



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY-MANILA

2401 (twen'tē fōr'ō, wun) is a landmark number along Taft Avenue. It is the location ID of De La Salle University-Manila, home to outstanding faculty and students, and birthplace of luminaries in business, public service, education, the arts, and science. And 2401 is now the name of the official newsletter of DLSU-Manila, featuring developments and stories of interest about the University.

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SDRC to pay tribute to the Chief Builder

The Social Development Research Center (SDRC) will honor the Chief Builder, the late De La Salle University President Br. Andrew Gonzalez FSC, during its 27th year anniversary celebration on March 23, 3 p.m., at the Marilen Gaerlan Conservatory.

Titled “27 Years. . . And Many Happy Returns,” the program will include a tribute to Br. Andrew to be given by SDRC Research Fellow, Behavioral Sciences faculty member, and University Fellow Dr. Pilar Ramos-Jimenez.

A professorial chair lecture will also be delivered by the holder of the Distinguished Professorial Chair in Applied Social Sciences, University Fellow Dr. Exaltacion Lamberte. Her lecture is titled “Tracking Achievement of Millennium Development Goals: Chasms and Issues.”

Representatives of support groups and agencies as well as stakeholders in the Center’s undertakings were invited to attend the anniversary proceedings.

SDRC is the Social Science research arm of the College of Liberal Arts. Its mandate is to conduct research about, build capacities for, and promote public

awareness and discussion of emerging social issues about the quality of life, social development, and the nation’s growth.

The Center seeks to fulfill a two-fold mission: To serve as a hub in the Philippines and the Asia-Pacific region for research and advocacy, and to form a bridge between the academic community on the one hand, and the society and community it is serving on the other. Its vision is for Filipinos and Asian and Pacific peoples to enjoy an improved way of life, and to live under decent conditions, in an environment worthy of human dignity and respect.

In related news, the Center for Social Concern and Action (COSCA) will honor members of the Lasallian community who are silently but diligently serving the marginalized sectors of Philippine society during its 23rd anniversary activities. With

the theme “Lasalyano: Kumikilos para sa Makabuluhang Pagbabago,” COSCA’s festivities are slated from March 20 to 24.

The COSCA Week will kick off with an opening Mass on March 20, 12:10 p.m., at the PGP Chapel. Other activities during the week-long celebration are exhibits and bazaars at the Yuchengco Lobby and Central Plaza. Participating offices and projects include Gawad Kalinga, Singalong Micro-Finance Project, Fair Trade Alliance, and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology

A forum-concert will also be held on March 22, 2:30 p.m. at the Amphitheater. Invited resource speakers are Congresswoman Riza Hontiveros-Baraquel from the Akbayan Partylist and Ma. Lourdes Melegrito from COSCA. Among the participating artists are Gary Granada and the resident cultural groups of the Cultural Arts Office.

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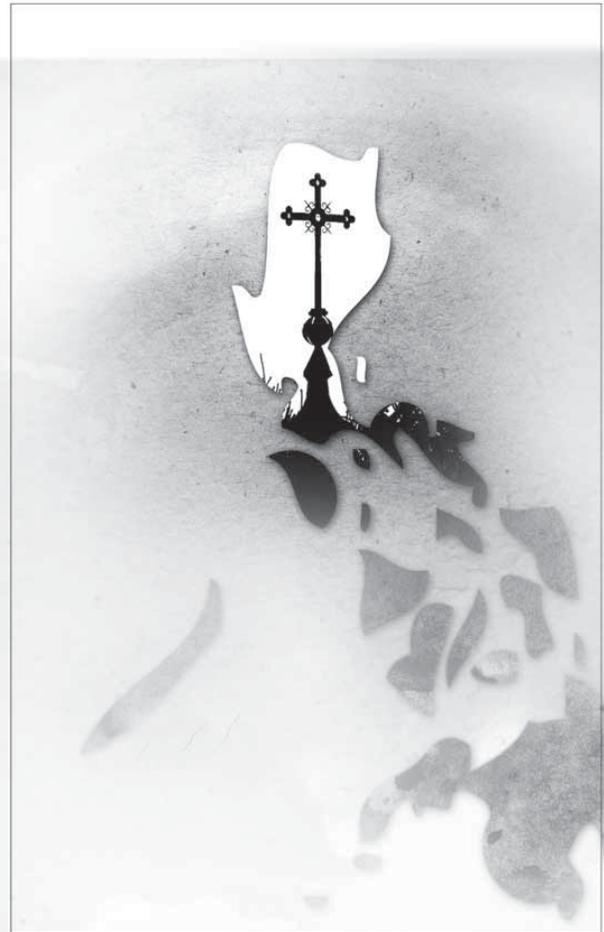
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Being Christian, Being Filipino

By Dr. José de Mesa

What if we spoke of “ginhawa” instead of “salvation” within Filipino Catholicism? Then, wouldn’t “salvation” be understood as indicative also of our total earthly well-being instead of just a spiritual one after this life? What if, in the place of the term “grace,” we talked about God’s “pagmamagandang-loob”? Would this not call attention to the truth that “grace” is who God is in relationship with us rather than a “thing” that we gained for doing something good? For that matter, would it not be helpful if we named God’s presence as “pananahan ng kagandahang-loob ng Diyos” in our midst because it connects with many positive aspects of “tahanan”? What if we discussed what a “sacrament” is in terms of “bakas,” as a trace of God’s presence in our world? Would this not suggest, as the term “sacrament” should, that sacraments are experienced often in daily life instead of receiving them only occasionally in the church?



