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Editor's Preface

Leo-Martin Angelo R. Ocampo

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REV. FR. CATALINO G. ARÉVALO, S.J.

1925-2023

First Dean and President of Loyola School of Theology

EDITOR'S PREFACE

In this issue of *Loyola Papers*, we humbly pay tribute to one of our former editors who was also the first Dean and later on President of Loyola School of Theology: Rev. Fr. Catalino G. Arévalo, S.J. (1925-2023) who passed away at the ripe age of 97 on January 18, 2023.

Fr. Arévalo finished his doctoral studies in Dogmatic Theology at the Gregorian in 1959. The first doctoral student of the renowned ecclesialogist Fr. Francis A. Sullivan, S.J., he became the first Filipino to teach at the Jesuit theologate in Woodstock College, Maryland. Upon his return to the Philippines, he taught at San Jose Seminary until 1965, when he became the first dean and eventually president of what is now Loyola School of Theology.

Hailed as the “Father of Asian Theology” by the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conference, he was the secretary of the 1970 meeting of the Asian bishops with Pope Paul VI in Manila and served the Federation since then as its main theological peritus. He was the mind behind the programmatic document “Evangelization in Modern Day Asia” of the first FABC Plenary Assembly in 1974 and headed its “Theological Advisory Commission” for more than a decade.

He also served the local Church in the Philippines, working very closely with the late Jaime Cardinal Sin, who dubbed him the “Dean of All Filipino Theologians and the Godfather of Hundreds of Priests.” In 1997, he received the distinguished papal award, *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice*, from Pope John Paul II and was conferred the title, Doctor of Humanities *honoris causa*, by his alma mater, Ateneo de Manila University. With nothing more than a slim book of homilies published under

his name, he penned (or rather, typed) thousands of pages, all in humble and quiet service to God and his people. He was quoted as saying in the citation for his honorary doctorate: “All this writing has been done, I trust, in the service of the Church. My Jesuit vocation places my life completely at the service of the Church: her people, her communities, her leadership, her works.”

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Our first article, “Illusions of Influence: Clerical Partisan Engagement During the 2022 Elections,” by moral theologian **Rev. Fr. Eric Marcelo Genilo, S.J.**, is an attempt to draw the line between the duty of the Church to form the consciences of the faithful in order to help them make prudent political choices, and what he calls “public partisan political activity.” Analyzing last year’s elections, he applies key distinctions, such as the difference between “political rejection” and “political endorsement” to evaluate the political involvement of some clergy. In this incisive essay, he observes “a disturbing disconnection between church leaders and ordinary citizens regarding assessing political candidates,” resulting in the dilution, if not drowning, of the Church’s “prophetic voice.” He warns that “when a cleric engages actively in campaigning for a candidate, there is a conflation between the cleric’s identity as a representative of the Church and his partisan political advocacy.” Thus, he comes to the rather bold but perhaps prophetic opinion that “The CBCP should have known better than to allow public political partisan activity by the clergy during the last elections.”

The next article by **John Lemuel Lenon**, titled “Faithful Citizenship in the Person of Jesus,” is a Christological inquiry into the political stance of Jesus. He notes that while earlier scholars may have been reluctant to consider Jesus as political,

a rediscovery of politics that now appraises it in a more positive light lets us take a second look at him as a citizen. In this very insightful paper, Lenon contends that being a faithful citizen is an inextricable part of Jesus' faithfulness to God that "calls for a kind of political engagement that seeks to orient society towards the common good and to structure it justly." He then goes on to discuss the Beatitudes and Jesus' teaching on retaliation and how they embody this idea of faithful citizenship. In light of the growing tendency nowadays to bracket religious beliefs in the civic and political sphere and vice versa, this model of citizenship inspired by the Gospels can be a viable application of the "better kind of politics" that Pope Francis advocates.

Gabriel Liu, S.J.'s "Divided Yet One: The Two Catholic Communities in China" offers a first-hand glimpse at the situation of the Catholic Church in China where he avers that instead of two Churches - one sponsored by the government and another underground - there are instead two divided communities. Tracing the history of this unfortunate division and the Communist government's continual attempt to regulate religion in China, Liu refers to a deepening wound that this has engendered between the two segments of the one Catholic Church. At the same time, he points to some glimmers of hope that seem to signal an ongoing shift towards change and openness in the relationship between these two communities, as well as in the relationship between the Chinese government and the Holy See.

