cart. But there is really no need for high-tech, because these scenes would always be full of life and light, rich in color, dramatic, almost seeming to be in motion even if they are not.

Then of course, in some inconspicuous enclosure in this extravaganza are Mary and Joseph and the newborn bambino, and sometimes with their usual retinue of angels, shepherds and kings.

FIRST POINT

A writer reflecting on the presepio scenes says that it seems that for the artists behind these displays, it is the great detail of these exhibitions that is most important. They almost seem to be saying that the rich experience of life and motion all around trumps the gospel event, which is simply part of a bigger story.

But for one who believes, the message is the reverse—not that the holy is pushed to the periphery by the complexities of daily life, but that the ordinariness of things is blessed by a God who has gently entered into its core. Hence, the color and the life and the vibrance. It is Emmanuel at work, bringing new hope and new excitement. He invites us to see that everything and everyone coming into our lives bear meaning, and point to a reality beyond.

It is for this reason that we can do as both the prophet Zephaniah and the apostle Paul bid us in the first two readings of this Gaudete Sunday: Rejoice because the Lord is always near! Yes, Emmanuel means God-with-us, but even more compelling is that he is also always in us,
in me and in you, this God and Father who is “over all and through all and in all” (Eph. 4:6). One Spanish translation of this sentence is particularly striking: “Un Dios, Padre de todo, que lo trasciende todo, y lo penetra todo, y lo invade todo.” They are words verging on violence, expressions of a powerful love able to banish all fear and anxiety, so that we can attain “the peace of God that surpasses all understanding”, and indeed rejoice.

SECOND POINT

Even more astounding is that this love is so intense that it cannot but overflow into our being able to love so many others.

On the one hand, like all the characters of the presepi, we do tend to prefer to live our little lives in our little corners, finding our regular rhythms and routines, getting comfortable with our particular quirks, coming to a point of seeming normality. Then moments come when the Lord “comes in” in a particular way, upsetting our schedules, messing things up somewhat, bringing in ideas from out of left field, frustrating projects, inviting some new characters into our ambits who sometimes even re-order our lives. We are then challenged to look again, and realize that when Emmanuel comes in, he often stretches our view of things, and we begin to see beyond ourselves, and it is at that point that we begin to allow the current of love and generosity and kindness and forgiveness to flow.

“What should we do?” ask the crowds in today’s Gospel, in order to prepare for the Lord. The Baptist’s response can be summarized in very quick phrases—share with those who do not have, be kind, be fair, be honest. Let the love of God, which is expressed so extravagantly this season, spill over into the lives of the people around us. Perhaps, this is why gift-giving is much easier to do at this time of year. We are less stingy, as we are reminded of who we are at heart—images of a God whose very essence is to give. The more we genuinely give, the less we hold on to, and the more we can really rejoice.

Let the love of God, which is expressed so extravagantly this season, spill over into the lives of the people around us.
The Church’s Prophetic Mission in These Challenging Times

by Manoling Francisco, sj & Jojo Fung, sj

(LOYOLA SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY)
As of September 11, 2016, statistics released by the PNP revealed that 1,466 suspected drug users were killed by the police. Another 1,490 cases were unsolved.

INTRODUCTION: DEPLORABLE LOCAL SCENARIO

The spiraling grassroots lamentations of survivors of those killed nationwide due to the buy-bust operations, Oplan Tokhang, Oplan Galugad, etc. that escalated into a shootout between the police and the alleged drug suspects who were reportedly caught in the act of engaging in suspected illegal activities. The killing also involved the individuals tagged in drugs by unidentified assailants in shooting incidents or by motorcycle-riding gunmen. The incident was either witnessed by other people or captured on CCTV. The victims’ bodies were discovered away from the crime scene, either bearing a label tagging them in drug-related activities (usually a cardboard bearing the words “drug pusher” “drug user” or “drug addict”) or there are reportedly illegal drugs recovered from the body. The victims’ faces and bodies usually bear gunshot wounds, and sometimes even stab wounds. The victims’ arms or legs, or both, are also usually bound and their bodies wrapped in tape.1

Most of the victims are from the lower income families who like Marites, age 40, surrendered herself while her brother, Francisco, earned only a despicable fraction of the drug money to buy rice [“Basta ang importante sa kanya, makabili siya ng bigas”] for his wife and 3 children—including a 4-month-old baby. Unfortunately Francisco was brutally gunned down by unidentified assailants riding a motorcycle on August 23, 2016 in Barangay Rosario, Pasig City. Marites wishes that her brother was arrested and shamed, like those top officials in the police, politicians, and the judiciary who were named in public by Duterte but not assassinated.

