ANOTHER REFLECTION ON POPE FRANCIS?

AUTHENTIC POWER: AN ENCOUNTER WITH POPE FRANCIS

SABRINA ONGKIKO: BUILDING BRIDGES

RICKY PALOU: NO TRICKS FOR THE MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN

THE WAY OF THE TAI

BOOK EXCERPT: HEARTSTRONG
Ateneo High School students at an outreach activity in Montalban, Rizal.

Photo by William Baclao / University Communications and Public Relations Office (UCPRO).
A Word from the Editor
From the Director, Office of Alumni Relations
From the University President

ANOTHER REFLECTION ON POPE FRANCIS?
CATALINO G. AREVALO, SJ

AUTHENTIC POWER: An Encounter with Pope Francis
PATRICK JOSEPH D. ECHEVARRIA, SJ

BUILDING BRIDGES
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RICKY PALOU: No tricks for the man behind the curtain
BILLIE ANDRADA

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LOUELLA FORTEZ

Book Excerpt: HEARTSTRONG

In Memoriam
We’d like to welcome you to the maiden issue of Fabilioh! We hope that an online magazine allows us to reach more of you. We are speaking to a large audience here, of course, with considerable breadth and depth: some of you abroad, some of you living in provinces, some of you old, some of you young, and an online magazine will allow us to let you know what’s happening back home, here, at the Ateneo.

We will be issuing this online magazine twice a year: once in July, in honor of the Feast Day of St Ignatius. And the second issue will come out each December, which is homecoming season. As this is our maiden issue, there might be a few kinks in the system so we hope you bear with us. We’d love to hear from you, as well, in case you have suggestions of stories you’d like us to cover. Feel free to email us at alumnirelations@ateneo.edu.

In this issue, we begin with the reflections of two Jesuits, Fr. Catalino Arevalo and Brother Joseph Patrick Echevarria (one very distinguished with a long history while the other just beginning his formation). They reflect on the visit of Pope Francis to Manila last January and share with us their insights on this historical event. Keeping to the call of Pope Francis to “go to the peripheries,” the article written by Ateneo alumna Sabrina Ongkiko on her life as a public school teacher is a concrete example of someone who has accepted that challenge. Of course, what would an Ateneo magazine be without sports? In this issue, we focus on two personalities who have given a lot to sports at the Ateneo, namely, Coach Tai and Ricky Palou.

We hope that you enjoy this first issue and that you continue to grow with us as we find more and more stories to share with you. Although we have all “come down from the hill,” it is important to go back up once in a while to see the divide between the earth and sky. We recall our happy years here and hope that the brief respite will allow us to renew our commitments and strengthen our spirits to go back to our worlds of work and toil with firmer resolve.

On a final note, one that I hope will add flavor to your reading, almost everyone who worked on this magazine is an Atenean.

Best,

Rica Bolipata-Santos, PhD
Editor-in-Chief
My Dear fellow Alumni,

Peace!

I have completed a year in my term as the new Director of the Office of Alumni Relations (OAR). For the past months, I have been given the privilege of meeting and greeting our alumni here and abroad. For the past year, we have delivered continuing formation sessions and the Holy Week Triduum Retreat for our alumni. We have also facilitated the signing of the Memorandum-of-Understanding (MOU) between the Ateneo de Manila University (AdMU) and the Ateneo Alumni Association (AAA). The task now is to facilitate the creation of the Memorandum-of-Agreement between AAA and the AdMU especially in the areas of the (1) Alumni Fees, (2) Alumni Database, and the (3) Annual Alumni Homecoming.

Since formation for our alumni aligned with the AdMU’s strategic thrusts is one of the main goals of the OAR, we have also partnered with the Ignatian Renewal Network (IRN), a group of formators that promote Ignatian spirituality to our alumni.

I am happy to announce to you this maiden issue of Fabilioh!, our bi-annual online Alumni magazine. We also plan to produce print issues with ads to be given as gifts. This magazine will regularly feature news from the various units and offices of the University, our alumni-in-memoriam, exemplary alumni working in the peripheries, and reflections on significant national events, among others.

Fabilioh! is an old cheer, an old traditional cry of Ateneans. Without any root word, Fabilioh! has become legendary over the years unique only to Ateneo. Hardly having any significance at all to the outsider, Fabilioh! is very dear and close to the hearts of all Ateneans. To the Atenista, Fabilioh! is filled with meaning. It sums up the life and the passionate desires of every Atenean soul—desires that put together, create the true Ateneo culture and community of excellence for service.

Fabilioh!

Norberto Maria L. Bautista, SJ
Director, Office of Alumni Relations
You may have heard of the many changes that the Ateneo de Manila is going through. We are poised to fully implement K-12 next year, which promises a total upgrade of our Basic Education curriculum. This has prompted us to institute organizational changes within the Basic Education unit. We shall be building the Senior High School (Grades 11 and 12) this year, which shall include an additional 300 co-ed students from public and private schools. We see this as a way to better prepare our students for university life and to help the country as well.

The Ateneo Junior High School now holds classes in Bellarmine Hall.
Photo courtesy of the UCPRO.
In accord with the university’s strategic goal of internationalization, the Loyola Schools and the Professional Schools have shifted their academic calendar to August this year. This will only bring about greater exchange of people and knowledge across our shores. The latest development in both the Loyola and Professional Schools is our partnership with Le Cordon Bleu, which will be housed in The Areté, the soon-to-rise creative hub of the Ateneo de Manila.

Aside from the expansion of our High School (Grades 7-12), we also see the need to expand our Rockwell campus, which houses the Ateneo Graduate School of Business and the Law School. We also plan to build an annex for the Ateneo School of Medicine and Public Health over at our Ortigas campus in view of the increasing number of students who wish to undergo our unique program in medicine and leadership. For campus sustainability and safety, we are strengthening our buildings (especially those in our Grade School) in response to the findings of Phivolcs on the West Valley Fault.
We are not fazed by the changes we need to make. St Ignatius Loyola gave us a legacy of lightness and freedom in the spirituality he bequeathed to us. And I believe that this Ignatian spirit continues to permeate the entire university to this day. You see this in our faculty who are generous and truly committed to forming our young to become men and women for others. You see this in our staff who genuinely care about service and quality in their work of supporting others. You see this in our students who are truly multi-talented and who desire to lead and make a difference in the lives of our people. Magis, cura personalis, love expressed in deeds of service and excellence for the greater glory of God—these are enduring Ateneo values that give us our bearings when we are tossed about by change or when we are in uncharted territory.

In every graduating class, I tell our young Ateneans to come home every so often to the Ateneo, if only to recover our anchor, our dreams, and our sense of purpose and belonging. Come home to our alma mater, the mother of our soul, especially when the world is too much. “This is the place where we belong.” And so I invite you our dear alumni to come here again to find refreshment and renewal. Even if your having gone down the hill is just a distant memory now, I invite you to take your place on this hill once more, and stand “between the earth and sky.” Come and rest those eagle wings. Come and see the colors of Loyola still flying in the wind.

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

The photos on this spread and featured in other sections of the magazine are the winners of the photo contest “Faces, Places, and Spaces,” held by the UCPRO for the launching of the new Ateneo website.
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And so I invite you our dear alumni to come here again to find refreshment and renewal. Even if your having gone down the hill is just a distant memory now, I invite you to take your place on this hill once more, and stand “between the earth and sky.”

Come and rest those eagle wings. Come and see the colors of Loyola still flying in the wind.
One of Cardinal Tagle’s comments made just after the papal visit was on our need to reflect, “in breadth and depth,” on what we saw, what we experienced. Our need to hear Pope Francis’s words again, to really listen to them, in the quiet of thought and prayer. To ask the Spirit to help us truly understand them.
Another reflection on Pope Francis’s January visit? One of Cardinal Tagle’s comments made just after the papal visit was on our need to reflect, “in breadth and depth,” on what we saw, what we experienced. Our need to hear Pope Francis’s words again, to really listen to them, in the quiet of thought and prayer. To ask the Spirit to help us truly understand them, to help us take up and make ours what we should hold onto, from Francis’s messages, for our own lives. Archbishop Chito is giving us his own lead in this area; not a few of his recent key messages are in fact “Pope Francis follow-ups.”

Let me here take up only two ‘moments’ from the Holy Father’s visit. One, some words, a few lines from the impromptu homily at Tacloban, from the Mass which was, many felt, the ‘high point’ of the five days in the Philippines.

Let me tell you something personal. When, in Rome, I heard of Typhoon Yolanda’s catastrophe, when I ‘witnessed’ it, I felt I had to be here. That was when I decided to come here. I wanted to come, I wanted to be with you. Maybe you will tell me that I came a little late. That is true, but...here I am.2

A priest-friend told me he was here in Manila, at a studio, watching the event on television with a group of newsmen and press photographers, when the Holy Father, standing on the side-stage (not the ‘main altar’ as had been planned), . . . standing in the rain and the wind gusts, spoke—not lines from a a prepared homily—but a few stumbling words from his heart. The priest said to me, “It was so quiet in the room, and I knew there were many there in tears. I knew I couldn’t hold mine back.” Some few moments later, the Pope said:

So many of you have lost everything. I do not know what to tell you, but surely He—Jesus there on the cross—knows what to tell you. So many of you have lost loved ones, members of your family... I can only be silent. I accompany you silently, with my heart.

Many of you have looked to Christ, and you have asked him, ‘Why, Lord, why’? To each one of you, the Lord responds from his heart.

