

INTERVIEW

Adolfo N. Dacanáy, SJ

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Department of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University

Jose Ma. Edito Tirol (JT): Good afternoon, Father. Please say something about your family and background.

Father Adolfo N. Dacanáy (AD): Okay, I come from Bacnotan in La Union. That's a small town fourteen kilometers north of San Fernando—San Fernando is the capital. That's where I grew up. Both my parents are from there. I have two older brothers. One is in the US now, the other one passed away last year. And Father [Bienvenido] Nebres is from there too.

JT: The same town?

AD: Yeah. Bacnotan is a small town so if you shout loud enough in our house you could be heard in his house.

JT: I came across an article somewhere which mentioned that your mother was a teacher all her life and that your father at one point also taught. Is that correct?

AD: No, my father never taught. He was a municipal government employee. But teaching can be said to be in my genes. My mother was a public elementary school teacher, and so were two of her sisters. My father was not a teacher, but two of his siblings were. My memories as a young boy include evenings around the dining table. My mother would be making her lesson plan; even as a very senior and experienced teacher, she prepared her lessons well and thoroughly. We three siblings would be studying our lessons or reading a book. My father would be doing his crossword puzzle or poring over an issue of applied mechanics. The dictionary would be at hand; one of the points my parents insisted on was to check the dictionary for the meaning of new words.

JT: Where did you go to school?

AD: I had Grade One in Bacnotan Elementary School. It's a public school. And the instruction was in Ilocano. In Grade Two, my parents moved me to Christ the King College. That is a school run by the ICN sisters in San Fernando. And the instruction was in English. I didn't know English when I went to Grade Two. I studied there from Grade Two until Grade Six.

JT: And for high school?

AD: High school I went to Immaculate Conception Minor Seminary in Vigan.

JT: Okay.

AD: So I was thirteen when I entered the seminary. What do you know when you're thirteen?

JT: Nothing.

AD: But there was a sister in Christ the King College. Her name was Sister Woodrow, a Belgian nun, who was also the teacher of [Bienvenido] Nebres. She herded honor students to the seminary and maybe four, five of us went into the seminary. But by the end of high school, I was the only one left.

JT: How much older is Father Nebres than you?

AD: Thirteen years older.

JT: So he's seventy-five?

AD: Yeah, he was born in 1940. I was born in 1953.

JT: And then how did you end up in Ateneo?

AD: So I graduated in Vigan. And then the Bishop said, why don't you apply to San Jose Seminary? So I applied to San Jose Seminary and was accepted. Then I studied in Ateneo, from 1970 to 1974. I was in the same homeroom as our graduation speaker two years ago, Bienvenido Tan. We were batch mates in English and then I majored in Philosophy. [Eduardo Jose] Calasanz was our valedictorian.

JT: Oh, you're the same batch as Professor Eduardo Calasanz?

AD: Yes, I graduated in 1974, and then I left for a year. It was not so unusual that some people would leave the seminary between Philosophy and Theology. And then Father Ortiz asked me to do things for him. So I worked with him for a year. And then I returned in the school year of 1975–76 to do Theology in the Ateneo. After I finished the second year, I entered the Novitiate.

JT: So that would have been . . .

AD: '77.

JT: I'm just asking Father, but were you active during Martial Law?

AD: Martial Law was '72. I was in third-year college. Active? If you mean going to rallies, no. Some of the people in San Jose were *very* active. William Beng was two years ahead of me, the one who was eventually shot. Alex Aquino was very active. They were roommates, in fact. But I was not. I was a political virgin. I was a serious student.

JT: So you were not one of those Ilocano . . . ah, what is the polite word? Loyalists? You were not one of those?

AD: No. I was politically innocent.

JT: We will not use the word “virgin” anymore. We’ll use the phrase “political innocent.” But Father, where and when did you get the call to the priesthood?

