The present issue of Budhi is all about people who have accepted the challenge, and known the joy, of satisfactorily conducting another in some field of human endeavor, and who, in the process, have honed their own mastery of the field. Excited by the development of their own skills, these charges go on to recruit others into a great chain of being crying out in unison: “Your success is my success!”.

I have found my own place on this chain, through the instrumentality of two individuals: Fr. Miguel A. Bernad, S.J., and Fr. Joseph Galdon, S.J. In life, Fr. Mike (Bernad) served in various capacities, as professor of philosophy at Berchman’s College in Cebu, and professor of literature at the Ateneo de Manila University and then at Xavier University in Cagayan de Oro City. He served as Editor of Ateneo’s highly regarded Philippine Studies, and made important contributions to Philippine literary criticism and literary history, through such writings as Bamboo and the Greenwood Tree: Studies in Philippine Literature in English (1951); Dramatics at the Ateneo de Manila: A History of Three Decades: 1972–1951 (1977); and The King’s Phrase: Some Philippine Literary and Cultural Perspectives (1998). His contributions in the study of Philippine history have been of equal importance as his literary legacy. One writer notes that the titles to his historical works—History Against the Landscape, Tradition and Discontinuity, Adventures in Vietnam—suggest that for him “history and memory are nothing less than forming and transforming, constitutive of the future.” He became the founding editor of Xavier University’s Kinaadman, a journal that many Philippine historians treat as a highly valuable tool of their trade. His four-volume history of Bishop Maximo Gregorio Aglipay and the schism of 1902, Religious Revolution in the Philippines: The Life of Gregorio Aglipay, which he prepared in collaboration with Fr. Pedro
de Achutegui, S.J., remains the standard work on the subject. For his contributions to literature and historiography, Fr. Mike received the Catholic Media Award for Journalism (1979), the Manila Critics Circle Award for Best Book of Essays (1987), and the Manila Critics Circle Award for Best Book in History (1987).

On many occasions, Fr. Mike spoke of the role of humanism in education, and the wisdom of treating learning as a way of loving God. St. Ignatius tells us that “just as prayer and contemplation are pleasing to God when done for love of Him, so also to devote oneself to the study of any faculty, is pleasing to God when done purely for His service." In keeping with this, at a lecture on the humanities he once gave at the Ateneo, Fr. Mike urged the faculty to make the most quotidian tasks relating to teaching an opportunity to teach as Jose Rizal had taught in Dapitan. Rizal was a humanist, he said, and for a humanist every gesture is educative.

The quick run-through provided above of Fr. Mike’s commitment to Philippine scholarship, has inspired me to not cease to strive after knowledge and wisdom in a nation such as ours that is illumined only rarely. His impressive achievements as a professor of literature and the classics, have similarly spurred me to a deeper appreciation of the power of words. His pioneering work in literary theory and historiography has clarified for me the meaning of many complex, historically-specific local movements. His tireless efforts as an editor and a journalist to get people to make sense of their lives within the frame of a liberal, humanist tradition recall to my own mind the beauty and humility of all our striving. And I have been exceedingly grateful.

I first met Father Joe Galdon, Professor of English at the Ateneo in the mid-1970s. His reputation among students at the time was legendary. Everybody took Father Joe’s classes simply because he was teaching them. I succeeded in enlisting in one such class, despite the long lines which began at four in the morning to be able to do so, which was a required Drama class. There I met a man who lived up to his reputation! In his classes, Father G. brought to display the full range of his complexity as a Columbia University-educated man and, therefore,
as a super-achiever, as a Renaissance man, a man who spoke English spontaneously, with wit, passion, and a vast vocabulary, whose images and metaphors enlivened his conversation, ensured that his lectures were never dull. He conveyed an *esprit* that was at once inquisitive and respectful, learned and playful, practical and yearning. His lessons on the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Oscar Wilde opened our eyes to the unexpected beauty and meaning of even the most familiar elements of human affairs, even when they were not easy to accept, such as what “Aeschylus taught...” “Sophocles taught...” that “man learns only through suffering... but through what he learns, man can be counted on to do what is right.” To the seventeen-year-old person that I was at the time, Father Joe seemed already quite advanced in years yet, amazingly, in his lectures, he displayed an energy that wiped away those years.