1 [Written at the Loyola House of Studies, Ateneo de Manila, Easter Sunday 2015. ] The TV and radio stations deluged us with reports and reflections while the visit was in progress. Some video-documentaries have already been available; JesCom’s was surely one of the first, and we might expect and hope, one of the best. Picture—’coffee table’—books will soon be in the bookstores. With so many photos taken—(in the millions?)—of the events, how many will be on sale?...

2 Compassion and its call to nearness; its call to really ‘being with’...
I have no more words to say to you. Let us look on Jesus. He is the Lord.  

I don’t think I need to add anything by way of comment. When in one of the TV recordings of the event, a flash view is shown, of a rather ‘tough-looking man wiping tears kind-of-strongly from his eyes’, I thought that was more than comment enough. In one of his talks, Francis said we have to learn how to weep again, to weep truly for others’ pain, because the life and culture of our own time has processed the hardening of our hearts.

A ‘second moment.’ In the press conference Cardinal Tagle and the pope’s spokesman Father Lombardi gave at the Diamond Hotel on the evening of 17 January, the Cardinal shared something of the conversation he had with the Holy Father on the plane bringing them back to Manila after the shortened Tacloban visit.

It was an intense half-day. For me, it was taken for granted that Pope Francis will bring inspiration to many people, will touch many of our people’s minds and hearts. What I am really curious about is how he will be affected by our people and by the suffering they conveyed to him…. When we had already boarded the plane, I asked him: ‘So how is it, Your Holiness? Are you tired…are you afraid perhaps because this is really your first typhoon?’ … He was silent for some moments, then he said: ‘This visit is really for me. This is for me. I am learning… This visit is for me.’

Cardinal Chito’s own comment:

O, … that’s how to be a pastor. You learn; you never stop learning. Then you bring it to your heart.”  

Let me add an impression of my own. I had a sense, which struck me most during the Mass for priests and religious at the Manila cathedral (morning, 16 January), that Francis was listening and even quietly praying most of the time, a sort of quasi-permanent attitude he had grown into through many years of his life. Not just as a priest and pastor, but as the person he is, and has become, with God’s grace. He speaks often about “arriving at an encounter with the Living God, the real core of our Christian life.”

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3 Silence; the opening, the listening of the heart. No need of empty words. Again, genuine compassion: nothing put on; the real thing.

4 The needful ‘listening of the heart’.
He says many think they can come to this by their own efforts, through self-mortification; or much meditation and thought; or through penance, fasting and austerity of life, and the like.”

But Pope Francis says:

But Jesus tells us that the path to encountering Him is to find His wounds. We find Jesus’ wounds in carrying out deeds of mercy, giving our body, ... the body, ... and giving our soul too, but—I stress—looking for, finding the body of your wounded brother, because he is hungry, because he is thirsty, because he is naked, because he is humiliated, because he is enslaved, because he’s in jail or in a hospital. These are the wounds of Jesus today. And Jesus asks us to take a leap of faith, towards Him, ... but through these His wounds. You might say, ‘O, great! Let’s set up a foundation to help many people, and carry out many good projects to help.’ Yes, that’s important too; but if we remain on this level only , we will be ... just philanthropic. We need to touch the wounds of Jesus. We must caress the wounds of Jesus. We need to bind the wounds of Jesus with tenderness. We have to kiss the wounds of Jesus, and this truly, literally. Just think of what happened to Saint Francis, when he embraced the leper. The same thing happened to Thomas the Apostle, when the Lord invited him to put his finger into His wounds, to put his hand into the pierced side...his life changed.... The way to our encounter with Jesus are His wounds. There is no other way.”

5 A homily Pope Francis gave at a Mass in Casa Santa Marta in July of 2013
Finally, just another point, I believe moving in the same direction. Some Francis words:

The biggest problem [in the area of Church teaching] is when the message we preach ... seems identified with overemphasized secondary aspects which, important as they may be, do not in themselves convey the heart of the message of Christ.

The Church, he had pointed out, has to make sure it doesn’t bury the good news of God’s saving merciful love but to set it up on a flagpole.

People in Buenos Aires knew that their Archbishop Jorge had a personal line-up of “four bergogliano principles.” Unfortunately, we can’t spell out their meaning here and now; but here they are:

Time is greater than space.
Unity prevails over conflict.

The whole is greater than the parts.

And, what I think is really relevant here:

Realities are more important than ideas.

He sometimes manifests a certain distrust of those “intellectuals” who spend their time spinning out theories, ideological and conceptual systems which in time have less and less contact with reality. “Intellectuals” who join all of the above with talk, talk, “supposedly profound talk, much of it wordy, fuzzy and pretentious.”

Bergoglio’s high intelligence (a Jesuit contemporary even speaks of “brilliance”) was “recognized” in the Order from early on in his Jesuit life; hence the responsibilities given him from his priestly ordination onwards. But his mind and spirit remained ever in contact with the real, and connected with praxis and deeds—so those who knew him long and well invariably add. Unfailingly joined too, to a living sense of mission and service—the service of the Lord and His people, which was always the one meaning of his vocation and his life. We musn’t forget too: joined also to humility and capacity for hard work, and a hands-on dedication to poor people.

After the hour which Pope Francis shared with us Jesuits at the Papal Nunciature one evening (17 January), a fellow-Jesuit said to me that what struck him most was “the Holy Father’s authenticity, his down-to-earth honesty; nothing put on, no false fronts to try to impress.”

“Walang bola, talagang di bolero; always just himself, his flesh-and-blood self; the truth as he sees it, simply and directly told.”

These are some things that came to my mind during and after Pope Francis’s visit. Things I too have to go back to, now that he has gone, in thought, and above all, in prayer and in deed, so that the January events and words may change my own life, even just a little, by the Lord’s goodness and grace.

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CATALINO G AREVALO SJ (GS 1937, HS 1941, PhD Humanities (honoris causa) 1998), called the ‘Dean of Filipino Theologians’, was born on April 20, 1925, entered the Society on May 30, 1941, and was ordained June 19, 1954. He was the first dean and first president of Loyola School of Theology.

6 Read Austen Ivereigh’s fine book, The Great Reformer, sometime.
AUTHENTIC POWER
An Encounter with Pope Francis
by Joseph Patrick D Echevarria sj
Photos by Harvey Mateo sj and Arnulfo Bugtas sj.
Last January 16, when I joined a group of 40 Jesuits to have a private audience with Pope Francis, I saw a leader who was not just approachable, but one who himself approaches.

IN Hindsight, meeting Pope Francis could have been like meeting any other person. Yes, he is world-famous, the spiritual leader of a billion people, and canonically my boss. Yet he is also just a person—who eats, laughs, and struggles like all of us.

I remember before blessing the crowd at St Peter’s Square, he asked them to bless him first. When asked to describe himself, he said “a sinner.” And in the recent Synod on the Family, instead of exercising his authority for decision-making, he sought dialogue and collaboration. Looking at these gestures, I sense that he would prefer that people see him not as an imposing and intimidating leader, but as regular person—someone whom everyone can readily approach, connect with, and relate to.

Last January 16, when I joined a group of 40 Jesuits to have a private audience with Pope Francis, I saw a leader who was not just approachable, but one who himself approaches.

We were gathered in a simple reception area with warm lights and a loose arrangement of chairs facing a small table with a microphone. It was around 7:30pm when his bodyguards opened a side door. We all stood in anticipation. Apparently, the pope passed by the kitchen—perhaps to grab something to eat before meeting us. We were told that he went beyond schedule at his meeting with families in the Mall of Asia Arena. But if he was tired or hungry from his long day, it did not show. When he came in, we cheered and applauded while an assistant directed him to the table and microphone in front. Instead of following protocol, however, he went the other way towards the Jesuits at the back of the room. We all turned around as he gave each Jesuit a
personal moment starting with those at the back. Many of the more senior Jesuits kissed his hand, some even had a little Italian or Spanish message for him. The pope had a big smile and occasionally nodded as he wove his way around the room not wanting to miss anyone.

When my turn came to face him, I must have looked unsure and lost because his smile seemed to widen and he was the one who extended his hand. Forgetting protocol, I quickly shook his hand. His grip was soft and gentle, unlike the firm handshakes common in business. I probably should have kissed it like the others but it was too late and he did not seem to mind. I thought he would be taller, but a slight stoop made our eyes level. The eye bags, wrinkles, and facial spots showed his age, but his eyes were wide and bright, full of life and excitement. I sensed that if we were happy to see him, he was even happier to meet us.

Pope Francis sat beside his translator and took the microphone. “I will speak in Spanish,” he said somewhat apologetically, “because if I use English, I will not be able to say anything!...and you will not be able to understand anything!” He has been studying English in preparation for his visit—a challenge at 78—but he is not yet so comfortable with it. I thought about how old age is often an excuse to avoid learning or trying new things—not so with this pope. Clearly, it was more important for him to speak from the heart and it set the tone for the audience.

“I did not prepare any speech,” he continued through the translator,” but I am ready to answer your questions.” I should not have been surprised by his candor. His unscripted in-flight interviews should have been enough warning. So Fr. Louis Catalan raised his
When my turn came, I must have looked unsure and lost because his smile seemed to widen and he was the one who extended his hand. Forgetting protocol, I quickly shook his hand. His grip was soft and gentle. I probably should have kissed it like the others but it was too late and he did not seem to mind. I sensed that if we were happy to see him, he was even happier to meet us.

hand to ask (in Spanish) about the pope’s impressions of Filipinos so far. The pope nodded in understanding as the translator sat back. He admitted that after just two days in the country, he did not have a comprehensive answer yet. But he does know Filipinos living in Rome—in the Curia, in Santa Marta. In the kitchen, in the reception area, he sees Filipinos. He could not fully explain it, but he sensed an “elevated dignity” among Filipinos. He was impressed by their profound religiosity, especially in their devotion to Mary whose rosary he noticed was always carried by Filipinos in Rome. He added that he admired how much Filipinos spoke fondly of and genuinely cared for their parents, especially their grandparents. Parents and grandparents seemed to hold a special place in the pope’s heart. Being elderly in Europe and other developed countries often meant being set aside and marginalized. That is not the case for many Filipinos.