AD: Well, what do you know about the priesthood in high school? Nothing. As a matter of fact, my father did not want me to go into the seminary at the end of grade school. He says, “*Anak*, you have to go to college. You have to allow me to finish, to discharge my responsibility.” *Tumigas ang ulo ko* because my friends were going. But what do you know in the minor seminary? Nothing. And in a way it was good I was not too serious about minor seminary. Otherwise I would have left the seminary. I would have left the Church. In San Jose, maybe there was a little bit more guidance. There was a little bit more direction. Around third year, I had good teachers: the Jesuits. So I was thinking, getting to know the Jesuits personally and also their work better. And then in fourth year I was enrolled in the philosophy of science course of Father Green and I was reading on Galileo. And then there was Robert Bellarmine. I ended up reading the entire biography of Bellarmine by [James] Broderick. Broderick had this biography of Bellarmine that I read and I started thinking about it third year, fourth year. Even when I was out, I was working with Father Ortiz. And when I went back to the seminary I continued to discern. Finally, at the end of my second year in Theology I thought this was a good time to make a decision.

Looking back now, the Jesuits I admired the most were good teachers—organized and well-prepared teachers, professionally competent and interested in their students. They presented a very appealing challenge to me, young and impressionable and even innocent. I think that that was probably one of the attractions of the Jesuit vocation to me.

So I applied and I was accepted. The year before me, Nemesio Que and Demy Polledo had applied. Demy Polledo is a Jesuit. He’s now in Davao. Nemesio Que is now Vice President for Administration [at the Ateneo].

They entered in 1976. In 1977 I also applied and was accepted. I was in the Novitiate from 1977 to 1979. After the novitiate, we moved here to Loyola where we did one year of juniorate. At that time we were supposed to study communication skills. So we were studying Filipino and English, which no one took seriously. After my juniorate, I was assigned as a regent

in Naga for one year. But I was there for only one year. After that I came back to Loyola and resumed my theological studies from 1981 to 1983.

That was also the year I started to teach here in the college as a scholastic.

JT: Teaching what subject, Father?

AD: I taught . . . At that time, it used to be called Theology 21. From 1981 to 1983.

JT: Okay.

AD: Then in 1983 I was ordained. My first year as a priest I was assigned to Zamboanga del Sur in a little town called Titay. It's about ten kilometers—maybe six kilometers—from Ipil. It's a small town, small parish. I was there with Father Ruben Reyes who is now back in Naga. That was called a pastoral year, the first year as a priest.

JT: Father, had you not become a priest, what else you would have become?

AD: When I was in high school, I wanted to take up law. And as a matter of fact, without telling my parents, I had applied to UP [University of the Philippines].

JT: Really? Wait, wait. For law school?

AD: No, for college. I had wanted to get out, to leave the seminary. My parents would not allow me to go to UP [because it was not a Catholic school.] . . . Ateneo was a Catholic school . . . and then there was San Jose Seminary.

JT: Wait, Father. I'm just asking. Did you pass UP?

AD: Yeah, I was accepted. But I was with my cousins in Manila during the early part of the summer, and my parents wired me and they asked me to go home. My parents had no telephone then. So I went home, and *hindi pa ako nakapasok sa bahay*, Nanay was waving this envelope. "Ano ito?"

JT: Oh, no, *na-unahan*! It's like the advisory grades. What course, Father?

AD: I can't remember, but I wanted to go to prelaw.

JT: So there was prelaw as a course. *Sayang*. UP lost a lawyer right there. Okay, Father, but when you were teaching here in Theology 21, what was it like? I mean, that was thirty-two years ago.

AD: It was a much smaller course. The Theology Department was in Kostka Hall.

JT: Okay, how many people were there? How many faculty members?

AD: I don't know, but [Ma. Christina] Astorga, [Ma. Victoria] Parco, [Father Asandas] Balchand was chair. [Lito] Tejido. There were a couple of priests at that time in good standing and they eventually left. I can't remember their names.

JT: How was your style then? I mean, in your first years of teaching? Is it any different from what you are like now?

AD: No, I don't think so. Even when I was teaching as a regent in Naga, it was basically—

JT: *Ganoon na*? Even the humor, Father?

AD: I don't know about the humor.

JT: But the strictness was there?