Gun violence is relentless. Jonathan Head of the BBC report disclosed that women were part of the hit team because they can get close to their targets without arousing the same suspicion a man would. Maria (not her real name) confesses to carrying out contract killings as part of Mr. Duterte’s brutal campaign against illegal drugs. Maria claimed she has killed five people, shooting them all in the head, and sometimes even stab wounds. The victims’ arms or legs, or both, are also usually bound and their bodies wrapped in tape.2

As of September 11, 2016, the statistics released by the Philippine National Police revealed that 1,466 suspected drug users were killed by the police, 1,490 cases were unsolved killings, 16,025 were arrested due to drug-related activities, 709,527 surrenderees, 52,568 suspected drug pushers and the rest, suspected drug users. The 2012 National Household Survey estimated that there are 1.3 million drug users nationwide while 8,629 out of 42,065 (20%) of barangays are drug infested, according to the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency.

In keeping with these grassroots’ dissent, the Philippine Daily Inquirer’s “Kill List” of victims of extrajudicial killings in the anti-drug campaign shows the overwhelming majority are from poor neighborhoods and of modest means, suggesting the war on drugs is actually a war against the poor.3 Little is disclosed to the public regarding how the war on drugs tackles the drug cartels, from the Filipino-Chinese drug syndicates who engage in bulk smuggling and manufacturing with their clandestine laboratories and warehouses to the African drug syndicates that smuggle via couriers (usually women) in and out of the country and the Mexican Sinaloa drug cartel that supplies raw materials or finished products to Filipino-Chinese distributors.4

1. INTERNATIONAL CONCERN AND DIPLOMATIC FUROR

The international community has expressed concern over the indiscriminate killing in the Philippines. President Duterte has allegedly called “on people to kill drug dealers” for “he values public safety over..."
human rights.” This is clear from his State of the Nation Address, “Double your efforts. Triple them, if need be. We will not stop until the last drug lord, the last financier, and the last pusher have surrendered or put behind bars—or below the ground, if they so wish.” Since Duterte assumed his presidency in July 30, 2016, his anti-drug campaign “has cost nearly 1,900 lives in the first seven weeks alone of his presidency” who were killed on suspicion of “either using or trafficking drugs.”

Due to this bloody democracy, “the United Nations, international non-governmental organizations, the foreign media, and Western governments have criticized the extrajudicial killings as a violation of basic human rights.” Duterte “accused the United Nations of meddling with domestic affairs” At another occasion, Duterte “accused the United Nations of meddling with domestic affairs” and “has threatened to take the Philippines out of the UN if it continues to criticize the killings.”

Before the ASEAN Summit in Laos from September 6-8, 2016, President Barack Obama “had earlier indicated that he would voice concern over human right issues surrounding Duterte’s campaign against people linked to illegal drugs that has resulted in over 2,400 deaths.” Duterte cautioned the US, “You


6 State of the National Address, July 25, 2016.


8 Ibid.


11 Ibid.
must be respectful. Do not just throw questions and statements.” Duterte has insulted Obama by calling him a “son of a whore” in Tagalog. Subsequently President Obama canceled his meeting with Duterte through the diplomatic channels. President Duterte swiftly “expressed regrets that his comments inadvertently “came across as a personal attack on the US President.” In defiance, Duterte averred at the ASEAN Summit, “we shall not be cowed, we will press on” and urged ASEAN to “act together in concert” on such threats to ensure the region can continue with its economic achievements.