More than what the local Filipino terms suggest in lieu of the religious concepts Catholics have grown accustomed to, these local terms can help people see the connection between their Christian faith and contemporary human experiences. If our God offers “kaginhawahan” instead of “kahirapan” in all its forms – material, psychological, social, environmental – people can more easily see why the Gospel is *good news*. In today’s situation where evil seems to be prevalent, it is indeed an amazing “grace” that God persists in being “kagandahang-loob” towards us. That God lives among us as gracious goodness (*pananahan ng kagandahang-loob*) brings consolation and confidence as we face our daily personal and social challenges. After all, we still find so many traces (*bakas*) of divine presence and goodness in the small and unpublicized acts of unsolicited kindness in everyday life.

Affective resonance and effective relevance of the Christian faith is what a theologian tries to discover in everyday life and articulate for other believers. To me this means that formulating Christianity today requires not only fidelity to the Judaeo-Christian Tradition of faith, but also responsive to contemporary challenges as well as rootedness in the local culture. This has not been easy for me for this was not a given in my own theological training. My training in the Catholic faith in Catholic schools and later in the specific discipline of theology, from the basic till the doctoral, has been in the main Western European in form as well as in content. Only little by little in the course of my theological studies did I realize that theology need not be Western, valid as this may be for the West. It can be and should be otherwise, as other theological traditions exemplify. Realizing that a Filipino expression of theology is possible and ideal was only the beginning in my theological career. The next twenty five years that followed has been my continuous attempt to think Filipino in theology.

Many years ago, Filipino historian Horiacio de la Costa, S.J., dreamed of the creation of a Filipino form of Catholicism, as there is a Roman form of it, saying that “there should be a distinctive Filipino style of being a Catholic, a manner of style Catholic in full communion with the universal church, yet fully, truly Filipino, adapted to our needs, our attitudes, our patterns of thought and actions, our economy and society, our traditions and ideals, all that we mean or imply when we say, ‘I am a Filipino’.” Inspired and persuaded by the theological renewal brought about by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), my career as a Filipino theologian has focused on the re-interpretation of the Christian faith by utilizing the wisdom and genius of the Filipino culture. In no way does this mean that I regard the Filipino culture as totally positive and life-giving. But while I recognize its limitations and weaknesses, I prefer to highlight its riches than dwell on its negative aspects, a point also indicated by Vatican II. There was one particular realization which has had a wide-ranging implication for me. It dawned on me, after many years of teaching theology, that if I allowed culture to be my primary guide in the endeavor to inculcate the Christian faith, the process of development would be faster and surer, though not in an absolute way. This conviction led me to develop a theological approach which I call “the hermeneutics of appreciation.”

Why did I chose theology? The answer is both simple and complex. Simple, because I like it. I liked it in the form of religion classes which I had in La Salle as a grade school and

high school student. Looking back, I must credit the La Salle Brothers for introducing and nurturing this interest in matters religious which eventually led to my choosing of theology as a career. It was Br. Raffy Donato who especially showed me that this kind of subject matter ought to be approached seriously and reverently, attitudes important in theological studies. I also enjoyed studying theology as a student while I was being initiated into the depths and complexities of theological thought and systems. Belgian CICM theology professors taught me to think critically, making me aware that authority is the weakness of arguments. Filipino Benedictine, Fr. Anscar Chupungco, OSB, showed me that a Filipino expression of Catholicism is not only thinkable, but do-able as well. I dreamt of serving God as a theologian, helping believers to appreciate the unconditional and abiding goodness of God towards us in Jesus of Nazareth. I was excited, upon finishing my doctorate, in exploring Filipino thought and harnessing it to make sense of the Christian Gospel. There is no denying that as a Filipino lay theologian, I experience intellectual fulfillment in my chosen career. But, to my mind, there is no greater satisfaction or joy that can come the way of a theologian than when others are led to experience the unbelievable gracious goodness of God through his or her theology.