AD: I think so.

JT: Because I wondered if you scared students even back then, thirty years, forty years ago.

AD: I don't know if they're joking, maybe. At the time I was teaching, I taught a total of seven sections.

JT: In a year?

AD: No, in two years. In the first semester I taught one, in the second semester I taught two. And I kept in touch with many of them. I see them regularly. I married many of them. I baptized their children. And they joke to me about the strictness.

JT: But Father, after 1983 you went on to graduate studies.

AD: In 1983 I went to Zamboanga.

JT: And after that?

AD: From there, graduate school, yes.

JT: From what I understand, Jesuits always end up pursuing a master's degree and eventually . . . Is it required for all Jesuits to go for a PhD?

AD: No.

JT: But why canon law, Father?

AD: You know when I was a first year novice—that was 1977—the Provincial was Father [Joaquin] Bernas. And the Provincial sees everyone at least once a year. That is called a manifestation of conscience. So he asked me, "Would you be interested to go into canon law?" Being a first-year novice, and considering the fact that I actually thought of going into law school, I said, "Yeah, I'd be interested to go into canon law." Which was a good time because the new code of canon law was promulgated in 1983 and that is what we studied in 1984.

JT: Okay. So you went to Gregorian University? Where is that?

AD: Gregorian University is in Rome. It is on the Piazza della Pilotta. It is run by the Society [of Jesus].

JT: And a licentiate in canon law is . . .

AD: It's the ecclesiastical equivalent of an MA.

JT: So, it's not like a four-year law course.

AD: No, no. It's not a professional degree. It's an academic degree.

JT: Oh, okay. I wanted to clarify that because people ask me, "Father Dacanáy is a canon lawyer. Does that mean he went to law school?" And how long does it take to finish the degree, Father?

AD: It used to take two years to do your licentiate, and another two years to do your doctorate. But now they added a third year for the licentiate.

JT: Okay.

AD: Even UST [University of Santo Tomas] now has a third year.

JT: I've also heard—correct me if I'm wrong—but the whole thing is in Latin.

AD: Yeah, the whole course was in Latin.

JT: The MA and the PhD?

AD: The whole medium of instruction was in Latin. And then for the core courses, the canon law itself, the exams were in Latin. Oral exams. Now for the other courses, like the philosophy of law and things like that, you can look for a common language with a teacher.

JT: Oh, but defending the dissertation itself?

AD: That has to be in Latin. I wrote it in English but it had to be defended in Latin.

JT: Why?

AD: Well, the whole idea is that the original documents in the Catholic Church—the official versions are still in Latin.

JT: Okay.

AD: So that was their way of forcing people to learn Latin. It must have been at the end of my first year, if I'm not mistaken, when they asked students if they'd like to shift to Italian, like what the other faculties have done. And Italian was narrowly defeated by a couple of votes. We said that at least, if it's in Latin, all of us suffer. The playing field is even. If it's in Italian, the Italians will have an advantage.

JT: Selfish. Really selfish, Father.

AD: But eventually they shifted to Italian.

JT: Afterwards.

AD: Yeah.

JT: Okay. But Father, the way it works, I remember when I was your student you said there were actually very few canon lawyers in the Philippines.

AD: There are many, but very few are actually practicing.

JT: Why?

AD: Because many of them would rather be parish priests than do canon law, where you will have to study and sit down and things like that. Like, you know, I'm reading a case that I will hear on Thursday. To write a case,

you will have to study this and do a little of jurisprudence et cetera. Many priests do not want to do that.

JT: Is it a matter of patience, Father? Or capability? Or both?

AD: No, they were able to do their degrees. I suppose there's a basic capacity there.

JT: So how many are practicing now?

AD: For example, the court of Manila, how many judges are there? We are five. Of the five, two are Diocesan priests from Manila, one is a Salesian, one is a Jesuit, and another is a Diocesan priest from Pampanga. There is a Canon Law Society of the Philippines. At the last count, there are 137 members. For Manila I imagine there must be at least twenty. Thus, we have to import people to man a tribunal.

