

EDITOR'S PREFACE

This issue of *Landas* commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of Loyola School of Theology-Loyola House of Studies. In addition to scholarly articles, it contains messages, speeches, testimonials, and summaries of the round table discussions during the International Theological Symposium held last March 10–11 to celebrate the jubilee of Loyola School of Theology.

In his keynote address at the symposium, the Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education, Giuseppe Cardinal Versaldi, D.D. (“Leading and Serving through Theology: 50 Years After Vatican II”) calls attention to the process of renewal ushered in by the Second Vatican Council which aimed to overcome the separation between the Church and modern sciences (culture):

[O]ne of the reasons for this separation and, at times, conflict that cannot be grasped is the fact that, on the part of theology, there was a certain immobilism (rigidity) in the process of formulating the Christian message in order to adapt this formulation to the understanding of peoples in places and times of always changing human history.... This rigidity can be explained also by what a great theologian and epistemologist, the Jesuit Bernard Lonergan, calls “the neglected subject,” that is, an approach to the truth which forgets that any judgment (also on God) is always a relationship between the knowing subject and the object known. “Veritas formaliter est in solo iudicio.” (p. 12)

This immobilism spawned the separation of culture’s evolution from religious thought. The secular culture became indifferent or

even antagonistic to religious truth, and the Church, for a time, was unable to move on from a defensive position.

“The historic novelty of Vatican Council II” according to Versaldi, “was essentially that of taking the Church towards a non-defensive and rather proactive dialogue with the world, without denying the difficulties that an anti-Christian culture created for the Church in modern times” (p. 13). Real and integral progress can be achieved “only if [theology] reconnects the dialogue between faith and reason, overcoming the errors on both sides” (p. 16).

In this way, the *scientia Dei* does not remain an abstract and aesthetic knowledge, transmitted in a uniform and immutable way through a system of truth that does not have impact on the history of the world. On the contrary, it becomes that *scientia amoris* accessible to the more simple according to the words of Jesus who thanked his Father because He revealed himself more to the “childlike” than to the “wise and the learned.” (p. 19)

In the second major address of the symposium, Orlando B. Cardinal Quevedo, O.M.I., D.D. (“The Call to New Evangelization: The Church in Asia in the Next 50 Years”) focused on the challenges of evangelization in Asia. How does the Church in Asia understand “evangelization” or “New Evangelization”? For the Church in Asia, proclamation and dialogue are not two separate elements of evangelization; rather, “[p]roclamation and all other paths of evangelization are in the mode of dialogue” (p. 30). Far from diminishing the importance of the explicit proclamation of the Gospel, telling the story of Jesus Christ can be more effective if he is given, as it were, an “Asian face,” i.e., images of Jesus intelligible to the ethos and culture of Asia, such as “the Teacher of Wisdom, the Healer, the Liberator, the Spiritual Guide, the Enlightened One, the Compassionate Friend of the Poor ...” (p. 31).

How does the Church in Asia want to evangelize? In telling the story of Jesus, the Asian Church must reach out to the people by means of a triple dialogue: 1) with cultures, 2) with Asia’s

religious traditions, and 3) with the poor of Asia. According to Quevedo, "... telling the story of Jesus in dialogic mode should be gradual and progressive, employing a pedagogy that is evocative, not proselytizing but respectful and humble, guided certainly by the Spirit of God, while patiently waiting for God's grace for the final fruition of the Jesus story" (p. 36).

What will the Church in Asia do to evangelize in the next fifty years? Some of the challenges that the Asian Church has to face are the following: economic globalization, an emerging secular and materialist culture, poverty abetted by social injustice, the plight of migrants and refugees, the marginalization of indigenous peoples, religious intolerance, global warming and climate change, etc. To meet these challenges, the Asian bishops propose a "spirituality of communion" that has some of the following features: a deep personal encounter with Jesus Christ, a passion for mission, and dialogue as a mode of life and mission characterized by humble sensitivity to the hidden presence of God in the struggles of the poor, in the riches of people's cultures, and in the varieties of religious traditions.

In his address to the LST graduates last May, Antonio M. Pernia, S.V.D. ("Theology Whose Heart is Mission") called attention to the shift in demographics of the Christian population from the global North (Europe and North America) to the global South (South America, Africa, and South Asia). "It is therefore extremely important," he said, "that in the global South there be reliable institutes of research and reflection and world-class centers of study and teaching in theology and missiology." The Loyola School of Theology, he adds, "should see itself as one such institute and center in the global South. As such, LST must be both rooted in the classical tradition of theology and responsive to the missionary exigencies of the concrete context" (p. 98). The theology in LST must not just be "faith seeking understanding" but also "faith seeking expression" (*fides quaerens linguam*). The latter involves proclamation, inculturation, and dialogue with

the local communities and other religions. It is a theology whose heart is mission.

While a mission theology that arises from the Asian context still needs to be developed, Pernia suggests salient features of such a theology. First, there is *powerlessness*—because Christians are a minority in Asia, the missionary has to evangelize from a position of humility. “The only power he or she will need is the power of the Word and of the Spirit. And that power is the power of love, which is manifested in self-giving. The ultimate reason for humility in mission is that mission is God’s and not ours” (p. 100–101). Second, there is *contemplation*—because of Asia’s rich religious traditions and contemplative spirit, the missionary “will not be tempted to explain away the mystery of God by words and discursive language, but will try to lead people into the very mystery of God through signs and symbols in respectful dialogue” (p. 101). Finally, there is *stewardship*—because the Christian faith is seen in Asia as a Western importation, the missionary must share the faith “as a gift received from God through others, conscious of himself or herself as merely its steward or servant and never its owner or master” (p. 102). “The missionary, therefore, will respect the freedom of God who is present and active among the people, and respect as well the freedom of the people who are responding in their own unique way” (p. 102).