In a sense, I can speak of my theological career as starting in La Salle. Today, after teaching seminarians, priests, religious, lay people in specifically theological and pastoral institutions for many years, I have come full circle. I am back in La Salle, sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ both to the undergrads doing their Rels courses as well as to graduate students of the Applied Theology Program or the Religious Education Program of the university. The Brothers who awakened my interest in the subject continued supporting it when I became fulltime in the university. Br. Andrew Gonzalez encouraged me to write and to publish. He even wrote a foreword for my first book with the DLSU Press. Br. Bill Garvey and Br. Mawel Pajarillo helped me plan and design the masteral and doctoral programs in Applied Theology. Br. Roly Dizon, when he was President, requested me to share my expertise to the faculty and staff of the system. I cannot, however, speak about my theological career without mentioning the most influential persons who have made my theological thought what it is: my wife and my children. My experience as a married person and as a parent within the Filipino setting have tremendously contributed in making my theology take on

Dr. José de Mesa is a full profesor of the Theology & Religious Education Department. In 2004, his book Mga Aral sa Daan: Dulog sa Paraang Kultural sa Kristolohiya was named Best Book in Theology and Religion during the National Book Awards organized by the Manila Critics Circle.

From page 1

La Salle pilots Lian's marine resource planning

In pursuit of the University's vision of being a resource for Church and Nation, the De La Salle University-Manila Br. Alfred Shields FSC Marine Station spearheaded the drafting of the Talim Bay Coastal Resource Management (CRM) Plan.

Prepared in cooperation with the municipal government of Lian and its barangay councils, beach home owners, private residents, and other local stakeholders, the CRM Plan was recently forwarded to the municipality's Sangguniang Bayan for approval and adoption.

The CRM Plan aims to conserve, protect, and sustainably manage the coastal resources of Talim Bay, the body of water adjacent to La Salle's marine station. It outlines the problems, issues, and concerns affecting the coastal resources and lives of the people within the bay. It also contains the policies and programs that seek to address them.

To increase acceptance of and compliance with the comprehensive 10-year CRM Plan, DLSU-Manila, led by Marine Station Director and Biology Department Full Professor Dr. Wilfredo Licuanan, facilitated a participatory development approach in developing the Plan.

Stakeholders were encouraged to take part in all activities related to the plan development including coastal resource assessment, issue prioritization and coastal zoning, goal identification, and economic and policy assessments.

The stakeholders identified various environmental, socio-economic, and institutional concerns that contribute to the degradation of the coastal resources within the bay. These include use of illegal fishing methods, decreasing

number of marine turtles, continuous degradation of mangrove, seagrass, and coral reef areas, limited fishing grounds, lack of alternative livelihood, and absence of a recognized organization of fishers, among others.

The recommendations stated in the CRM Plan that seek to properly address these problems are the establishment of coastal zones and the institutionalization of the Talim Bay CRM Council. The Council will lead the CRM Plan implementation and its regular monitoring and evaluation.

Funding for the planning came from the DLSU System Sharing Fund and a

private donor.

Apart from the development of the CRM plan, DLSU-Manila is also facilitating the mangrove reforestation project in the area, coral reef monitoring, and the establishment of the Pawikan Rescue Center.

The Br. Alfred Shields FSC Marine Station is a research facility of the College of Science that was established to further research and extension activities in coastal areas. It is located in Sitio Matuod, Lian, Batangas.

Lian, Batangas residents survey the marine resources of Talim Bay



DLSU-Manila confab highlights ethics in S&T

The Colleges of Computer Studies, Education, Engineering, and Science hosted the 8th Science and Technology Congress on March 8 at the Don Enrique Yuchengco Hall.

With the theme “Ethics in Science and Technology,” the event featured papers on current ethical issues in the area of research and development. Scientists, computer experts, information technologists, engineers, and educators from different academic and research institutions shared their research findings during the congress.

The line-up of activities included plenary sessions in the morning and special lectures and regular paper presentations in the afternoon. Dr. Manuel Belino, chair of the Mechanical Engineering Department and recipient of the 2005 Metrobank Foundation Outstanding Teacher Award, served as plenary speaker. His lecture was titled “Is There an Ethics Boom in S&T in the Philippines?”

Special lectures were also given by Dr. Luis

Razon of the Chemical Engineering Department, Dr. Anna Bella Manalang of the Industrial Engineering Department, Dr. Severino Gervacio of the Mathematics Department, Dr. Florante Salvador of the Software Technology Department, and Nazar Rebong of the Science Education Department.

More than 70 papers and posters were presented during the event, which was attended by more than 200 participants from different institutions in Metro Manila and neighboring provinces.

The event also marked the launching of the EF ‘70 Enterprise Award, an annual competition funded by a group of DLSU alumni. It will give cash prizes to commercially promising thesis projects of engineering students.

EF ‘70 was established in March 2003. Composed of a batch of DLSU alumni who entered COE in 1970, EF ‘70 has more than 100 members based here in the Philippines and abroad.



Dr. Manuel Belino gives the plenary lecture during the S & T Congress