JT: So Father, just like in our current legal system, there is a shortage of judges and a surplus of cases? Is that the way it is? Did I understand it correctly? Not enough practicing?

AD: Yeah, that's why cases take forever. Because not enough people are working.

JT: And you enjoy this?

AD: Ah, there is a certain challenge—especially if the case is difficult—and you say, "Wow, this is difficult." You have to read up on jurisprudence and see if there are similar cases to it and how it was handled. It's not just pastoral work, but there's also a kind of intellectual satisfaction in finding out how it is.

JT: Okay, but Father, when I was your student, what I remember you talking about was handling celebrity annulments.

AD: Well, there are celebrity annulments, but not all cases are celebrity cases.

JT: What does canon law cover exactly, Father? Aside from marriage?

AD: If somebody wants to leave the priesthood, there is an investigation that is carried out locally, and then there are certain things that the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith would like to find out. This is an office in Rome. It used to be called the Holy Office of the Inquisition. It is now the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. So there are certain things they want you to find out. So that's what you try to find out, that's what you try to determine from interviewing the priest supplying all this information. That's one case.

Then you also have cases of sexual abuse brought against a priest. Because eventually it could be a penal procedure where the priest will be dismissed. So you also handle that.

A third general area would be when a cause is introduced or a beatification. For example, now there is a case of Father George Wilman. He's a Jesuit who introduced Knights of Columbus in the Philippines. The Knights of Columbus are sponsoring, are introducing this cause. So there are commissions; a theological commission, an historical commission, and then a tribunal is set. That's another area. Of course, the most common is the marriage annulment. That is what concerns the lay people. But there are other things.

JT: Which part, Father, gets the most work? In those fields?

AD: Oh, the most common and demands the most work is annulment. The beatification is just being introduced now. So far that's the only one that I've participated in. As for the penal cases, these ones are painful things to be involved in, where you have to sit in judgment of another priest. It's not the most pleasant.

JT: How often does a tribunal meet, Father?

AD: It depends. I go there every Thursday. Since 1989.

JT: Twenty-six years or more. Where is this, Father?

AD: Intramuros. Near the cathedral, near the COMELEC, near the old San Ignacio Church.

JT: But they're fast-tracking annulments now. I heard something about making it shorter?

AD: Yes . . . for the procedures, not the substance of the law. But the procedures have been simplified in two general areas. One is the competent court. Before the competent court would be the court of the respondent. Or the place where the marriage was celebrated. Now, where the respondent is, where the petitioner is, or where the marriage was celebrated—all of those are three equal grounds. That certainly simplifies it. And the other simplified amendment has to do with the removal of a step: [in the past] if a petition was granted, if an annulment was granted, it was automatically reviewed by the appeals court of the Philippines. Now that process has been removed.

JT: Okay. *Naawa ako*, Father, because of the large number of annulments. I have classmates who have had marriages annulled already. It's depressing, to put it mildly. But Father, aside from actual tribunal work, you have a textbook now? You've had published works?

AD: Well, yes. *Canon Law and Marriage* started off as class notes. And then I was able to put together the whole commentary. The section on marriage, 1055 to 1156. But it was out of necessity; it was a kind of intellectual adventure.

JT: How long did it take, Father, to put the book together?

AD: It was published in 2000, so it took ten years.

JT: So it is not one of those in the name of a research grant or creative work, which Ateneo is trying to push nowadays.

AD: No, it was done out of necessity. I had to produce something for my class.

JT: So part of your time goes to tribunal work, part of your time goes to writing the occasional piece because of the long list here of published research on your CV. But Father, part of your reputation among the faculty now is your wonderful words during disciplinary hearings. Because I used to be the chair of the discipline committee [of Loyola Schools, Ateneo], I know how it works. But I've heard your language with some of the students has been . . . colorful.

AD: Well, not as colorful as some.

JT: There are worse than you, Father? How much of that, Father, is theatrics? And how much is real anger?

AD: Most of it is theatrics. I don't even remember . . .