Thus, when Fr. Tony Moreno asked what message the pope had for all the Jesuits in the Philippines, he immediately called for Jesuits to remember the marginalized and go to the peripheries, especially to the poor. This is the Jesuit identity and charism. “When Christ looks at the poor, he is looking at himself.” Previous Jesuit documents challenged Jesuits to go to the “frontier.” Frontier referred to places where few or no
When Fr. Tony Moreno asked what message the pope had for all the Jesuits in the Philippines, he immediately called for Jesuits to remember the marginalized and go to the peripheries, especially to the poor.

one had gone before. There was a sense of trailblazing pride, adventure and exploration. In practice, this included going to far-off missions, immersing in unfamiliar cultures and faiths, even studying and researching emerging fields in the arts and sciences. “Periphery,” however, gave a different sense: not of adventure and pride, but of humility and service. Periphery implied not just that no one had gone there, but that no one wanted to go there. For the pope, that was where Jesuits should go.

In the Philippines, the Jesuits are already at the periphery: in Bilibid, in the Philippine General Hospital (PGH), and with abused Overseas Filipino Workers, just to name a few examples. Fr. Chester Yacub, chaplain at PGH, asked if the pope had a message for the sick and infirmed. “Tell them that Christ is real,” he emphasized, “he is not just an idea, not just a pious thought.” Christ shares in the suffering alongside the sick and infirmed. To the hospital doctors and staff, he added, “The sick are the flesh of Christ—they mirror Christ,” and urged them to see Christ in all they minister to. I remember the picture of the pope embracing a severely disfigured man. He sees beyond their infirmity and recognizes Christ.

The pope also had a message to the millions of Filipino migrants and workers around the world. He said that many migrant and overseas workers go through a *via crucis* (the way of the cross) because of their painful experiences: the loneliness and difficult working conditions, but more so when they suffer sexual abuse and slavery. These are precisely the people at the periphery the Jesuits need to reach out to. “Christ is always with them,” he said.

Pope Francis’s call is to go not just to the frontier, but to the periphery. And not just to go and serve, but to
find and meet Christ there. To meet and engage others in order to encounter Christ— that is the pope’s hope, especially to the young. When told about the Jesuit ministries with the youth, he said, “My message to the youth is: do not be frightened.” He encouraged everyone to meet other people and engage life. He lamented how fear was paralyzing so many of the young. “Do not allow yourself to be alone,” he added, “walk always with Christ.” To the Jesuits, especially working in schools and with the youth, he instructed further, “I ask Jesuits to journey with people—accompany them, answer their questions honestly, walk beside them but always walk together behind Christ.” This request reflected his way of connecting to the youth: engaging and journeying with them, leading them to Christ.

For all the newsworthy initiatives—drastically simplifying the Papal lifestyle, auditing the scandal-ridden Vatican banks, speaking against inequality and bigotry—the pope always returned to Christ, to following and anchoring our life in Christ. He reminded us that for all the good and important works the Jesuits are busy with, we should not let go of prayer. Prayer is what allows us to return to our center: Jesus.

When I see Pope Francis leaving the comforts of his palace, riding a dangerously open vehicle, and saying Mass in the middle of a typhoon, I see a true follower of Christ. He reaches out and risks to show people Christ, to share with them the joy of finding Jesus, to manifest God’s love and mercy particularly to those who most need it, the poor and those in the periphery.

I believe if we look back and recall the lessons the Ateneo instilled in us, we will find few more ingrained than the call to go “down from the hill.” Down from our privileged position, down from comfort and security, down and away to the periphery where there is greater need and where we will find Christ waiting for us. This is where the pope is inviting us to go. Indeed, if an Atenean is to be proud of anything, it will only be because he or she has used the many gifts God has given to generously love and humbly serve God and neighbor, particularly the poor and those in the periphery.

The audience came to an end when Pope Francis stood to give us his blessing and asked for our prayers.
in return. He then called everyone for a photo near his portrait. Whatever shyness we had in the beginning was now nowhere to be found. He was one among us. A place was quickly cleared and people found their places. And as the cameramen focused, I realized there was no need to remind us to smile.

Before parting, as a small gift to the pope, the Jesuits sang Amare et Servire—“in all things, to love and serve the Lord.” His eyes brightened when he recognized the words. And then he bowed his head, visibly relishing the moment.

JOSEPH PATRICK D. ECHEVARRIA, SJ (B.S. Physics 2005, Computer Engineering 2006) graduated Class Valedictorian and finished his MBA at the Asian Institute of Management in 2009. He entered the Society of Jesus in 2011 and is currently finishing his philosophy studies.
BUILDING BRIDGES
As a public school teacher and as an Atenean, I’m neither this nor that but I am both. Where is my place then? I realized that my place is to be in the middle. I am in the best position to bridge.

by Sabrina Ongkiko
I was standing in front of the classroom wearing my teacher’s uniform and sweat was trickling down my back. With chalk in hand, I was facilitating a discussion of the Circulatory System. These were all grade 6 pupils and they had been tackling the different body systems since 3rd grade. I thought it best to ask what they thought of the word, ‘system.’

“Why do we call the circulatory system, a system?” I asked in Filipino. One student said because it is composed of different parts. I wrote the words, ‘different parts’ on the board.

“What do these parts do?”

“They do different things!”

“So we’re saying that each part has a role to play?”

“Yes!” Then began an army of hands shooting through the air with students wanting to be called to recall the function of each major part of the circulatory system.

“But what do you notice about their roles? The blood needs to deliver oxygen to the body so the heart pumps the blood which passes through the blood vessels…what does this say about the parts?”

“It’s like they’re working together.” (I wrote the words ‘working together’ on the board.)

“Why do they need to work together? What’s their purpose?”

“So blood can circulate.”

“Isn’t that interesting? They are doing different things but they have a common purpose?”
“Yes!” (I wrote the words ‘common purpose’ on the board)

This was the short version of it. In truth, there was a lot of back and forth questioning. I always liked to see my students’ furrowed brows as much as I liked seeing their eyes light up. I asked the class to combine all the key words to create their understanding of the word, ‘system.’ This was what they came up with:

A system is composed of different parts working together to achieve a common purpose.

I was a Biology major but one system I’ve always been interested in is that of the Department of Education. Most of my years in the Ateneo were spent with an organization called Alay ni Ignacio or ANI, as we fondly called it. During summers, we would teach the best public high school students from partner schools in nearby communities so they could get a better shot at passing the entrance tests of good universities.

For most of my students, getting into a good university on a scholarship is the golden ticket to better opportunities and thus a better life. I visited their homes, met with their parents, and theirs was clearly a struggle to go up the economic ladder. Getting a good education was my students’ way of saying: “I don’t want to live like this anymore. I don’t want my family to stay this way forever.”

I have always known how important education is—my own parents made sure of this but in ANI, I saw how it can really change lives.

This explains my continuing interest in the education system. I loved my students and I loved teaching and there were so many questions about this system which I wanted to explore—why was there a big gap between the education I was getting with what my students were getting? How do we provide access so more children can get educated? How do we improve teaching and learning in spite of limited resources?

This love and my questions led me to teach in the public school.
I won’t claim to have the answers. If anything, my questions bred new ones: What do we do when students go to school hungry or tired from working? Why is it that in this system, we are more afraid to be right than to just go with the majority who follow wrong orders? How do we strengthen the resilience that is already in a number of students, teachers, and parents?

For six years, I was weaving my way through the education system and with it I have woven stories—of challenges and limitations but also of dreams, meaning, and hope. I realized that the picture painted about the public schools has always been a dismal one. But being in a public school every day, I saw that a more balanced picture could be painted. For every dark and angry stroke, I can add a lighter more hopeful spatter. I painted using my words and began sharing the stories I have to people.

I started to be known as ‘the Atenean who teaches in a public school.’

One of my co-teachers, a very candid and spirited middle-aged woman asked me, “If you were not an
Atenean... if you were just a normal teacher like us, would you get noticed?"
She proceeded to share that her mother was a very good teacher who taught for many years but never received any attention or recognition.

This got me thinking. There was truth in what she asked and I gathered two things from her: one that I wasn’t a ‘normal’ public school teacher because I was Atenean and second, ‘normal’ teachers—even when they perform—lack the recognition they deserve.

On the other hand, people would always point out that my choice to teach in the public school was novel or noble even if a lot of people make similar career choices every day. For them, I was not ‘normal’ as an Atenean either.

In most people’s eyes, I am not ‘normal’—as a public school teacher and as an Atenean. It’s like a riddle: I’m neither this nor that but I am both. Where is my place then?

I realized that my place is to be in the middle. I am in the best position to bridge.

As Ateneans, we are called to ‘go down the hill.’ But when I did, I found that the hill wasn’t a hill but was actually a chasm. A great divide. And being there in the middle presents a compelling opportunity to stretch ourselves to create bridges—of understanding, of relationships, solidarity, and hope.