James H. Kroeger, M.M. (“The Dynamic Spiral of Mission Spirituality: Exploring Insights of Recent Popes”) discusses the important elements of a dynamic spirituality for ministry and mission based on theological-pastoral themes found in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, *Redemptoris Missio*, *Ecclesia in Asia*, and *Evangelii Gaudium*. He systematizes them under four headings: 1) mystery—the aim of mission is to serve in the unfolding, the epiphany, of God’s saving plan for the world (Paul’s *mysterion*); 2) meditation—through prayer and contemplation, the evangelizer becomes deeply rooted in the *mysterion* so as to be filled with the Holy Spirit, “the principal agent of mission”; 3) ministry—the

call to be an evangelizer emerges from a life of faith and takes the form of a personal commitment within the loving plan of God; “faith-service” can be rendered in a variety of ways, all of which work toward bringing the Good News to people and transforming their lives from within through it; and 4) mission—any form of ministry or apostolate in the Church involves a vibrant sense of mission; an evangelizer must realize that his particular ministry, no matter how localized and limited, is a participation in the missionary activity of the universal Church. According to Kroeger, it “remains a paradoxical truth that the home parish or diocese is strengthened when it sends forth missionaries—even out of an insufficient supply of personnel” (p. 115).

Jojo M. Fung, S.J. (“Teaching Theology: A Ministry with a Mystagogy”) criticizes the enslavement of theology to a kind of positivistic rationalism that relativizes and sanitizes the religio-cultural worldview of the common people. He also criticizes an exaggerated dualism that separates humankind from the cosmos and alienates the creature from the Creator, making the latter so distant and inaccessible. Theology must be grounded on bedrock mysticism, i.e., it must be rooted in a personal encounter with and experience of God so that its articulation would resonate with people who have already been touched by God in their lives. Fung thus proposes a ministry of teaching theology that involves “a mystagogy in which the lecturer guides the *formandi* in a contemplation of placing oneself in God’s triune presence, becoming attentive to God’s voice and the deepest passion, to the burning issues and challenges in the *formandi*’s heart” (p. 128).

As we now celebrate the fiftieth year of Loyola School of Theology, it is important to recall what Horacio de la Costa, S.J., then Jesuit Provincial, said at its inauguration:

No doubt, men will tell us why they do not believe or why they believed before but do not any longer. And when they do tell us, we must be able to understand them. This is the crucial, the urgent need. We must be able to understand not only what they say, but

what they mean but cannot say. For they will tell us in the language of modern science and technology; they will tell us in the language of the new psychological and behavioral disciplines The burden of this task of understanding, loving and saving lies on all of us This is a tremendous task. How shall a man train himself for it? This house was built to create the conditions in which such a man, given the dedication and the grace, may undergo such training with a measure of success.¹

Thus, when the Jesuits decided to establish the school of theology inside the campus of the Ateneo de Manila University, they were keenly aware of the importance of studying theology within a university milieu where other disciplines are studied and discussed.

Today, the Loyola School of Theology continues to prepare its students to face the challenges of a contemporary society that has become secularized, multicultural, and multidisciplinary in its outlook. In addition to being affiliated with the university, LST has been enriched by its close collaboration with other institutes located on campus, such as the Center for Family Ministries (CEFAM), the Center of Ignatian Spirituality (CIS), the Emmaus Center for Psycho-Spiritual Formation, Jesuit Communications (JESCOM), and the East Asian Pastoral Institute (EAPI). Students have access to the Ralph Gehring Library, one of the finest theological libraries in Asia, as well as to the university's own Rizal Library.

If enrollment is a measure of success, LST has the numbers to prove it—a total of 464 students were enrolled this school year, one third of whom are from abroad, mostly from Asia, Africa, and Latin America where Christian churches are flourishing and experiencing a “new Pentecost.” Moreover, while the bulk of its students (about half) are studying for the priesthood, LST has also drawn both men and women as lay students. The school

¹Unpublished address of Horacio de la Costa, S.J., on the occasion of the inauguration and blessing of the Loyola House of Studies (Quezon City, Philippines: March 13, 1966).

offers both ecclesiastical and civil degree programs that cater to the needs of emerging churches. Its graduates have become leaders and administrators of dioceses, missionaries and parish priests, professors and formators in seminaries, theology teachers in universities and colleges, and family and marriage counselors, as well as spiritual directors and retreat givers, among others.

As more and more international students enroll in the school, LST—in its vision and mission statement—“aspires to be a leading Catholic center of theological and ministerial formation in Asia, working to realize a believing and praying Church that serves humanity and collaborates with diverse cultural and religious traditions.”² The school has embarked on a program to make the content as well as the pedagogy of theology more contextual (“Asian”) yet sensitive to the issues and concerns of the universal Church.

Felipe Fruto Ll. Ramirez, S.J.

²Available at <http://www.lst.edu/about-us/vision-a-mission>.