JT: See, Father. That's one of the things I've learned from you. In class, acting is very useful. Feigned anger.

AD: Even in class. When I'm angry, it's seldom . . . I can only remember the case of two students where I was *genuinely* angry.

JT: Two students in over thirty years.

AD: And it was the same instance, they were talking in class. And I got so upset because it was already the end of the semester when you already know the things that irritate me.

JT: Oh, that's dumb. When was this, Father? Roughly, when was this?

AD: Eighteen or seventeen years ago?

JT: And what happened to the miscreants?

AD: Well, I told them to get out. "Don't come back. Don't sign up for the oral exams. Look for a teacher in Theology where you can take the exam. I'll give you a written exam. Inform the secretaries who these teachers are and I will give them the exams."

JT: And what happened? Did they pass?

AD: Apparently, they must have studied.

JT: Did they at least apologize?

AD: I told them, "I don't want to see your face." They came here several times. I was genuinely upset. In most other cases, they come in and I say, "Sit down. What's up?"

The first thing that I want students to know is . . . that I care. That I'm interested in what happens to them. And because I am interested—

that is where my strictness comes [from]. So when I scold them, this is not just to make life difficult. I don't want them to take my instructions lightly. Those instructions have grown out of my experience. And there is a point. And I want to make sure they know I'm concerned, that rules are not just rules, and there's a concern . . .

JT: And aside from your committee work, do you do any outreach work? Outside the campus?

AD: Well, I think I always listed down as outreach work my work in the tribunal and my teaching canon law in other places.

JT: Like where, Father?

AD: Now I teach in Don Bosco Seminary in Parañaque. I go there on Tuesdays.

JT: And do you have any other advocacies off campus? Like where do you regularly hold Mass outside?

AD: Before, I used to say Mass regularly for many years—*siguro* four years, five years—in Kapitolyo because the parish priest was a friend of mine.

Then he was transferred to another parish. And I followed him there and stayed on for maybe two years. Then he was loaned to a diocese in Great Britain and that was that . . .

My regular Mass now is at Mary the Queen. I say Mass there every third Sunday.

JT: Now what about sports, Father? Because I read in some of the early articles that you didn't get into the fascination of sports until after 2002. Is that more or less accurate?

AD: I think so. I've never been athletic in my life.

JT: It shows, Father. It's okay.

AD: I started to watch . . . you know that game when we won the championship? I was not even there. I could not fake it at that time.

JT: Father!

AD: Yeah.

JT: The Game 3?

AD: With La Salle? Chito Salud invited me. *Manood lang tayo sa bahay.*

But before that . . . occasionally, I did watch but it wasn't with the same regularity.

JT: So, you started regularly around . . .?

AD: Around 2004.

JT: 2004. Oh, that was a bad year. 2004 we were . . . was that the year Larry [Fonacier] got injured?

AD: I don't remember now. No, I did not watch Larry, so if he was playing regularly at the time, I didn't watch regularly.

JT: Okay. But Father, where do you get your tickets. People have been asking for the longest time, "Where does Fr. Dacanáy get his patron tickets?" No, because the running rumor I've heard among students is that that is what you charge for annulments. For every annulment you ask for season tickets. That's the running joke.

AD: Funny, but no.

JT: But Father, you're also actually checking papers, right.

AD: Yes, if you go to the place early. Or during breaks.

JT: But Father, you don't have to go there that early because the seat is reserved.

AD: Yes, but you go with a group and they want to go early. They linger *pag sa Araneta*. They linger there in front of Starbucks. So you have to go there early and make small talk. And after the game, you stay there in the lobby smoking, gloating if you win, bitching over the other team if we lost.

JT: So, it was bitching last Saturday.

AD: I could not because I had to leave immediately . . . I had Mass. I was late for my Mass.

JT: Father, God will understand.

AD: But they know. When we got there, they were like, "Oh, we thought you would be later *kasi kakatapos lang 'yung game*."

JT: This is why we lost, Father. Because you were late for the Mass. . . . When you're out there at the game your vocabulary becomes more . . . how do I say it? Colorful.

