

MESSAGE

ADNU DHC

March 27, 2010

“Ite imflammate omnia!”

Legend has it that St. Ignatius, when he sent St. Francis Xavier to the East, told him, “Go, set the world alight!” With the birth of the Society of Jesus, a new fire was lit in a changing world. A novel form of religious life came about, not through human enterprise but as a divine initiative. The fire that was set alight then continues to burn today.

Tonight, here in this small corner of Bicol Peninsula, Camarines Sur, in the Far East segment of the world that fire enkindles other fire...taking into its powerful embrace a Dominican Archbishop.

I am deeply touched and grateful for this great honor you have bestowed upon me tonight. As a man devoted to university life, I am well aware of the meaning of a doctorate, *honoris*. It is the highest honor that is within the power of an institution of higher learning to give. I am humbled, therefore, as I express my gratitude to Very Rev. Fr. Joel Tabora, SJ, and Ateneo de Naga University, both for myself as well as for the Archdiocese

of Caceres, because in so granting me this honorary degree, your University does honor, too, to the Metropolitan See.

But over and above all these motives, I treasure the most its meaning within the continuing story of the fire of the Jesuit Society. What can a Dominican even dare think of adding anything of significance to the fire that was said to St. Alberto Hurtado, “a fire that enkindles others?”

A little spark, a little twist as may only be hoped for. Over the two decades of close association with ADNU, I watched with awe at its dizzying tempo of growth so needed and even more wisely implemented. It is to this that I wish to respond by some brief reflection on what, I think, will give rationale and unity to all our efforts, by some brief **reflections on the nature, the purpose and role – the whole rationale of a Catholic university in the local Church.**

My focus is centered on the role of the university precisely in the life of faith of the concrete members who make up the reality of the local Church. The role is *not* limited to local church members who actually study in the university – rather it **embraces in various direct and indirect ways all the members of the local church.**

Catholic faith, we all know, is a whole life. Not just a particular doctrine, nor just a specific moral view, nor finally an attitude and practice of worship – but essentially and intrinsically all

three: Doctrine, Moral and Worship. Together each dimension draws from, and relates to, the other two.

Thus, the Catholic University's nature, purpose and role relate intrinsically to all three essential dimensions of the Faith: Doctrine, Morals, and Worship. The Catholic university cannot be so focused on one dimension as to lose sight of the other two, since all three dimensions are equally essential to authentic Catholic faith-life. The authentic study and development of Catholic faith-life can never be reduced to one or other of Faith's three dimensions, but rather must recognize and proclaim authentic Catholic faith as a living, actual life exercise of these three: thinking, moral, doctrine/acting and worshipping.

Moreover, essential to the authentic faith-life of Catholics is the dynamic integration of the three activities – their mutual interaction and impact on one another for authentic living faith. Without all three constituting together one unified faith-life – the actual exercise together of all three dimensions of the Faith – no fully authentic faith can exist. Thinking morally, acting and worshipping precisely as a believer, constitute the living faith of the authentic believer – a member of a Catholic community.

Such, then, must be the basic complex image of authentic Catholic faith – the Catholic believer, doer and worshipper – as

one member of a Catholic community within which each Catholic finds a local habitation and a name. In concrete terms, within the caring embrace of the university which is Catholic, a program for this type of education is not only good, not only useful, it is essential.

Conclusion

This is the peculiar challenge that faces us in this new day. It is a challenge that faces you here at ADNU. It is a challenge that faces all. It is the challenge that faces all of education everywhere in the world. We must adjust the university so that it might form new man for this new age.

A Catholic University is not only useful for this purpose; it is essential in its success. The person who comes out from this university home must be a person who is stable, who realizes and accepts the need for change. The new person must be stable within the turmoil of change; one who is able to change without upsetting this stability, because that is what our society today requires.

This is the continuing fire of Ignatius with which he asked St. Francis to “Go, set the world alight!” It is in this fire that you and I must find in ourselves if we are to continue serving our people and our youth today, and in the years to come.

And it is in this spirit that I accept with humbled pride the honor you have so generously conferred on me tonight.

Mabalos, ADNU !