There are multiple concerns in the Philippines. Foremost is the moral question, does the end identified as ‘public safety’ through war on drugs justify the extrajudicial means? Should it be condoned even though Duterte denied that “the nature of a number of deaths though imply internecine, or organizational killings within the drug trade?” and the Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Ernesto Pernia stated that it is a legitimate means, amounting to self-defence to an end labelled as War on drug? The second concern is related to the use of the term ‘war’ by the Duterte’s Administration has justified the use of force with its ensuing collateral damage that sacrifices innocent non-combatants, their livestock and properties. The third question, is mere supply reduction or the stepped-up demand reduction a more doable solution? Supply reduction is all the more suspect since the US and drug-ridden countries in Latin America like Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Uruguay are also rethinking demand reduction as a more viable approach to drugs.

2. An Ignatian Dissension

Our Jesuit dissension is rooted in a call from an official communiqué of the Jesuit Provincial, Fr. Antonio F. Moreno, SJ, dated August 19, 2016, entitled “A Call for a Discerned Response to the ‘War’ on Drugs.” This call arises out of a context in which the said communiqué poignantly remarked, “We have become painfully aware” which the provincial identified as “the drug problem in our country [that] is deep and complex.” This menace, the provincial averred, “has broken and ruined the lives of many people.” Structurally the menace is systemic due to the “weak judicial system, the inadequate witness-protection program and corrupt bureaucratic practices [which] have undermined the rule of law.”

The provincial insightfully concluded, “as a result the key perpetrators of crime are often not brought to the bar of justice.” Furthermore the communiqué deplored “the loss of lives without due process” that is on the increase with each passing day and “has unwittingly created more widows and orphans whose lives, like the victims of drugs are forced to endure deep trauma and pain.” At the same time, the communiqué insightfully forewarned that “a dangerous culture of impunity and unac-

Several empirical studies have shown that it will not make a proportional dent on the quantity of drugs demanded by the drug users. Estimates vary, but a 2006 study co-written by Nobel Prize winner Gary Becker found that, on average, for every increase in the price of drugs (say, 10%), drug purchases tend to decrease only by half that magnitude (in this case, 5%).


12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
17 In 2017, for example, the US is proposing to spend more on demand reduction than supply reduction for the very first time since their drug war started.
18 Supply reduction only increases the market price of drugs.
countability is seeping into our social fabric whereby an irresponsible ‘end’ justifies the means’ mentality is disturbing tolerated.”

This effort at theological reflection on the ‘war’ on drugs is a joint response to the clarion call of the Jesuit Provincial of the Philippines.

I therefore ask Jesuit communities, institutions and ministries to look closely at this matter and discuss it together with our mission partners so as to consider appropriate collective actions…. Some Jesuit institutions and ministries have already been studying and reflecting on the issue, and proposing lines of action in response to extra-judicial killings. I recommend them for their initiative and concern. I encourage further the creation of circles of discernment to pray over and reflect on this contentious issue. I ask our government leaders too to hear not only the cries of drug victims and their families but to restore the rule of law and heed the longings of those who have lost loved ones.

The envisaged formation of the Jesuit (eventually intercongregational) circles of discernment to pray over and respond concertedly to this menace are still forthcoming. Nevertheless these circles of discernment are important loci of communal discernment and concerted actions in this “unhappy time.”

3. A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION REGARDING THE ‘WAR’ ON DRUGS

The theological pronouncements of the local institutions of the Philippines are part of the moral outcry that have been articulated in the first section. The subsequent section will be a theological critique of the ‘war on drugs’ in the light of the Catholic Social Doctrine.

3.1. Local Institutional Outcry

The Christian Churches, the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines and individual priest and institutions have registered their moral outcry.

Theologizing on this state-condoned drug-war, Cardinal Chito Tagle was quick to pronounce that all forms of killings should be denounced. “Many are worried about extrajudicial killings, it’s only right. But I hope we should be worried too about abortion, why are few speaking out on it, that’s also killing. Unfair labor practice is also killing the dignity of the worker,” Tagle said. Tagle also averred to other forms of killing like wasting food, forcing poor people to pick it in the trash and feed it to their families. “That is also killing children who have nothing to eat,” he remarked and added that each and every life should be held sacred. “I know the killings are a big issue now. Guilty or not, life should be taken care of and respected. And if one is guilty, he should be given a chance to change,” Tagle retorted.