AD: The color just comes out. I just had my eye surgery and I realize it's so bright now. I think that's what's happening when you go to a game.

JT: So when you're surrounded by students, you don't care if they can hear you cussing away?

AD: This is a game. This is not a Mass.

JT: That's on the record, right, Father? I can put that on the record, right? Because from what I heard last Saturday, the students were well-behaved, but the alumni and Father Dacanáy were letting them have it. But Father, the FEU [Far Eastern University] team plays clean.

AD: It's okay. It's okay if they play clean.

JT: But Father, when did you also start watching the volleyball games?

AD: I've been watching the volleyball games for maybe four years?

JT: Fab Five, *pa*. When it was still the Fab Five, *pa*. Before Alyssa [Valdez] became *Alyssa*.

AD: Yes.

JT: But you watch regularly now?

AD: Yes.

JT: So, starting February.

AD: Both men and women.

JT: Ah, the men's team. So, you don't watch the Lady Eagles? The lady basketball team.

AD: Well, you can't go to all the games. Some of the baseball players are my former students. So I say I will just go to the finals. *Kasi yung baseball, hindi mo alam kung matapos siya alas-tres or alas-sais.*

JT: It can go on and on and on. But Father, a lot of the players end up in your class.

AD: No!

JT: That's another rumor we need to discuss.

AD: Well, perhaps some who say there's nothing to lose anyway.

JT: So, Father, you do try to spend extra time talking to these players?

AD: No. You know, I don't like to go out of my way. Sometimes they come here. That's okay with me, but I'm not going to run after them.

JT: Ah, I thought you provided extra levels of moral guidance.

AD: If they come here. I don't like to give unsolicited advice . . .

JT: Oh, okay. Father, I just wanted to ask about students. How would you describe how students have been since you came back from Rome? The evolution of the Ateneo student.

AD: You know, my perception is that it's not a linear development. Sometimes you have good semesters, good years. What scares me is I don't know if we're breeding a very soft generation. People who cannot take disappointments, people who cannot take pressure. There are not many things that keep me sleepless at night. As a matter of fact when I lie down, I'm gone in five minutes. *Inisip ko, ang daming* suicide, depression, *parang* . . . This is, of course, anecdotal. It's not anything scientific. Before, occasionally, there were some suicides, but this time there are so many depressions, dropping out of school, going on LOA. I feel we are part of rearing, raising a very soft generation who do not have the stomach or the spine for failure.

JT: The term I've heard is "lack of resilience." And what would be the source of this, Father? Is it the parents?

AD: You know, I have a former student. She's now a fellow in psychiatry. And they're saying that the neurons are already connected by [age] eight or nine. So, the basic things are already there. So, one, it's mainly the

parents. Parents who are . . . I don't know if they're absentee parents who are making up for it. And then other parents who are fine parents, but give too much attention . . .

JT: Ah, so the student is not allowed to develop his own character.

AD: Like the mother is always there to provide a parachute.

JT: The hovering, helicopter moms. That's the expression I've heard.

AD: So some families in a previous generation, they would have five, six, seven. And the children were okay. That's what I've noticed. The children now are so much more . . . they're not resilient; they don't have a spine; all these things. And I think also in the case of separated families, I think that the parents try to compensate for being away, for being absent, so the children would not blame them. Sometimes the children play one parent against the other. And so they fall prey to this. I've never heard it as often as I've been hearing it in the past five years, the parents are concerned with their children's self-esteem. I mean, even the way you correct papers. I used to make big red marks. And now you're supposed to say nice things.

JT: Huh? Come on. And the students, Father, do you see a pattern? Especially from the exclusive schools, or from the public schools?

AD: No, I don't know enough of the students to be able to make generalizations. I know students who have parents who make just enough will say, especially if the student is also conscientious, "I cannot afford to repeat. I cannot afford to go on summer. I cannot afford to go for another year. I have to graduate on time. I have to graduate so I can work and help my family."

JT: And what about the students and social media?

AD: I don't have social media so I don't know about that . . . I don't have Twitter, I don't have Facebook.