I am not saying that being a public school teacher is the only way to help bridge the gap in education. As my students said, a system is composed of different parts working together to achieve a common purpose. I bridge by being a teacher. Others build bridges by being in the management side of the Department of Education. Others bridge by being in NGOs and in the private sector. All of us have different roles but are
working together to ensure that Filipino learners get the education they deserve.

**BRIDGE OF UNDERSTANDING**

I had my own perception of the public school when I entered. I thought teachers would be difficult to deal with and bad-tempered. I thought students would be miserable because they were poor. I also heard a lot of stories about the culture in public schools and how this might eat you up.

I can tell you that there is a grain of truth here, but I can also tell you that it is not black and white. Most of how I saw these things was actually colored by my perception.

Ma’am Rodriguez was a senior teacher when I started teaching. She was old but still strong. She was strict and students were scared of her. At times, it made me jealous that they were always quiet in her class and not in mine. That year, she was given the lowest section. “That never happens!” she said in frustration. You never give the lowest section to a teacher about to retire because they wouldn’t have the energy to handle it. The lowest section is the ‘problem’ class—you would find there a mix of non-readers and slow readers and students with behavioral problems. I should know because I was always given the lowest section too.
As I gathered my things at the end of class, Ma’am Rodriguez would often ask me, “O kaya mo pa ba? Ako give up na.” Most of the time I’d just smile and say, “Kaya pa natin yan, Ma’am.” It’s easy to say that Ma’am Rodriguez lacked the patience and the passion. But whenever I went to school a little bit early, I would see her bent on a table with some of our students teaching them to read. As I later learned, she devotedly did this every day. Saying that she had given up was only her way of expressing frustration. But she never did. I learned to probe deeper, to ask her questions, and to listen and with it my perception changed. When it did, I gained a nanay in school.

Building a bridge of understanding means understanding the context. And my students were my best teachers.

During my first year of teaching, I would walk with them going home. That was always my favorite part of the day because they would be the ones giving the lecture and I would be the one taking notes. Jackneil told me how they never get to eat at Jollibee not until his father wins the lotto. Hannah asked me if I ever tasted rice cooked in oil sprinkled with salt and soy sauce. When I told her I haven’t, she gave me a wide smile and urged me to taste it because it was good, “Ma’am, if we have extra money, we put bits of chichirya in it!” That December, Carla happily told me that they had a new Christmas tree. She and her brother saw an old broken umbrella from the garbage dump, removed the cloth, and decorated it with Styrofoam balls.

I looked at them and I was amazed. Even as sad as their stories might seem, they had no trace of self-pity. There was only an eagerness to share their lives. My students did not look down on themselves because they

I am not saying that being a public school teacher is the only way to help bridge the gap in education.

A system is composed of different parts working together to achieve a common purpose. All of us have different roles but are working together to ensure that Filipino learners get the education they deserve.
Before I became a teacher, I rarely cried. I learned to cry when I started teaching. Now, when I talk about my students’ dreams, I would choke and cry.

I was taught by my students to look at their lives from their point of view and not compare it to the life I’m used to. I have learned a lot about life from my students—beautiful things like how to make Christmas trees out of broken umbrellas.

**BRIDGE OF RELATIONSHIPS**

Before I became a teacher, I rarely cried. After college, I served as a Jesuit Volunteer and at the end of a full and meaningful year, all of us volunteers were in a circle, holding hands, overwhelmed by emotions. My batch mates started crying and I felt all the emotions but I couldn’t cry. Scrunching my face to force tears out didn’t work.

I learned to cry when I started teaching. Now, when I talk about my students’ dreams, I would choke and cry. There was a time when everybody in the lowest section passed my quiz for the first time and I cried. I cried when I had to say goodbye to Abdul because finally his family could go back to Zamboanga after the siege.

It doesn’t mean that when you serve you are already vulnerable. Vulnerability is not just opening oneself so one can give; it is also the openness to receive from the people you serve. Teaching taught me to be vulnerable—to acknowledge that my students have power over me. It was a necessary opening in building a deep relationship with them.
Teaching taught me to be vulnerable—to acknowledge that my students have power over me.

Building a bridge of relationships is to be ‘men and women WITH others.’ In my case, it is about journeying with my students and co-teachers. When I look at my co-teachers, it strikes me that we come from different backgrounds and we have unique histories but we are all here now as teachers—battling the same challenges, experiencing the same joys, teaching the same students. We found ourselves on the same road and are now traveling together.

My co-teacher did not consider me as a ‘normal’ public school teacher but being with them and my students taught me that no matter how different you might seem, what mattered was the relationship you had with them. It is this relationship that gets you to motivate each other, listen to one another, and be more compassionate towards each other. All of these are crucial if we want to make our school better for our students. It is in this relationship that we no longer consider each other strange or a stranger. Instead, there arises this loving familiarity that makes what we do together more meaningful.

**BRIDGE OF SOLIDARITY**

There are lots of things that need to be fixed in the basic education system. I do not fancy myself as a superhero who can singlehandedly transform schools. However, I do know that I only have one life to live and I want to make it count by making a difference in my own way. That’s what the idealistic part of me says. The realistic part would say that I need help. We are a system, after all.

We had a lesson on mixtures where I had all these plastic cups lined up in lieu of beakers. Each cup had a different ingredient—soy sauce, rice grains, salt,
vegetable oil, etc. I asked my students to predict what would happen if we combine the different ingredients. I lifted the cup with the oil and the cup with the salt. The students excitedly raised their hands and gave their predictions. To boost their anticipation, I dramatically raised the cups and said, “Let’s see what happens.” Students were holding their breaths and everyone was silent. As I was about to tip the cup of salt to the oil, a couple of students suddenly shouted, “Maaaaaaam, huwaaaag!” I stopped. “Why not?” I asked in Filipino. They said, “Ma’am, sayang. Ipangkakain na lang po namin.”

I came face to face with my limitations that day. As a teacher, I could create a classroom where they could learn and enjoy learning but there are other needs that I am not equipped to address. I have to involve more people so my students can just focus on learning. I started creating a network that I can tap for health and psychological concerns and for school materials. I would also invite friends who are in different fields to inspire and interact with my students.

Building a bridge of solidarity means you don’t have to be alone in the middle. The more people we hold hands with, the better and faster we can close the gap.

**WHY BOTHER BEING A BRIDGE?**

Because I have students like Joshua. Joshua was one of our poorest students. He only had a pair of black pants—his favorite even though our school slacks is colored brown. He would sew this up whenever it gets torn. His backpack’s zipper was broken. He got a plastic straw
to tie the flaps together so his things wouldn’t fall out. Joshua was the student you would bring extra paper and pencil for during a quiz because he didn’t have any. His aunt adopted him because his parents couldn’t afford the extra expenses in our already free public school.

But Joshua was able to get into the 6th grade and during graduation practice, he was the one singing the graduation song with all his might. He was at the back and I was standing by the stage but I could see his open mouth and his matching facial expression while singing, “Lipad, lipad kaya kong lumipad. Lipad, lipad, ano man ang iyong hangad. Maniwala sa iyong galing, abot mo ang bituin. Lipad, lipad, kaya mong lumipad.”

Joshua believed he could fly. If he believed in his dreams no matter what his circumstance might be, then I believe that our education system should work to help him achieve this. And being a bridge as his teacher is a part I have to play.

Ultimately, being a bridge is stretching yourself because of love. In one of my prayers, God reminded me that the call was not to teach, the call has always been to love.

This love is the reason why I stay and why I say yes to teaching over and over again. This love drives me to understand the system more and pushes me to trust and work with others.

It is this love that secures those bridges—of understanding, relationships, and solidarity—with hope.

Teaching taught me to be vulnerable— to acknowledge that my students have power over me.

Building a bridge of relationships is to be ‘men and women WITH others.’

In my case, it is about journeying with my students and co-teachers.

SABRINA ONGKOKO (BS Biology 2005) fondly called Teacher Sabs by her students, joined the Jesuit Volunteers Philippines for a year after graduating. She started teaching in 2009 at Culiat Elementary School. Sabrina chose to love as a public school teacher and is continuously taught by her students to love.
RICKY PALOU

NO TRICKS FOR THE MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN

by Billie Andrada

Sports has always been a constant in Ricky Palou’s life. A true blue Atenean from grade school to college, he played for the Ateneo throughout his life, most notably in basketball, during Ateneo’s years in the NCAA.

On 2 May, Ricky Palou entered the small café of Holiday Inn, a tall and grizzled man with a slight hunch. Lean and steady in movement, he struck me undeniably as an athlete in carriage and poise. But it wasn’t until he spoke that a clear impression was made. He leaned on the table, hands clasped and body still. His voice, quiet and steady, carried over easily in the recording. Here was a man both laidback, not rushed in his responses, and alert, coiled with intent. The Asian U23 Volleyball Championship was only beginning and around us were players from different countries eating their breakfast before moving on to the competition areas. By the time this story comes out, the Philippine delegation had already placed seventh in the games. With little time to prepare the current team, and without some of the key players the management wanted to include, as well as the lack of experience in competing internationally, this year’s placement in the U23 was a huge achievement for the fledgling team. It was on this tension-filled morning that I interviewed Ricky Palou, who was there as the secretary of Larong Volleyball sa Pilipinas, Inc. (LVPI), the current national governing body for volleyball in the Philippines. He is also the current University athletics director of Ateneo de Manila since 2007, the Oz behind the growth of the Ateneo de Manila sports program. The brick road to meeting him is filled with grand narra-
tives of wins and turnarounds from the different sporting teams of the Ateneo, filled with names of star athletes and coaches, TV spots and trending hashtags. But where we find Ricky Palou, instead, is in the details and, unlike Oz, there are no tricks.

