IN THE SERVICE OF THE CHURCH
LST: From Inception to the Present*

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The invitation was this: "As the Provincial Superior who inaugurated Loyola School of Theology (LST), we invite you to share with us the 'Historical Growth of LST from inception, birth, growing up years until the present status.'" That means seventy-four years of history in twenty minutes, a frightening task. Let me try in two parts: 1) the thirty-eight years of choosing a place for it; and 2) the thirty-six years since it began to function teaching theology.

Thirty-Eight Years of Choosing a Place

To know the inception of Loyola School of Theology, you must go back with me to the years before Vatican II in the whole Church. One constant problem for male religious congregations and dioceses was this: should philosophy and theology be taught to their scholastics and seminarians in the city or in the country? We see examples in our own Philippines. The seminary of the Dominicans is in the cen-

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ter of Manila on the campus of the University of Santo Tomas. The SVDs chose a hill in Tagaytay for their location. The CICMs first chose also a high hill in Antipolo and constructed there a huge building; after Vatican II, they moved to Maryhill in Manila. The Redemptorists also built a seminary in Antipolo.

All over the world the same problem existed; it also affected the Jesuits. In favor of a city was, first, the life and example of St. Ignatius himself. He had studied at the University of Paris, forever admired and loved it, and sent young Jesuits there to study. He practically knew our saying, “gawa sa Paris, walang kaparis” [if it’s from Paris, it must be exceptional]. Then he built the Roman College in the center of Rome, again implicitly indicating his preference for the city. Furthermore, many Jesuit provinces continued the city tradition, as Innsbruck in Austria, Louvain in Belgium, Nijmegen in Holland, St. Louis University in America, Montreal in Canada.

Side by side with this tradition, however, there existed another favoring the country. Examples were Heythrop in England, Woodstock, West Baden, Alma in the United States, Kurseong and Shambaganur in India.

Each tradition claimed for itself solid reasons and Jesuits of prudent judgement to defend them. Through many years, major superiors and their consultors discussed and debated the two positions; the more evenly matched were the reasons, the more difficult became a final decision. How decide such important problems when equal numbers stood on each side?

In addition to this dilemma of city and country, Philippine Jesuits faced another special problem which few other provinces in the whole world experienced. We were responsible not only for a Jesuit House of Studies for philosophy and theology but also for a university, the Ateneo, and a major seminary for philosophy and theology, San Jose. Many Jesuit provinces have their own house of studies and a university, or their house of studies and a major seminary, but it is rare to have all three in one province.

Basically, each of the three institutions needs and absorbs tal-
ented and trained manpower. Each needs a library and varied equipment. If each of the three lives its own separate life, the pressure is heavy on the human and financial resources of the province. Yet if they should be partners in any way, which should go together? Should the house of studies join the university or the major seminary?

One good reason for the joining with the university was, looking ahead, the power from Rome to grant ecclesiastical degrees. When I attended a Jesuit General Congregation in Rome in 1957, the Vice-Provincial of Ecuador in South America narrated how Rome's congregation of seminaries and universities was against granting that power to their Jesuit house of studies standing alone just for Jesuits. But once they joined a university, the power was easily granted. Rome wanted the degrees, he said, to be open to many.

Let us investigate rapidly how the Philippine Jesuits handled their scholastics from 1927, when the scholastics first began to study philosophy here in the Philippines. Scholastics studying theology continued to go to other countries, such as the United States, Spain, Rome.

In 1927, the scholastics studied philosophy with the San Jose Seminarians in Manila. In 1932, they moved to La Ignaciana in Sta. Ana; in 1933, to Novaliches; in 1939, to Baguio to experiment with the climate there. In 1941, they returned to Novaliches. During the war they were at the Ateneo de Manila in Ermita, Manila. In 1945, they were back again at Novaliches; in 1951, they migrated to Cebu; in 1963, once again they returned to Novaliches.

I became Provincial in 1957, with the desire of all to try to end this wandering, as much as possible.

Finally in 1958, backed by the group of Jesuits who favored joining the Ateneo de Manila, I asked Father General for permission to build a house of studies just for philosophy on the Ateneo campus, leaving open the possibility of theology in the future. He agreed and planning began. Then in 1960, Father General cabled from Rome to stop planning for the Ateneo campus, and to join a new San Jose seminary in Antipolo.
The immediate occasion for the change of decision was the request of San Jose Seminary to move from its location on EDSA to a new site in Antipolo. The Jesuit faculty at San Jose on EDSA was convinced that their property and buildings were not suitable for the growth of the seminary.