In the 113th Plenary session of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines, held on July 9, 2016, Archbishop Socrates Villegas of Lingayan-Dagupan called on the CBCP “to stand up against what is morally wrong and uphold the Church’s teachings even if it means going to the ‘wilderness … the right is right and the wrong is wrong… we will not withdraw from the mission of the Lord. We will stand and defend every person’s life and dignity… We will shield the weak from harm, we will protect the confused from error.” On August 25, 2016, Archbishop Socrates called for prayer to heal the “wounds and divisions” afflicting the country. Archbishop Socrates explained, “Our first armor is prayer. So let us pray even more,” making additional reference to a “prayer for healing of the nation”, which asks for unity, solution to crimes and corruption, and compassion for those who died “in the present purge.” He interjected, “The killings continue to rise. The divisions seem to widen even more. The indifference to the violations of the Commandments of God is spreading. We must not give up.”

Earlier on the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (AMRSP) issued a much more comprehensive statement,
We express our full support for the government’s serious crusade against the problem of illegal drugs in our country. We admire the leadership that the President has taken in this campaign and the determination of the people under him in working to rid our society of such menace. Nevertheless, we are alarmed at the continued extrajudicial killings, which seem to go unchecked, without trial or investigation. We are alarmed at the silence of the government, groups, and majority of the people in the face of these killings. Ubi boni tacent malum prosperat. Evil prospers where good men are silent. Is this lack of public outcry a tacit approval of what is happening? Is it fear that prevents people from speaking out? Whatever the reason, this problem, if it remains unchecked, leads to a culture of impunity. We demand that the concerned government agencies continue apprehending those involved in drug trafficking but avoid extrajudicial killings, and pursue and apprehend vigilantes who carry out such illegal actions.

As men and women of consecrated life, we commit ourselves to the following:

1. For our communities, parishes, apostolates and educational institutions to study, reflect on and act on these unabated killings.

2. To care for the violated, the orphaned and the widowed through counseling, sharing and integration with Gospel values.

3. To stand with people of other faiths and other beliefs in the inviolability and sacredness of life. In the Year of Mercy, let our humanity and compassion reach those who are the least and the powerless.

4. To recognize that the drug problem is a complex and deeply emotional issue that needs to be addressed holistically, with great understanding and compassion for both victim and perpetrator for we are all dehumanized by this culture of death.

5. To recognize and support the need for reforms in the criminal justice system and the need for rehabilitation for drug dependents. We need to weed out the corrupt in our security forces as well as in the prosecution service as well as the judiciary. The drug menace is an intricate web of corruption and patronage that feeds on the insatiable desire of people for profit.

6. To hold Masses and prayer vigils for peace and justice in the affected communities.

7. For the bells to toll at a designated hour in solidarity with the poor and in upholding the sacredness of life.

Noteworthy too is the statement of the Manila Episcopal Area of The United Methodist Church that supports the establishment and development of a just and humane society where peace, justice and love reign. The statement further extrapolated:

We fully reject all careless, callous, or discriminatory enforcement of law. We denounce retributive justice but uphold restorative justice that seeks to hold the offender accountable to the victimized person, and to the disrupted community. Through God’s transforming power, restorative justice seeks to repair the damage, right the wrong, and bring healing to all involved, including the victim, the offender, the families, and the community.

In the Theological Hour at the Loyola School of Theology held on Wednesday, September 14, 2016, the faculty and students were requested to reflect on three Church responses to the state as explained by Dan Harrington, sj. The three options are: cooperation in the light of Titus 3:1-2 whence the State promotes the Gospel values or the well-being of its citizens and critical Collaboration in the light of Mt. 22:15-22 and lastly, denunciation in the light of Rev. 6:9-10 whence the State undermines the sanctity of
human life and human rights. The assembly at the Theological Hour were further invited to reflect on:

- What are my reactions to the anti-drug drive of the Duterte administration and the alleged cases of extra-judicial killings? (Attitudes)
- How is the Lord inviting me to respond? (Behavioral Response)
- How might we as an institution collectively respond to the situation? From cooperation to critical collaboration and denunciation?