Sports has always been a constant in Ricky Palou’s life. A true blue Atenean from grade school to college, he played for the Ateneo throughout his life, most notably in basketball during Ateneo’s years in the NCAA where he was known as Ricky “Palpal” Palou. He won championships during his time not just in basketball but also in track and field. Despite being a star athlete, he wasn’t always a good student. After his freshman year, he failed to make the QPI (Quality Point Index) and he “was asked to leave but with the condition that if I did well, I would be re-accepted.” He went on to study at Ateneo de Davao, before coming back to graduate in the Ateneo de Manila university campus. It was a lesson he learned that carried over in the support programs for the athletes. Three years ago, he started a study hall in the Blue Eagle gym where athletes were required to spend time to study. This ensured that they maintained the passing units required for student athletes, which is 60 percent of the units being taken, according to Rodel Cubos of the University Athletics office.

After graduating with a BS Management degree, he worked for the Far East Bank and Trust company until 1998, and for the Philippine Basketball Association as Financial Director from 1999 until his retirement in 2004, when a call from then-president Fr. Bienvenido “Ben” Nebres found him going back to his roots. “I didn’t expect it. Actually, in 2004, I already said to myself that I will retire and spend more time with my family and just take it easy.” Yet he found it very difficult to say ‘no’ to Fr. Ben Nebres, who was also his teacher in high school. He
The rise and domination of the Ateneo Blue Eagles under Norman Black in basketball is now well-known. This success was one Palou wanted to recreate in the school’s other sports programs.

also felt called “to help the university in whatever capacity I would be able to do so.” In 2004, Palou joined the University as Varsity Sports Development director and as part of the committee (with F Harn, J Campos, J Capistrano, among others) who searched for the next coach for the Ateneo Blue Eagles basketball team. This, of course, led to Norman Black being hired as consultant, and eventually, coach—he went on to lead the Blue Eagles through a 5-peat, record-breaking championship streak from seasons 71 to 75 (2008 to 2012) of the UAAP.

ON FINDING THE RIGHT PEOPLE

In 2007, Palou took over as University Athletics Director after Jose Capistrano. He came on at a time of renewed interest in Ateneo’s athletics following the 2002 UAAP Championship of the basketball team and their consequent final four finishes after. When asked about the year he became the director, he said, “During my first year, people were just focused on basketball. So, one of the directives that Fr. Ben gave me was to see that the other sports get more attention, and to look at the facilities—how we can improve our facilities. It was kind of difficult because there was no budget for this, so we had to find ways to generate funds to fund all these other sports, and to improve our facilities.” This directive defined the focus of his term. Under his direction, new sports programs were created and improved to varying successes, and new facilities were built to train the athletes.

Some of the triumphs and strategies of his program are more known the others. What is easily apparent is the importance Palou places on the people involved in the sporting programs. The rise and eventual domination of the Ateneo Blue Eagles under Norman Black in basketball is now a well-known story and the subject of
Its own book, 5. This success was one Palou wanted to recreate in the school’s other sports programs through the recruitment of both exceptional players and coaches. On this, Palou said, “For me the number one requirement for a good sports program is to hire good coaches. When you hire good coaches, they attract good athletes.” This is also the story of the Lady Blue Spikers under Coach Anusorn “Tai” Bundit, who, when he came on in 2013 for a one-month stint, told Palou that the “team is not good enough.” Coach Tai changed their training from once-a-day to twice, increased expectations of their performance during training, and taught the players meditation. They entered season 76 expecting third place. They ended up winning the championship, and went on to defend the title next year with 16-0 wins—practically a massacre. When asked what made him stay and coach the team, despite being a national
It takes a lot of money and energy to put all these together and, in a university catering to some 5,000 college students with competing needs, there is not always enough funding.

coch in Thailand, he had this to say of the Lady Blue Spikers: “They are not lazy. They wanted to improve.” Palou added that Coach Tai thought “this team will go places because they have the drive.” What is apparent, in Heart Strong, the book covering the Lady Blue Spikers’ meteoric rise to the championship, and in all subsequent media coverage, is that the unique rapport between the coach and his players was central to their success.

The combination of exceptional coaching and aggressive recruitment that eventually led to the Lady Blue Spikers’ (Coach Anusorn Bundit) back-to-back championship in volleyball in seasons 76 and 77 was also recreated for the Blue Spikers. They went on to win the championship in season 77. The Ateneo Blue Batters (Coach Randy Dizer), similarly, won the championship for baseball for seasons 75 to 77. The school has had great successes, too, in badminton and swimming over the past years. Palou was quick to sing praises, too, of the less media-covered sports in terms of which sports he’s looking to improve and develop further, and which sports they’ve succeeded in developing, “We’re looking at football. We’ve done really well in baseball, we’ve been the champion for the last three years. We need to do something to generate interest from the alumni […] to get them to come and watch the baseball games. It’s actually a nice game to watch—people think it’s boring and slow but if you’re there, it’s not, it’s an enjoyable sport to watch.”

The payoff when Palou finds the right combination of coach and players is offset by the reality that not all combinations yield fruit. Like two-sides to the same coin, the sweet success of finding the right coach is shadowed by the heavy burden of having to let go of those who didn’t quite fit the bill. Between raising
“The most difficult thing for me was letting go of coaches and assistant coaches and program heads.”

tens of millions, winning championships, and coordinating programs for hundreds of athletes in the university, this is what he considers the most difficult decision to make. “The most difficult thing for me was letting go of coaches and assistant coaches and program heads. It’s always difficult to tell them ‘we need to replace you, because you’re not doing well in your performance.’ A lot of these guys, probably, this is their job, and you have to technically fire them, and replace them with better people.”

AND BUILDING THE BEST ENVIRONMENT

While collegiate athletics and their players have become part of media’s bread-and-butter, it takes more than a good coach and great players to win games—it requires facilities, recruitment strategies that take the athletics office all over the country, and systems and people inside the university to develop and support the athletes. These are not so obviously seen in media coverage, but this is the part Palou plays the greatest role in. It takes a lot of money and energy to put all these together and, in a university catering to some 5,000 college students with competing needs, there is not always enough funding. “The problem with this is, we don’t want to compete with their [the school’s] fundraising activities [for other projects], so we had to find ways to go about this without disrupting their own fundraising activities.” Under Palou, the season tickets were sold at higher prices to the benefit of the student athletes. It took a while for the alumni to accept these
changes—certainly not everyone was quiet about their displeasure—but the additional funds helped recruit more athletes who could not afford to attend Ateneo. Still, the athletics office needed donations from alumni in cash and in kind to build the kind of facilities that produce high-caliber athletes, and to offer and sustain scholarships for recruitment. Donations, however, don’t come for a cause no one’s heard of. It is a cycle that is difficult but necessary to maintain: success begets interest begets funding begets success, and so on. Palou recognizes the intertwined problem of athletic achievement and public interest (and funding) in Ateneo’s other sports programs; it must have been difficult to convince alumni to invest in facilities for teams that are not already winning. Still, the results more than live up to the efforts to put everything together: for example, the chairs in the Blue Eagle gym, which used to be wooden benches and tables, are now stadium-type single seats. This allowed the university to host some of the volleyball games in the home turf. More obvious is the construction of the Moro Lorenzo football field and track oval under the patronage of the Lorenzo family. The Blue and Lady Blue Tracksters, who usually train off-campus or at the Moro Lorenzo Sports Center (MLSC), can now train inside school grounds with the Olympic-standard oval. While the P40-million project was not smooth-sailing—the weather interruptions in 2011 delayed the project by months—the end result is a sports facility that meets the standards of the International Association of Athletic Federations (IAAF). The gains, I suspect, will be counted in the following years for different sports programs; after all, increasing the budget for season tickets led to the recruitment of athletes that eventually won Ateneo their first volleyball championship.

Beyond funding, however, Palou understands better than most what it means to make sports a central part of our country’s popular culture and identity.
Beyond funding, however, Palou understands better than most what it means to make sports a central part of our country’s popular culture and identity. This man is, after all, one of the founding members of the Shakey’s V-League which helped popularize volleyball in the Philippines. Fortunately, the recent wave of corporate interest in collegiate athletics has led to the mainstreaming of certain sports and sporting events. This has had the additional effect of fomenting greater competition amongst universities. “Really a lot of corporate entities see that there is benefit to getting involved in sports. First of all, the exposure is there. Secondly, it creates a lot of goodwill. You see a lot of corporate entities in sports, which is really what is happening in Ateneo to a certain extent.” The changes caused by this corporate interest have built over the years—who can forget how telecommunication giants Smart and Globe rode the
popularity of the 2002 UAAP basketball championship of La Salle vs. Ateneo? Nowadays, it is no longer strange to see these athletes on TV or advertisements, hosting different TV shows, selling various products not necessarily related to sports. These athletes now have fans and supporters outside their respective universities.

But more importantly, it has changed the caliber of players and sporting in the Philippines. Palou points out that, precisely because of the boons created by this interest, it has become more urgent that Ateneo develops its sports programs holistically. “It’s changed a lot—you’ve seen the likes of NU building their sports program... La Salle has been doing that for the longest time. You see now more universities looking at building their facilities and recruiting players, and building their sports programs. It’s really changed a lot, it’s become more competitive. And I think the benchmark would really be the overall standing of the universities in the UAAP—so, the next benchmark to see how successful your programs are is the general championship in the UAAP. We are playing three and four normally. We would like to eventually win our first general championship.” It’s a possibility that, with funding, has become real for more and more universities in the UAAP. Collegiate sports can only get more exciting from this point on. This new era for the UAAP—more than a decade after Palou joined the University Athletics office—is one which he helped create, through his efforts within and outside Ateneo (as in the Shakey’s V-League and the LVPI). For Ateneo, however, he holds the same dream he had when he came on in 2004, “Eventually, we want to be a force to be reckoned with in all the UAAP sports disciplines but we can’t do this overnight, so we’re doing this slowly, one sport at a time.”