"Wisdom: The Feminine in the Divine" by **Rev. Fr. Rogel Anecito L. Abais, S.J.** dives deep into the character of "Sophia" or Lady Wisdom as expounded in the Scriptures. Building upon the critique of American feminist scripture scholar Rosemary Ruether, who considered the Wisdom Literature as still heavily androcentric despite its seeming

exaltation of certain feminine figures, Fr. Abais invites us to revisit the text, focusing his analysis on the figure of “Sophia” and her “three-tiered unfolding” in the book of Wisdom. Here he demonstrates how Lady Wisdom is not only highly exalted in the book, but is virtually identified with the Divinity himself/herself, who “manifests his being in both feminine and masculine realities.”

We also have **Christiane Joseph Jocson’s** “Juan Luis Segundo’s Hermeneutical Circle: A Continual Hermeneutical Encounter of the Word and the World” wherein he examines the work of the Uruguayan Jesuit theologian and a prominent figure in Latin American Liberation Theology. The author takes a close look at Segundo’s “hermeneutical circle,” which he describes as “an arduous journeying with one another,” not unlike the synodal process. This “feet on the ground” theology — or a kind of theology ‘done on our feet’ as described by Fr. Daniel Franklin Pilario, C.M. in his Facebook tribute to Fr. Arévalo: — advocates a mutual encounter between the Word and the world in the process of trying to understand divine revelation. Adopting a critical attitude of “suspicion” that enables an awareness, if not unraveling of the “ideological veil” in existing interpretations, this method that promotes that the poor are the decisive “hermeneutical key” in understanding the Word of God, especially in contexts where poverty rooted in injustice afflicts the lives of many people. It challenges our traditional ways of doing theology and banks on the “creative power of the Spirit” to unleash the dynamism of the Word that longs to be incarnated again in us by way of praxis.

Kenjie Cortez’s “A Church in Communion: PCP II and the Early Church” revisits the ecclesiological vision of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines, in time for the 30th anniversary of PCP II in 2022 and coinciding with the ongoing Synod on Synodality. Responding to the lack

of a “synthetic ecclesiology” that was observed by Cardinal Tagle in PCP II’s section on the Church, Cortez attempts to gather its insights in light of the witness of the Early Church as expressed in Acts 2:42; 4:32-35. This he does under three emblematic headings: “A Church in the Spirit,” “A Church in Search,” and “A Church in Sharing,” which he applies to PCP II’s vision of being Church of the Poor to elaborate on its pneumatological, missionary and eucharistic aspects. He reaffirms the significance of PCP II as a “watershed moment for a local Church” that, at the same time, continues to be “a gift and task” for us after three decades.

The last article “Ignatius of Loyola and C.S Lewis in Dialogue on Discernment” by **Ramon Mikhail Paulo Nicdao** juxtaposes the teachings of the Jesuit founder and known “Master of Discernment” in *The Spiritual Exercises* with the insights embedded in the great English novelist’s *The Screwtape Letters*. In this interesting analysis, Nicdao even goes on to imagine a battle between the demon Wormwood, mentored by his uncle, Screwtape on the one hand, and Ignatius on the other, over the soul of the Patient in the four turning points of his life. Here he shows how Ignatius’ “Rules for the Discernment of Spirits,” drawn from his own experiences of spiritual struggle, effectively combats the diabolic tactics being taught by Screwtape to Wormwood. He concludes with a brief treatment on how literary narrative belonging to the first level or order of language that is “rich in symbols, metaphors, and images” complements the second level or order of language to which the elaboration of theology and doctrine belongs, and will hopefully help one to arrive at the third level or order of language which is that of encounter with Mystery.

For our synthesis papers, we are pleased to have **Eduardo Miguel Ramirez**'s "Healing Grace: A Framework of Hope for Sexual Abuse Survivors" for Theology and **Tuyet Trinh Tran**'s "In the Realm of Silence, I Long for the Missing" for Philosophy.

The first one adopts the complex and painful framework of sexual abuse as a lens to examine the mysteries of faith which become a way towards hope and wholeness through God's healing grace based on the experience of the author himself. The second invites us to plunge into the beckoning silence in the search for truth, identity, and meaning.

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Turning our thoughts once more to the great figure of Fr. Catalino Arévalo, S.J., what comes to mind are those moving lines he added to the poignant hymn that we sing in San Jose Seminary that are now immortalized in the stained-glass image of Saint Joseph over the main door of their chapel: *corda nostra tecum custodi*. Keep our hearts with you. His incomparable theological legacy aside, he bequeaths to all of us, who were blessed to have encountered him, a sterling witness of love for Jesus Christ, for Our Lady, and for the people of God expressed in his tireless service to the Church as well as in his quiet fidelity in the twilight of his life.

Our dear Fr. Revs, may the Father of Priestly Sons continue to keep your heart, as he always has, "...through the noontide years and life's evening too," ever close to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary whom you loved and served with all your heart.