To culminate the session on EJK, the entire assembly at the Theological Hour prayed for healing for the families and the nation.

3.2. Critique in the light of Catholic Social Doctrine

In the light of the surreptitious climate of fear, the statist violence meted out in the name of ‘war’ has to be denounced for what it is. The Catholic Social Doctrine denounces such militaristic war in no uncertain terms, “war is a scourge” and “a war of aggression is intrinsically immoral” for reasons that this ‘war’ has failed to satisfy all four criteria: (a) the damage … must be lasting, grace and certain; (b) all other means of putting an end to it must have been shown to be impractical or ineffective; (c) there must be serious prospect of success; (d) the use of arms must not produce evils and disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated. A case in point is related to the second criterion: the demand reduction has not been considered or implemented thus far.28

In this climate of fear and impunity, the security of the most vulnerable and the centrality of the human person need to be all the more re-emphasized. Every civilian or citizen has the right to political security, a right to be promoted by the political authority or the government of the day. In no. 384, the CCSD (Compendium of the Social Doctrine) alerts us that “the human person is the foundation and purpose of political life” and “the political community originates in the nature of persons, whose conscience reveals to them and enjoins them to obey” that extrajudicial killing is detrimental to the common good of the political community.29 Drug-related killings without due process of law is an inhumane state of lawlessness that has to be condemned because the Church “sees in women and men, in every person, the living image of God. This image finds, and must always find anew, an ever deeper and fuller unfolding of itself in the mystery of Christ, the perfect Image of God, the One who reveals God to us and we to God.”30 Those killed in the war on drugs are the poor who are not “a shapeless multitude, an inert mass to be manipulated and exploited, but a group of persons—to whom—‘at her/his proper place and in her/his own way—express their own political sentiments and bring these to bear positively on the common good.” In addition, “those who belong to a political community, although organically united among themselves as a people, maintain an irrepressible autonomy at the level of personal existence and of the goals to be pursued.” The goal to be pursued is fullness of life in God.31

By and large, the institutional moral outcry (see 3.1) is a verdict on the extrajudicial killing as unjust. A political order is deemed to be just only when such state-condoned policy flows from just laws or policies that “correspond to the dignity of the human person and to what is required by right reason and therefore is derived from the eternal law.”32 Otherwise, “a law that is contrary to reason… is called an unjust law” and “it ceases to be law and becomes instead an act of violence.” Aggressive pursuance of EJK that totally disregards the growing moral outcry has to be forewarned that the public authority “must always be exercised within the limits of morality.”33 Any failure on the part of the political authority to uphold the common good forfeits “its proper purpose and so delegitimizes itself.”34 In the face of further

30 Ibid., no. 122, p. 69.
31 Ibid., no. 385, p. 218.
32 Ibid., no. 398, p. 21.
33 Ibid., p. 222.
34 Ibid., no. 394, p. 223 and no. 398, p. 225.
delegitimization of political authority, the Church’s Social Doctrine posits that the citizens reserve the prerogative “in replacing them when they do not fulfill their functions satisfactorily.”

The prayer for the nation will continue so that the elected are given the opportunity “to share fully in the destiny of the people and to seek solutions to social problems.” The elected are challenged to “put power into practice as service” that restores the respect for the rule of law, promotes a legally binding code of conduct in the South China Sea, emergency response and disaster management, protection for migrant workers, security for all trafficked persons, peace, reconciliation efforts and combatting terrorism.

4. THE CHURCH’S RESPONSE

By far the harm reduction strategies are more effective. These strategies focus on the prevention of drug-related harms (Newcombe, 1992, 2) at the individual, community and societal levels and of the different types, ranging from health to social and economic rather than the prevention of drug use per se. The reduction of the harmful effects does not mean a blanket approval of drug use but the dignity and rights of the drug users are duly respected. In lieu of harm reduction, Atty. Ricky Gunawan, the Director of the Community Legal Aid Institute, Jakarta, Indonesia, has declared that “[P]unitive policies [alone] don’t work and what works are anti-illegal drug campaigns that respect the human dignity and evidence-based public health response.”