Ten years of experience had produced a consensus that both the land, already surrounded by factories and similar establishments, and the buildings, constantly needing repair, should be sold, and that a newly-found location in Antipolo could offer a new start. When this was presented to Father General for approval, he consented, immediately adding that the Jesuit House of Studies for philosophy should accompany it. If San Jose moved, it was more fitting, he judged, for the Jesuit philosophate to be with the seminary rather than with the Ateneo de Manila.

Immediately we obeyed, and efforts began to acquire the Antipolo property for San Jose and a contiguous space for the Jesuit House of Studies.

But we encountered unforeseen obstacles. The lots turned out to be disputed, with different persons claiming "clean titles" to various pieces of property. Our lawyers told us that it might take years to acquire this area; even then lawsuits would be a perpetual threat. All this I reported to Father General. He replied, "Keep trying."

In April 1961, the Philippine Province elected Fr. Horacio de la Costa as its delegate to a meeting in Rome. In his traditional report to Father General, he explained the Antipolo property situation. He convinced Father General that the Ateneo site was the best, and that he should not fear to approve it. He did so.

Thus a whole new planning program began, this time not only for philosophy but also for theology. Many reasons were converging to prove that sending Jesuit scholastics abroad for theology should cease; the hour had arrived when they should make their theological studies in the Philippines.

During this time, the faculty of San Jose Seminary, prevented
from transferring to Antipolo, perceived the advantages of moving to the Ateneo University campus near this future LST. Planning started for this building too.

Then began the construction of the Loyola House of Studies (LHS) and LST complex. It lasted for two years. The new site, where it stands now, was much easier to build on, and progress was steady, thanks to divine providence.

What was therefore the final decision of the Philippine Jesuits? It chose the city. Then, instead of having to decide for or against joining either the Ateneo University or San Jose Seminary, all three units became partners on one campus, far enough apart for each to live its own life, yet near enough for all to cooperate.

Then came a historic moment. When the LHS and LST complex were almost completed, just about two months before the buildings were occupied, the Jesuit 31st General Congregation, then gathered in Rome, passed a decree that made our hearts exult with joy. After discussing the puzzling problem of city or country, they passed this decree: “Let there be concern, as far as possible, that our houses of studies be built near university centers, so that scholastics can also have the advantage of other professors and libraries.” Then, all over the world, Jesuit houses of study began shifting to cities and university centers.

In our Philippine Province, it was therefore an immense consolation and a source of constant gratitude to God to realize that, through all those thirty-eight years of wandering, the providence of God had been directing the sincere efforts of so many, and that he had finally led the Philippine Jesuits to a solution which corresponded to the mind of the Church and the Society of Jesus for this period of history—the building of a university center.

How close we were several times to building on a hill in Baguio, Angono or Antipolo!
Growing Up to the Present

In December of 1964, Fr. Horacio de la Costa succeeded me as Provincial. He completed the final stages of the buildings from March to September. He organized the beginning of the academic life; he is therefore the founder of LST. He appointed Fr. Catalino G. Arévalo as the first head, and sent him on a journey to different houses of study in North America and Europe to see how they were functioning.

The first classes were held on 18 September 1965. For a while, LST was an institute of philosophy and theology. Philosophy was later given over to the Ateneo University; the present name, Loyola School of Theology, was adopted on 28 March 1972.

The Story of the Power to Grant Ecclesiastical Degrees

For many years, we had been dreaming of and planning for obtaining from Rome the power to grant ecclesiastical degrees; in 1985, when Father Pedro de Achutegui was president, it was granted for the first time, but through Fu Jen University in Taipei. Why through Taipei?

LST was bigger than the theology department at Fu Jen; it was also in a Catholic country, whereas Taiwan has relatively few Catholics. The reason goes back to China before World War II. At that time many Jesuit provinces of Europe and America had been assigned areas of China as their missions. To have one school of theology for the scholastics of these provinces and for Chinese Jesuit scholastics, a large building was constructed at Zikawei near Shanghai. I remember visiting it in 1934 on my first journey to Manila. Because of its size and importance, Rome gave the power to grant ecclesiastical degrees. Around 1951, when the communists expelled all priests from China, the Jesuit faculty and scholastics came to Baguio, bringing with them that degree power from 1952 to 1967, and then they transferred to Taipei and became a part of Fu Jen University. For various reasons, Rome decided to begin slowly, and have LST start under the
guidance of Fu Jen. In the time of Fr. Joel Tabora, he succeeded in convincing Rome that LST was now fully capable of acting in its own name. In 1999, when Fr. Victor Salanga was now the new president, that plenitude of powers was finally confirmed.