“I’m 67 years old, I’ve been on this job for eleven years. I’m going on my twelfth year. I think it’s about time other people take over—they may have new ideas, better ideas, because they’re younger.”
It would have been very easy for him to be intimidating. His staff, however, described him simply and simultaneously as “Coool,” and as someone very easy to get along with, to work with and to work for. This, I think, explains that contradictory sense I got from him initially: laidback and intent. This is a man who knows how to do his job well, and is not afraid of making things happen, no matter the difficulty.

Palou is only staying on as consultant until December 2015, after more than a decade on the job. Post 2015, he intends to focus on Philippine Volleyball in his capacity as secretary-general of LVPI, among other things he put on hold after joining Ateneo. “We are
“I’m looking forward to the Ateneo sports program doing better even if I’m not around. I’ve told everybody I’ll always be there in case you need my thoughts, my ideas.”

trying to build a good program for the national teams, and be more competitive internationally. There are other things I want to do, I have a power-generating project that I was working on before I got into Ateneo which I had to put on hold. Now, hopefully, I can finish that. Now, I have a sports events management company, Sports Vision Management group; we actually focused on developing the sport of volleyball. Now we got it where it is—it’s become really very popular—we may be looking at other sports we can improve on. You know, we started the volleyball Shakey’s V-League in 2004 when volleyball was practically dead, and slowly we invested in the sport, putting it on television, and now, it’s almost as popular as basketball.” He’s not retiring from sports—the trend tells us that this man probably never will. For that, we can count ourselves lucky.

On going down the hill one more time, he had this to say: “I’m 67 years old, I’ve been on this job for eleven years. I’m going on my twelfth year. I think it’s about time other people take over—they may have new ideas, better ideas, because they’re younger than I am. Hopefully they have more energy than I can put into the program. I think it’s about time they get someone to replace me... I’m looking forward to the Ateneo sports program doing better even if I’m not around. I’ve told everybody I’ll always be there in case you need my thoughts, my ideas.” Whoever replaces Ricky Palou will have very large shoes to fill. Fortunately, that person will stand on the shoulders of giants.

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THE WAY OF THE TAI

by Louella E Fortez

Photos by JC Lapuz, courtesy of the Ateneo Sports Shooters (www.fabilioh.com).
Volleyball practices are the same wherever they are. Teams rise with the sun for the required morning run, spend hours every day improving their game, perfecting one’s own strength and also mastering playing with a team. It is monotonous and tiring. There are days when the body is beaten down, refusing to strain for another hard push.

All this is true, even for back-to-back UAAP Women’s Volleyball Champions the Ateneo Lady Eagles. Today they are working on their spikes. A volleyball goes up in the air. The Lady Eagles look up and together, their bodies leap, backs arched, muscled arms raised, hands ready to strike. One of them smacks the ball and it sails uninterrupted to the other side of the net, all the way to the bleachers. At this time, the people watching them, a mix of fans, families and reporters, deem it best to get out of the way and move. Another ball is tossed up and again the ladies push themselves up in the air, and for a few moments too long, seemed to hover.

The drill continues until the end of the practice. Anyone watching the team would expect a few to lag at some point, standing back and just letting their teammates go for the ball. Some balls are volleyed back, some are also missed. For the latter, one’s ears perk up for a reprimand to the teammate responsible, or one gives them the eagle eye for that tell-tale wince or a twitch in the face that suggests a frown. There is none of that. Instead, laughter ripples from both sides of the net. In this, the Ateneo Lady Eagles stand apart from other collegiate volleyball teams. Their support for each other is genuine.

Despite the sweat gleaming on their faces and more mapped on their blue shirts, the Ateneo Lady Eagles show no signs of exhaustion. One might even say they exult in the practice. It is hard work but somehow, they make it look fun, judging from their eagerness in perfecting their service. Every day, they are able see themselves and their team mates get better, and together
become volleyball’s ultimate fighting machines. When the shrill blow of a whistle splits the air signalling the end of the practice, they go for a few more rounds. This takes a while. Head Coach Anusorn Bundit doesn’t implore them to hurry them up, and who knows if he has somewhere to be when practice ends? The ladies are having fun. While waiting, he accommodates a brave fan’s request for a selfie right there on the court, with balls flying in all directions.

Anusorn Bundit or Coach Tai, as he is more known to Filipinos following college sports, is credited for steering the Ateneo Lady Eagles to its uphill climb toward their first UAAP Crown in Women’s Volleyball in 2014 after a thirty-six-year title drought. This victory would be repeated the following year, with the team unbeaten throughout the season. Because of him, the Lady Eagles have become strong, powerful athletes in both mind and body, honed to win and nothing less. He is quick to shake his head at this.

“(If you have) no heart for the training, no heart for the competition, you cannot achieve (anything). If you have no heart, how can you do anything?” Because this is what only the Lady Eagles have: heart.

**TAI LESSONS**

Coaching, more than a skill, is an art. A coach is both leader of a team and its biggest fan, juggles the roles of parent, mentor, friend, disciplinarian, critic. There is no formula, no manual, for how one becomes the coach of a winning team. If coaching were the inevitable step after an athlete retires, then the world will be crammed with them. No. Not just anyone can be a coach. But if one has great love and respect for the sport, and is more than willing to share and teach it, then maybe, just maybe, it is possible to become a coach.
Anusorn Bundit did get his start playing volleyball for the Thai national team during the nineties before slipping off his knee pads and donning on the whistle. He would go on then to coach the Thailand Women’s National Team, helping them secure the 2006 Women’s World Championship. An invitation as consultant for the Ateneo Lady Eagles became a firm offer to become head coach in 2013. Coach Tai, two years into the service and two UAAP championships later, continues to emphasize having a heart for hard work and excellence to the team.

When one sees Coach Tai for the first time, he seems stern and unsmiling. The first crack in this demeanor is the quick compliance for autographs and selfies from fans (asked if he has fans back home in Thailand, his answer is an amused, “No!”), who can’t wait until the end of practice for their requests. He has also been nicknamed the Dancing Coach, breaking into a courtside performance during a game, to cheers and howls of approval from the crowd. On Twitter, he is @TheDancingCoach and boasts of over a thousand followers.

He refuses to take any credit for the success of the team but says that the secret is in the “training, heart and (being) happy!”

It is quite unusual for a coach to emphasize happiness to the team, as they are stereotypically slave drivers wringing out everything an athlete has to give to the very last drop, let alone one whose happiness is actually infectious. Coach Tai is one man who is serious about giving it. At some point during the interview, he reveals that he doesn’t like dancing at all but continues entertaining the crowd because “(It makes) people happy.”

Coaching responsibilities take him away from family, however. He keeps in touch with daily chat sessions.
Does he think he is a better coach the second time around? Coach Tai mulls this over before saying, “(I am) lucky—not a better coach—but lucky and happy.”

Determined to shift the focus on the team, he starts discussing the Lady Eagles’ edge over other teams. “(If you know how to meditate) you know how to think positive, you can do everything. (You have to know) how to focus on one thing and not think of everything.”

One could say that he is quite fanatic about meditation, and many reports on the team’s victory has mentioned this ability, as well as the rigorous regimen. Both are far from easy. “Some of the girls have a hard time so I teach them,” he says. “(I am) lucky they love to play (in the) team. (I am) lucky to have good players.”

HAPPY AND HEARTSTRONG

Ever since Coach Tai took the helm, he and the Lady Eagles have become synonymous to Heartstrong. Meaning Jai Dee in Thai, it means having “a kind and strong heart.” This is not only the center of their game but also a belief that Team Heartstrong lives with. One sees it in the support the team gives each other, generous with mutual encouragement and never forgetting to have a good time during practice.

Before becoming Team Heartstrong, Coach Tai noticed that the Lady Eagles “(had) no heart in the compe-
tition and the training. (If you) don’t concentrate on the training, (you have) no heart.”

When training under Coach Tai, one must ready both the mind and the body for his high expectations. As such, it is often a love-hate relationship between athletes and coaches in the world of sports. The Lady Eagles are mature enough to know that every challenge Coach Tai throws to them is for their own good.

“He only wants the best for us,” says setter Jia Morado. “(So) he pushes us way past our limits.”

It is widely known that aside from hours-long daily practices, the Lady Eagles must also run a minimum of at least five rounds twice a day in the Blue Oval. The training gets more rigorous as the new UAAP season nears. But as seen in their practices, the ladies have fun and want more challenges. The hard work has made each of them heartstrong. “It’s a blessing,” continues Morado, “Ibang level (siya) mag-train. It’s happy and exhausting Coach Tai always wants us to be happy. Kailanganan masaya kami sa paglalaro.”

Don’t mistake the enjoyment the Lady Eagles is due to their practices becoming mere playtime. It is not hard work but harder work every time. While some coaches pile on the praise and spoil their players, Coach Tai does the complete opposite. “He keeps reminding us we’re not invincible,” according to Team Captain Alyssa Valdez.

This is why when Valdez is asked on how it felt to end the overdrawn title drought for Ateneo the first time, she describes it as “surreal,” beginning only to sink in when they won the second time. “Nobody expected it,” agrees Morado.