By and large, the Philippine Church has adopted the Drug Education & Harm Reduction Policies and Programs as the bases of her pastoral responses. This is clearly evident in the following:

- The Archdiocese of Manila has the Sanlakbay Program with Faith Formation (c/o Fr. Bobby de la Cruz) and the Healing/Recovery Program (c/o CEFAM) with 20/10 Programs and 20 topics in 10 weeks training program for parish volunteers.
- The Archdiocese of Pampanga has stepped up efforts to convert the old Cursillo house into Training and Formation Center for drug dependents.
- The Archdiocese of Cebu has the Pilot Program under the aegis of Msgr. Carmelo Diola & Salesian Priests, the Formation Programs and Livelihood Training: welding, automotive, etc.
- In the archdiocese of Cagayan de Oro, Archbishop Tony Ledesma, SJ, in his pastoral letter dated August 4, 2016, averred, “I am asking all pastors in the Archdiocese to open available facilities such as churches and parish halls for community-based recovery programs.”
- The Diocese of Pasig, has the parish-based Outpatient Program (c/o Fr. Jun Sanchez and Dr. Rex Barboza) who collaborate closely with the Barangay (c/o Brgy. Captain).
- The Diocese of Cubao has the Kasahugan Program in St. Joseph’s Parish, Anonas and the Six Month Outpatient program in place.
- In the neighboring Diocese of Caloocan, Bp. Ambo David in collaboration with the CEFAM graduates, the DOH personnel, the Mayor’s Office and the Lawyers’ Group (c/o Atty Bok Labastilla).
- In the Diocese of Novaliches under the leadership of Bp. Tobias, Fr. Luciano Felloni and Fr. Tony Labiao, the diocese has the Ubas Program, the Faith Formation, Psycho-Education and Support Groups like AA.

The countervailing moral outcry of the Church, civil society and the international community is an indictment of the tyranny of EJK in this ‘war’ on drugs.

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36 Ibid., no. 410, p. 231.
38 Powerpoint Presentation, Fr. Manoling Francisco, SJ, September 14, 2016.
39 Ibid., Updated version for Our Lady of Pentecost Parish, October 27, 2016.
IN MEMORIAM

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

—MATTHEW 11:28

ateneo.edu/alumni/memoriam

August 18, 2016 Alex C. Eufemio (GS ’65, HS ’69)
August 20, 2016 Rodolfo “Rody” P. Cruz (BSBM ’72)
August 25, 2016 Daniel Mendoza (GS ’81)
September 1, 2016 Ramiro C. Cabrera (GS ’52, HS ’56)
September 2, 2016 Atty. Leonardo H. Guizon (HS ’47)
September 11, 2016 Ricardo “Boy” B. Ong (BSBM ’73)
September 22, 2016 Hector T. Lopez (HS ’34, AA ’36)
October 2, 2016 Roberto “Bombit” M. Paterno (GS ’48, HS ’52, AB Hum ’56)
October 9, 2016 Victor Reynaldo “Bobby” A. Tanchoco (HS ’62, BS Eco ’66)
October 10, 2016 Rafael “Lito” G. Hocson (GS ’56, HS ’60, AB Eco ’64, MBM ’66)
October 11, 2016 Manuel “Noli” S.C. Asensio III (GS ’72, HS ’76)
October 14, 2016 Pedro N. Prado (AB Philo ’69)
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November 9, 2016 Eric Jose “Jojo” P. Olaguer (GS ’75, HS ’79, AB Philo ’83)
Atty. Francisco Jose “Jun” S. Villa, Jr. (JD ’93)
November 18, 2016 Alex C. Eufemio (GS ’65, HS ’69)
November 20, 2016 Ambrosio B. Gonzales (GS ’68)
Invitation to the 1916 Alumni Day celebration, courtesy of the Ateneo de Manila University Archives.