**The New LST Building**

When the original LHS and LST buildings were constructed from 1962 to 1965, the emphasis was on getting the classroom building of three stories finished, and the three stories of the library, in addition to the whole LHS complex. We unfortunately had no time to think of a cafeteria for *merienda* and lunch for students from outside. After some years, this need was evident. Fr. de Achutegui built a wooden shed for them to eat their *baon*; this shed lasted for several years. In the time of Fr. Tabora, however, the students rightly complained about its inadequacies, and Fr. Tabora began to plan for a permanent solution. As the planning continued, other inadequacies became apparent, such as office space, research rooms, a chapel, etc. All of these developed into the new building which has fully equipped LST as we see it today. Fr. Tabora also spearheaded the drive to raise the money needed. We must thank him for the vision and the perseverance which have so enhanced LST for its modern apostolate to the Philippines and Asia.

**The Daily Work of LST and Its Results**

Through thirty-six years now LST has been teaching theology, plus its related branches of Scripture, canon law, church history, the social apostolate, spirituality, etc. It is impossible to calculate the amount of effort, time, sacrifice that professors and students alike have poured into the daily regime of classes, quizzes, repetitions, term papers, examinations, writing theses, etc. Day after day, students developed their knowledge of and love for theology and Scripture; semester after semester the regime continued and still continues. Praise and thanks are due to the seven presidents of LST: Frs. Arévalo, Pedro Sevilla, Antonio Lambino, de Achutegui, Tabora and Salanga.
The mathematical figures of this daily effort through the years are inspiring. Six LST alumni have been ordained bishops; 579 have been ordained priests; 633 have completed the seminary program. LST has also conferred 17 Ph.D. and 91 M.A. degrees in theology, 103 M.A. degrees in theological studies, 73 M.A. degrees in pastoral ministry, 294 S.T.B. and 10 S.T.L. degrees. Also, 182 have completed the diploma program in pastoral counselling.

**Publications**

One international periodical has been published, *Landas*, and a student journal, *Tinig Loyola*. Publication in books, though not outstanding, has been praiseworthy.

Fr. Arévalo's book has sold more than 10,000 copies; Fr. John Schumacher's various books have contributed greatly to Philippine history. Fr. A.N. Dacanay wrote *Canon Law on Marriage*. Fr. de Achutegui published at least two books, besides editing the yearly Catholic Directory of the Philippines through many years; Fr. Carlos Abesamis composed three books; recently, as a research associate in missiology, I contributed a book on Asian saints.

Fr. James Kroeger, M.M., has written or edited ten books on mission themes. Fr. Thomas H. Green has published nine books on spirituality, all printed in the United States, and often translated in at least seventeen foreign languages. Fr. Joseph Roche was a main author of *Catechism for Filipino Catholics*.

The *Logos* Series of books presented many studies on Scripture and theology in general, as well as in the Philippine setting. This *Logos* series has now stopped, but a new series of publications, *Landas* Monographs, is ready to begin.

Mention must also be made here of the liturgical songs composed by one professor of theology, Fr. Eduardo Hontiveros, and by his successors in the Jesuit Music Ministry; their songs are sung everywhere in the Philippines and around the world, wherever Filipino and Filipina overseas workers are active. These songs have successfully preached the gospel and theology through music.
CEFAM and LST

Over the years, the Center for Family Ministries (CEFAM), headed by Fr. Ruben Tanseco, grew more and more into union with LST. Theology and Scripture were mingled with their largely psychological approach and, today, CEFAM participants can earn an M.A. in pastoral ministry. In this way, LST has extended its services to many more of the laity.

The Library

During the last two years, the library has been constantly improved. The third floor reading room has been remodeled with private desks, and the three floors are fully air-conditioned; many computers are available for student use. At present, the immense task of computerizing the card catalog has begun.

LST Influence in the Philippines and Asia

A history of LST’s service to the hierarchy, to diocesan priests, to religious superiors and their men and women, to the ever-developing laity, would fill a volume. So often have they come to consult professors and the library, bringing with them serious questions about their problems and projects in the light of changing conditions. This theological school, in this central city of the Philippines, has had an unparalleled position as a source of knowledge and inspiration for others in need of both; it has been truly where the action is.

At the same time, moreover, and in a similar way, it has served the local churches of Asia, not only by its multiple contacts through lectures at international meetings but also by being an integral part of the whole Ateneo de Manila University and by working in close cooperation with the East Asian Pastoral Institute nearby on the same campus. Through the Arrupe House, it is training Jesuit scholastics from Japan, China, Korea, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Vietnam, Singapore, and Thailand. Still more, two of its distinguished professors, Fr. Arévalo and Bishop Luis Tagle, have served for some years as theologians representing Asia on the worldwide Pontifical Commission
of theologians, which meets periodically in Rome. For all of these blessings and graces, we give sincere thanks to God.