JT: I noticed, Father.

AD: I have a former student. I don't know where he gets the time. But he seems to be like the police. Apparently, he has these contacts, et cetera, et cetera. I mean, he's the friend of the friend of the friend of everyone.

So, like when *we* lost to La Salle in the first round, he must've sent me about twenty-five . . . texts? Tweets?

JT: Tweets.

AD: Saying about, Oh God, I went there, how Dacanáy will be tomorrow, et cetera, et cetera. There's no more restraint . . . every thought that they have is published.

JT: I mean, who cares? It's a whiner generation, Father. Social media allows these kinds to whine and express themselves. It's probably connected to

your earlier comment. They're not resilient and because they're allowed to whine even more, it strengthens this complaining about the smallest things. They now have a vehicle for their whining . . .

AD: Yeah, now that you put it that way, yes. They're whiners. And not only the young.

JT: Anyway, the social media allows them to complain and complain without actually trying to stop and think, is there anything I can do about it or to improve it? *Wala*, eh. It stops at the whining level.

AD: So . . . inhibitions which you normally lose at the end of your life, you lose them earlier on.

JT: Early. *Very* early.

AD: I think it also makes you feel self-centered. You think anyone is interested.

JT: That's what social media does.

AD: That's why I think there is a point to a normal life, because we cannot adjust. My program is I am sixty-two now, I will die at seventy.

JT: I remember, Father, we had this conversation in front of the Blue Eagle—in front of Jesuit Residence. Once we were making jokes, Father, and I said, "Isn't this building on the fault line?" And then you said that if the building ever collapses, you want to die right there and then because you didn't want to be pulled out and you didn't want to undergo the recovery. Father, *naman*. People are going to miss you if that would happen.

AD: I'll pray for them in heaven.

JT: But Father, also, aside from the students, what about teaching, Father? What else has changed in the way you've been teaching in the last twenty or so years?

AD: I used to assign papers. I've given up on that.

JT: Really?

AD: Yeah. What I do now is I will assign an article or a chapter, which they have to dissect and to critique.

JT: Is this group work, Father, or individual?

AD: This is a group. And I think, I'm trying it out. This is the third semester that I'm using it. It may be more pointed for my purposes to check on their critical thinking skills. I'm just trying it out. I don't know if I will go back to the old research paper.

JT: You gave up on the research paper, Father, because?

AD: I'm slowing down. I used to work much faster.

JT: Okay. I've heard also your oral exams are not as late and not as early. Father, the oral schedule you gave us before was 4 a.m. starting point.

AD: When did you graduate?

JT: 1994, Father.

AD: No, it cannot be.

JT: I remember a clock. Yeah, I think you had as early as six. *Baka* six.

AD: *Baka* six.

JT: And *hanggang* 10 p.m. I remember we had slots until 10 p.m. Aside from the requirements, what else has changed in your teaching in the last twenty years or so?

AD: No, the same style. I have the same style. Two exams, one final exam. You always have a choice of written or oral.

JT: The Friday quiz is still there.

AD: Our weekly quizzes, which I try to return on Monday.

JT: The dress code is still there.

AD: The dress code is still there.

JT: The closed, locked door is still there [so late students cannot enter].

AD: Now it's not necessary because I don't have neighbors. My classroom is in SEC.

JT: Father, is it true that you're nicer when we win a game?

AD: I, what?

JT: You're nicer on the students when we win the game? Like, three wins cancel a quiz.

AD: No. What we have are bonus questions.

JT: And if the student doesn't follow the game, sorry *na lang*?

AD: *Hindi*. Bonus *na*. It doesn't bring down your grade.

JT: But it can't bring it up.

AD: It can replace a lower grade.

JT: Okay. And Father, the same bad words in class.

AD: In class?

JT: Well, the *occasional* . . . ah . . . expressions, colorful expressions . . .

AD: Not in class.

JT: Outside?

AD: Not in class. In the game, maybe.