He waxed especially eloquent on the subject of the atrocity and injustice that have dogged us since the foundation of the world. Indeed, I am certain his intense awareness of the darkness of his times influenced his perception of light. In the true sense of the term, *sojourner*, Fr. Joe was a *sojourner* – how else could I put it? – a foreigner, who had turned up on our shores, to live and to work in what must have seemed to him a somewhat impenetrable setting. Up till the moment the light went from his mind, as much as he truly, deeply, madly loved us, we must have also seemed to him always somewhat strange, always slightly out of kilter. He came from environs that at the time were fraught with baby-boomer-generation audacity, scientific *hubris*, the Cold War, the racial and interethnic troubles that in 1960s America raged throughout the continent, but at least they were his own. But he chose to leave all that, to follow the God who beckoned, and arrived at our shores. From the moment he got here, he stood in the middle of intergenerational and intercultural instabilities, within the Philippine Jesuit Province, within the Ateneo de Manila, within the Philippine Church at large, in the years leading up to the Second Vatican Council, not to mention, martial rule! All throughout this time, Father Joe generously responded to several calls to him to serve in the eye of storms, as English Department Chair, as Editor (for eighteen years) of *Philippine Studies*, as Dean of the Ateneo College of Arts and Sciences, as Dean of Admissions and Aid, and then as Rector of the Ateneo de Manila Jesuit community. These assignments were tough but, as far as
anyone could tell, Father Joe never lost his cool, never lost his dry, New Yorkish, Bob Hope-ish (whom some of us thought he resembled) sense of humor, that enabled him to laugh — often and well — at a good joke, a funny story, the general absurdity of life!

The Scriptures aptly describe the complex nature of Father Joe’s multiple involvements. From the Prophecy of Isaiah, repeated in the Gospel of Luke, we hear:

The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted, to set at liberty the captives and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4, 18)

These words grounded his life and ministry as a healer, as a teacher, as an encourager, whose ministry was part of his everyday life, as all our ministries are supposed to be. But there was one ministry for which Father Joe had a particularly big heart. Women first came to the Ateneo in 1973. They, in a true sense, had also been put out to sea. Father Joe made it a point to seek out these kindred spirits, often finding them hidden from view, concealed behind Ateneo’s masculinist intractability and chauvinism. He organized them into the Prayer Days for Coeds, providing them with a sure and certain lodging in his own heart — a heart that, as I said, many years before had also put out to sea, traveling far afield of his original home, in order to make his new home among us, in new families, in new places.

A combination of physical and psychological travails assailed Father Joe throughout the last ten years of his life. Father Joe fought them mightily at first: he had more to do, more dreams to live, more connections to make, more preaching and prayers to share! Eventually, however, his outer body decayed. His faithful friends, however — those who, throughout the years of his confinement at the Jesuit Infirmary, tirelessly paid him visits, held his hand, fed him the nice things they brought, took him out for walks, recited prayers with him, and kept coming back, surely knew that his inner self continued to be renewed day by day. There was that unmistakable presence in him of a Temple not made by hands, of an aura about him suggesting the presence of a God who simply does not let go. Father Joe, throughout his years of prostration, taught me the most important thing he has ever taught—
that even as we suffer in our own lives with bodies that betray, God never leaves us.

In his Second Letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul says that, in the measure that we offer up to him our vulnerabilities, God mysteriously, and mercifully, draws us closer to himself, that was the truth Father Joe labored hard and well to impart to us, this good news of the Gospel about God’s redemptive love coming to us through Jesus Christ, this assurance we are a Resurrection people, and that nothing could ever separate us from God’s love, because, ultimately, all life, and all relationships, are God’s precious gift to us.

Luis David and Mike Bernad share a moment of humor.

Joe Galdon in the bloom of youth and as the lion in winter