“(But) they have excellence in doing everything,” Coach Tai says, watching the team give in to another round of laughter. Somebody must have missed the ball
“Gusto ng tao bumawi agad kapag nagkamali.”

The level of understanding and respect within the team can also be attributed to Coach Tai’s training. “The bond of the team strengthened,” Valdez says, remembering their first taste of his brand of coaching. “(We were taught) to be better as a person, as a team. We’re accountable for each other.”

Valdez goes on to compare the similarities of Ateneo’s drive for magis and the principle of heartstrong, resonating strongly during their games: “You do something good but you should do it better the next time. Kuntento pero din a kukuntento at the same time. We keep on fighting hangga’t di pa tapos ang laban. Di ka(mi) susuko. . . (when playing) we just think we’re going to fight with our heart.”

Perhaps this is why, even when practice is over for the day, the Lady Eagles continue with their drills. Each wants to do it better than the previous time, each is focused in delivering the best every time. When the drive and the doing of excellence becomes a habit, it is hard to shake off. But when your coach calls on you, you have no choice but to respond.

“Come here! Everybody come here!” Coach Tai calls them.

But the Lady Eagles, instead of going to him right away, are waylaid by coolers holding snacks. They kneel
before them, handing out cups of yogurt to teammates behind them before getting one for themselves. Some check their phones for messages. Some joke around with the male volleyball team, who will have their turn at the court shortly. A lone player, probably suffering from a cramp or strain, needs major stretching. She lays on the floor and her back is pressed, her legs stretched. Rather than call them for the second time, Coach Tai is patient and waits for them to huddle around him. Finally, they remember. They go to him, shifting to one side and the other to give space to their teammates who want to get closer. Coach Tai seems to do a mental count before determining that everyone is here. He doesn’t lecture them about being kept waiting. He goes right to the point: today’s practice and other matters concerning the team.

In between patting their sweating faces and arms dry with towels and scooping yogurt to their mouths, the Lady Eagles look at Coach Tai, bright-eyed and eager for more. His English is limited so there are times when they have to fill in the words where he draws a blank. He speaks to them as a father imparting life lessons to his daughters, and he singles out some players for things they have to work on to improve their game. No one is defensive, no one protests. Everyone listens.

Practice over, Coach Tai leads them in clasping their hands on top of each other’s and shouting, “Happy! Happy!”

Such is the Tai way.

Louella Fortez (BFA Creative Writing 2004) finished her Masters degree, also in Creative Writing, from the University of the Philippines in 2014. Louella teaches at both the English and Filipino departments of the Loyola School of Humanities.
Heart Strong
THE FLIGHT OF THE ATENEO LADY EAGLES
After two seasons of disappointment, the Ateneo Lady Eagles finally broke through in March 2014 to win the UAAP Womens Volleyball title.

With a predominantly rookie team led by a few grizzled veterans, the Lady Eagles defied the odds of a difficult stepladder playoff round to earn a ticket to challenge four-peat seeking De La Salle University. The Lady Eagles stopped Adamson first and then bucked the twice-to-beat advantage of National University to arrange an unforgettable title showdown.

The Lady Eagles won the title by winning three of four cardiac games against La Salle, capped by a three-set triumph in the last encounter. The victory ended years of waiting for a volleyball title for Ateneo, almost three decades after the mens and womens teams were dominant back then in the NCAA.

Every step of the way, the Lady Eagles were spurred by a simple mantra from their Thai Coach who hardly spoke any English. “Heart Strong” was the battle cry Anosourn Bundit used to spur the Lady Eagles to roar back into sets that looked lost and games that seemed impossible to win. Forged by backbreaking training sessions and challenging matches, the Heart Strong bond would help to finally nail the elusive UAAP title.

Relive this amazing sports history in the commemorative book *Heart Strong: The Flight of the Ateneo Lady Eagles*. In stunning pictures and buoyant text, the story retraces the early years of Ateneo volleyball to the rebuilding of the sport’s program and all the way to the final claiming of its first-ever UAAP crown.

The book also features special up close and personal profiles of the players and the coaching staff. Included are special trivia notes and pictures from the players’ personal collections.

*Heart Strong: The Flight of the Ateneo Lady Eagles* is available at the Loyola Schools Bookstore (MVP Basement, Ateneo de Manila) and during the games of the Ateneo Blue Eagles (UAAP). The soft-bound edition is PhP580.

For more information, call +63 (2) 426 6001 local 5185 and look for Mark or Grace.

(Sev Sarmenta / www.ateneo.edu)
#2, Alyssa Valdez
OPEN SPIKER
The Most Valuable Alyssa

Most people notice right away Alyssa's humility. We found the roots of this admirable quality in her high school. Former coaches Francis Vicente and Emilio Reyes attest to this. Her senior teammates also became her role model on how to handle and manage oneself. Moreover, the values that her professors instilled in her made her even more hard-working. The presence of her friends from school reminded her of the importance of sociability. In addition, living far away from her parents made her independent and responsible, thus contributing to her being able to value even the little things she achieved.
Oftentimes, her popularity is compared to that of Chris Tiu or Gretchen Ho. Kids with big dreams are running around playing ball and taking on the moniker “Alyssa.”

No wonder there is so much to be thankful for in Alyssa’s life. Volleyball gave her the big family she has, from her fans to her teammates and coaches. As she puts it, “Volleyball is really time-consuming. It takes a lot of time to perfect your form, your skill and get better at it. The company makes it all worthwhile, and the wins we get as a team as well.”

For the youth, the aspiring volleyball players and her legions of fans, she has these words: “They need patience. We cannot be as good as Michael Jordan in just a day. It takes a lot of time and effort during trainings to be one. But it is not only just by giving your time and effort you need to be hard-working and passionate in what you do. In the end, we should not forget to thank everyone who keeps you pushing to be the best.” The grateful heart is always the happiest heart!

People have heard high school student-athletes say that getting into Ateneo on a Volleyball scholarship is the best. What is true is that it is a mutually beneficial relationship between the student and the University.

Alyssa “Ate Ly” Valdez was born to Mr. Ruel and Mrs. Lita Valdez in San Juan, Batangas. The five-foot-nine Alyssa is the only girl in a brood of four. She learned how to play volleyball by playing with her two older brothers when she was in elementary school.
Having developed her volleyball skills, she later played in the Southern Tagalog (Calabarzon) Athletic Association (STACAA), a regional sports meet for elementary and high school student athletes. After that, she was discovered and recruited by the University of Santo Tomas (UST), where she played for their high school varsity volleyball team. The UST Tigress Cubs, an Espana-based squad bannered by Valdez, Kim Fajardo, and Aerieal Patnongon, won three straight UAAP championships from 2008 to 2010.

Alyssa describes the Ateneo “as the ultimate place for college as well as a good place to develop one’s volleyball acumen. Largely because it focuses the passion of an athlete playing for the love of the sport and for the pride of the school.” No wonder she looks forward to a brighter future because she promises to continue to be a model for her teammates and to keep on supporting them to do their best! Such is a leadership trait the school has offered her as she took over the reins of the team and came out with flying colours, being declared MVP for both the regular and the final seasons.

The grounding and formation of this Most Valuable Player as one can see it happens daily both inside her as well as outside in her physical prowess. Need we have a better role model for our youth? We all sleep well tonight knowing that the school produces great leaders of the future. It no longer surprises us that during the games, her fans hold up a banner loudly.
NAME: ALYSSA VALDEZ
NICKNAME: LY
AGE: 20
TEAM NO. & POSITION: #2 Open Spiker
YEAR AND COURSE: IV - AB PSY
BEST VOLLEYBALL MOMENT: CHAMPION
PRE-GAME RITUAL: EAT CHOCOLATE
TAMBAYAN IN SCHOOL: BLUE EAGLE GYM & OVAL
FAVORITE FOOD: ADobo
FAVORITE OUTFIT: SHORTS, SHIRT & SNEAKERS
FAVORITE PAST TIME: SLEEP
LAST BOOK READ: MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING
GO TO SNACK: FRIES
IF I'M NOT PLAYING VOLLEYBALL, I'D BE: SPENDING MORE TIME WITH MY FAMILY
I AM PROUD TO BE AN ATENELO LADY EAGLE BECAUSE: MY TEAMMATES ARE MY SISTERS.

IN 5 YEARS, I WILL BE: TRAVELLING & WORKING.... HOPEFULLY! 😊
#13, Dennise Lazaro
LIBERO
Denden, the Difference

Much of the credit is given to ace spiker Alyssa Valdez for Ateneo’s first ever UAAP volleyball title but quite a few would argue that libero Denden Lazaro was just as important in the Lady Eagles’ fairytale run to the top of the title at the expense of archrival La Salle. On the balancing side, great offense and great defense would only result in excellence if the lady in the middle does her job!

Although playing on one healthy foot after sustaining a left ankle sprain following a bad fall in their Game 2 loss during the season, the comely Lazaro gave her all notably in anchoring the Lady Eagles’ defense that propelled them to an historic 25-23, 26-24, 25-21 victory over the stunned Lady Spikers in their winner-take-all match that Saturday at the jampacked Mall of Asia Arena. “I just simply had to do it for the team,” Denden declared. Later she was named the season’s Best Receiver and Best Digger. “Ginawa ko lang ang pagiging libero ko and gave it all for our defense.” True to her words, Denden served as the backbone of Ateneo’s defense in the title-cinching victory, coming through with 15 excellent digs and all but seven of the team’s 25 receptions while practically hustling for every ball recovery.