JT: But not in the class. Okay. But Father, more specifically what else has changed as a Theology teacher? Because I've seen the composition of the department change over time. Like many old conservatives are no longer there so how has that changed teaching Theology and adjusting to understanding Theology?

AD: Okay. I did not devote as much time, for example, to the question of homosexuality. I said something about it, but it has become such a prominent concern and now I feel I have to. So there is now a section

on it where I talk about homosexuality, what the Church says, what it teaches. And I say you know that vision of the Church does not cover all the bases, but I think it's the most adequate one. So from the subject matter I try to address questions from students.

JT: And how would you describe the Theology Department now? I mean, the composition of it now?

AD: I think we're the most international.

JT: How many foreign teachers are we talking about?

AD: We have a German.

JT: Okay.

AD: We have two Austrians. And then, we have three Americans. I think there's an agreement on fundamental things. There might be little differences in the not-so-fundamental things, which I think is a good thing.

JT: Now going beyond the department, what's it like being a Catholic now? A Filipino Catholic at least?

AD: Well, I think Pope Francis and his visit to the Philippines really made an impact. He seems to have touched and inspired even people who may have been Catholics but have lapsed into nonpractice. And maybe even non-Catholics. And that's why I find that his presence, the life that he lives is such a light in a very dark world. He really brings illumination. So I'm not a very pious person but I am challenged by him. I think he also brought a certain balance even in doctrine where he said, "Yes, condoms, homosexuality, contraception. Okay, we have said this over and over again. I don't think we need to repeat it. The doctrine of the Church has not changed, so can we move on to something else like mercy." And that's such a breath of fresh air especially for somebody who teaches Theology. There's something inspiring about that, not just in an intellectual way but *napapahanap ka sa buhay*. So, being a Catholic—maybe I speak from being a religious—I'm almost proud to be a religious.

JT: *Almost proud*, Father?

AD: I don't want to go overboard.

JT: Actually Father, one of the most important things you taught me in your class, which might not exactly have been the whole point was—and it's like the same thing with the Pope, what I learned from the Pope—it's not about the piety, but the spirituality. That's the part I appreciated a lot from your class, what I appreciated from the Pope. Now Father, I have to ask this: What would your legacy be? If you're sixty-two going on seventy,

what more can you do with eight years? Let's put it that way. What more have you yet to complete in eight years?

AD: I have been teaching here at the Ateneo for some twenty-nine years, nourishing years for the most part. I must say that they have been very enjoyable and fulfilling years. I also like to think that I have grown as a teacher, as a Jesuit priest, as a person. The Theology department has been a home, my colleagues, my friends, the students my fellow wayfarers in my pilgrimage through life.

So I'm hoping that I'll be able to continue teaching. I know I'm slowing down. I used to be able to sit three hours straight without standing. Checking papers. I used to be able to do that. Now almost every fifteen or twenty minutes I have to walk around. Before I used to pile up ten exams and I check every ten. Now I check every five. So I'm slowing down.

JT: Father, sixty-two? *Bata pa yan*.

AD: Before I could finish a decision in one morning. '*Di ba*, I work early in the morning? I work from four and my class is at nine-thirty. So from four to nine I could actually finish one case. So I hope that I will be able to continue teaching. I hope that I will be able to continue writing.

JT: One more book, Father?

AD: Yes, there's one on Holy Orders.

JT: Necessity, not adventure?

AD: Yeah! It's what I teach. Somewhere in my professional career, I must have made a choice to be first a teacher and only subordinately a scholar or a researcher. The research I have made were always a function of my teaching and I am pleased to have made that choice.

If I were to live my life all over, I will be a teacher again, with one modification: I'd be a better teacher.

Jose Ma. Edito (Jo-Ed) K. Tirol, PhD, is an assistant professor at the Department of History of the Ateneo de Manila University and a former student of Father Dacanáy. A few months after graduation, Father Dacanáy paid him the ultimate compliment saying he would make a good Jesuit. Fortunately or unfortunately, this was not meant to be. Seven years later, Father Dacanáy was the officiating priest at Jo-Ed's wedding to another former student, Rebbie Alvero, and has since baptized their three children.