Their efforts finally bore the golden fruit, something Denden and Alyssa failed to realize in their first two finals stints that ended with equally painful setbacks against the Lady Spikers.

“I’m overwhelmed,” said the 5-foot-5 Lazaro during a television interview, to the delight of the Ateneo’s faithful from the stands. “Very fulfilling talaga dahil nakarating kami sa point na ‘to. Ang goal lang namin is to make it to the Final Four but our hard work paid off.”
Alyssa gamely shared their emotional moment with Denden during the awarding ceremony. “Nag-usap kami ni Den at ang sabi ko ‘Oh my God! Hindi ko lubos maisip na tapos na ‘yung game at ‘yung season at naka-gold pa tayo.’ Nakuha pa namin ‘to dahil nagtiyaga kami,” she said.

The way Alyssa, together with Denden and Ella, accepted the leadership role while improving with their rookie teammates, proved how these girls really stepped up this year. No one will question the impossible which came out as possible. It really is a matter of giving credit where it belongs: “it is amazing to see what great things happen when no one tries to grab credit for anything!”
NAME:   DENNISSE MICHELLE G. LAZARO

NICKNAME:  DEN   AGE:  22

TEAM NO. & POSITION:  13 LIBERO

YEAR AND COURSE:  4 BS BIOLOGY

BEST VOLLEYBALL MOMENT:  WINNING THE UAAP CHAMPIONSHIP

PRE-GAME RITUAL:  LISTENING TO MUSIC

TAMBAYAN IN SCHOOL:  DORM

FAVORITE FOOD:  STEAK & PASTA   FAVORITE OUTFIT:  T-SHIRT & SHORTS

FAVORITE PASTIME:  SLEEPING, EATING, HANGING OUT W/ FRIENDS

LAST BOOK READ:  THE FAULT IN OUR STARS

GO TO SNACK:  CHOCOLATES

IF I'M NOT PLAYING VOLLEYBALL, I'D BE:  A REGULAR STUDENT

I AM PROUD TO BE AN ATENEO LADY EAGLE BECAUSE:  WE MADE HISTORY

IN 5 YEARS, I WILL BE:  STILL STUDYING IN MED SCHOOL
Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

—MATTHEW 11:28

ateneo.edu/alumni/memoriam

January 6, 2015
Marcelo P. Marasigan
GS ’40, HS ’46

January 11, 2015
Francis Xavier V. Mariazaeta
GS ’87

January 19, 2015
Jose Ma. C. Chavez, Jr.
hs ’37

January 27, 2015
Joaquín G. Aherrera
GS ’69, HS ’73

January 27, 2015
Ramon A. Vito, Jr.
GS ’82, HS ’86

January 29, 2015
Rev. Fr. Vicente P. Marasigan, sj
GS ’31, HS ’35

February 2, 2015
Virgilio E. Javier
GS ’57, HS ’61

February 4, 2015
Jesus M. Morales
BS BA ’66

February 8, 2015
Amando M. Dumlao
GS ’63, HS ’67

February 10, 2015
Rev. Fr. Jaime C. Bulatao, sj
GS ’35, HS ’39

February 18, 2015
Tadeo R. Bengzon
GS ’31, HS ’35, AB ECO ’39

February 24, 2015
Oscar S. Gonzales
GS ’58, HS ’42

February 24, 2015
Vinnie James S. Yu
AB ECO ’71

February 25, 2015
Eugenio S. Florendo
GS ’70, HS ’74

March 02, 2015
Francisco S. Valera
HS ’77, BS BM ’81

March 13, 2015
Rev. Msgr. Jose Antonio S. Galvez
HP AB PD ’79

March 19, 2015
Renato V. Lim
GS ’75, HS ’79, BS BM ’84

April 17, 2015
Virgilio S. Sotto
GS ’60, HS ’64

April 19, 2015
Richard Y. Gocuay
GS ’73, HS ’77, BS Chem ’81

April 21, 2015
Andre Francisco C. Kintanar
GS ’66, HS ’70

July 24, 2015
Erwin Ernest T. Cabbab
GS ’88, HS ’92, BS Psy ’97

April 24, 2015
Ellen I. Leyba
AB ECO ’77

April 28, 2015
Victoria B. Aves
AB PS ’79

April 28, 2015
Cornelio C. Torrijos
AB Journ ’62

May 02, 2015
Rev. Msgr. Jose C. Bernardo, Jr.
AB Philo ’68

May 02, 2015
Tarhata Engelyn G. Enrile
BS LM 2001

May 20, 2015
Rene M. Sayo
BS BM ’77

May 20, 2015
Florante M. Roque, Jr.
GS ’68, HS ’72

May 22, 2015
Atty. Alejandro Lichauco
GS ’40, HS ’46

May 26, 2015
Rosario L. Avelino
AB ECO ’77

May 28, 2015
Dr. Jonathan F. Lara
GS ’72, HS ’76

May 30, 2015
Sebastián B. Santiago
BBA ’31

May 31, 2015
Rev. Fr. William P. Klintworth, sj

June 02, 2015
Mario B. Magat
BS BM ’74

June 02, 2015
Emmanuel S. Garcia
HS ’41, BBA ’49

June 04, 2015
Rene S. Sevilla
GS ’31, HS ’35

June 12, 2015
Rev. Fr. Arsenio C. Jesena, sj

June 18, 2015
Rhett Francis M. Mallen
BS ECE 2003

June 19, 2015
Eduardo P. Tiouyco
ABHG ’66

June 29, 2015
Ramon U. Ponce
HS ’73

July 12, 2015
Edgar S. Pasimio
HS ’49

July 18, 2015
Jinna T. Gulayan-Aurelio
BS Mgt ’97

July 26, 2015
Danilo M. Coronacion
AB ’71

July 27, 2015
Jose Roy Bartolome
BS Chem ’68

July 27, 2015
Gabriel Hilarion D. Gabaya
GS ’84, HS ’88, AB IS ’92
January 6, 2015  Marcelo P. Marasigan  gs ’40, hs ’46
January 11, 2015  Francis Xavier V. Mariazeta iii  gs ’87
January 19, 2015  Jose Ma. C. Chavez, Jr.  hs ’57
January 27, 2015  Joaquin G. Aherrera  gs ’69, hs ’73
January 27, 2015  Ramon A. Vito, Jr.  gs ’82, hs ’86
January 29, 2015  Rev. Fr. Vicente P. Marasigan, sj  gs ’31, hs ’35
February 2, 2015  Virgilio E. Javier  gs ’57, hs ’61
February 4, 2015  Jesus M. Morales  bs ba, ’66
February 8, 2015  Amando M. Dumlao iii  gs ’63, hs ’67
February 18, 2015  Tadeo R. Bengzon  gs ’51, hs ’55, ab Eco ’59
February 24, 2015  Oscar S. Gonzales  gs ’38, hs ’42
February 24, 2015  Vinnie James S. Yu  ab eco ’71
February 25, 2015  Eugenio S. Florendo  gs ’70, hs ’74
March 02, 2015  Francisco S. Valera  hs ’77, bs bm ’81
March 13, 2015  Rev. Msgr. Jose Antonio S. Galvez  hp ab pd ’79
March 19, 2015  Renato V. Lim  gs ’75, hs ’79, bs bm ’84
April 17, 2015  Virgilio S. Sotto  gs ’60, hs ’64
April 19, 2015  Richard Y. Gocuay  gs ’73, hs ’77, bs Chem ’81
April 21, 2015  Andre Francisco C. Kintanar  gs ’66, hs ’70
April 24, 2015  Ellen I. Leyba  ab Eco ’77
April 28, 2015  Victoria B. Aves  ab ps ’79
April 28, 2015  Cornelio C. Torrijos  ab Journ ’62
May 02, 2015  Rev. Msgr. Jose C. Bernardo, Jr.  ab Philo ’68
May 20, 2015  Rene M. Sayo  bs bm ’77
May 20, 2015  Florante M. Roque, Jr.  gs ’68, hs ’72
May 22, 2015  Atty. Alejandro Lichauco  gs ’40, hs ’46
May 26, 2015  Rosario L. Avelino  ab Eco ’77
May 28, 2015  Dr. Jonathan F. Lara  gs ’72, hs ’76
May 30, 2015  Sebastian B. Santiago  bba ’51
May 31, 2015  Rev. Fr. William P. Klintworth, sj
June 02, 2015  Mario B. Magat  bs bm ’74
June 02, 2015  Emmanuel S. Garcia  hs ’41, bba ’49
June 04, 2015  Rene S. Sevilla  gs ’51, hs ’55
June 12, 2015  Rev. Fr. Arsenio C. Jesena, sj
June 18, 2015  Rhett Francis M. Mallen  bs ece 2003
June 19, 2015  Eduardo P. Tiotuyco  abhg ’66
June 29, 2015  Ramon U. Ponce  hs ’73
July 12, 2015  Edgar S. Pasimio  hs ’49
July 18, 2015  Jinna T. Gulayan-Aurelio  bs Mgt ’97
July 24, 2015  Erwin Ernest T. Cabbab  gs ’88, hs ’92, bs Psy ’97
July 26, 2015  Danilo M. Coronacion  ab ’71
July 27, 2015  Jose Roy Bartolome  bs Chem ’68
July 27, 2015  Gabriel Hilarion D. Gabaya  gs ’84, hs ’88, ab is ’92

Photo by Alycia Bobak / UCPRO
“Be a flame that kindles other fires, to embrace a mission that sets all things alight with the justice and love of God.”

—Fr Patrick O’Leary, SJ