



# THE ACADEMIA

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MASS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

AUGUST 12, 2020

*Prior Provincial of the Dominican Province of the Philippines and UST Vice Chancellor Very Rev. Fr. Napoleon B. Sipalay, Jr., O.P., presides over the Eucharistic Celebration, which was solely live streamed for the first time through the official Facebook page of UST on August 12, 2020 upon the efforts of the UST Communications Bureau.*

## UST opens A.Y. 2020 - 2021: Dominican Provincial urges Thomasians to keep synergy, bring hope

The University of Santo Tomas (UST) officially opened the new academic year with the traditional Mass of the Holy Spirit being celebrated online. Prior Provincial of the Dominican Province of the Philippines and UST Vice Chancellor Very Rev. Fr. Napoleon B. Sipalay, Jr., O.P., presided over the Eucharistic Celebration, which was solely live streamed for the first time through the official Facebook page of UST on August 12, 2020.

UST Rector Very Rev. Fr. Richard G. Ang, O.P., Vice Rector Rev. Fr. Isaias D. Tiongco, O.P., and Dominican Fathers concelebrated the Mass, complying with physical distancing protocols. The Thomasian community — including the usual attendees of the Mass such as

**UST OPENS A.Y. 2020 TO PAGE 2**

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UST OPENS A.Y. 2020 FROM PAGE 1



UST Rector Very Rev. Fr. Richard G. Ang, O.P. (standing center), and UST Vice Rector Rev. Fr. Isaias D. Tiongco, O.P., concelebrate the Mass, complying with physical distancing and mask wearing protocols. The online Eucharistic celebration was announced through a poster uploaded on the official website and Facebook page of UST (right photo).



administrative and academic officials, faculty members, support staff and student leaders — joined the stream from their homes.

In his homily, Fr. Sipalay likened the experience of quarantine to the state of the Apostles prior to the appearance of the Risen Christ, saying “We were in locked doors, we experienced fears, anxieties, and we were waiting for the unfolding of the new normal. But just like the His disciples, we discovered that with the Risen Christ, with interdependence with one another, and with the coming of the Spirit as promised by Christ, we found new courage to navigate the new challenges we are facing.”

“It is in working together that we are able to craft the way to move forward in this present academic year. We thank our administrators who took the lead to navigate us to the new normal... As we enter the new academic year, we ask the guidance of the Holy Spirit to all our stakeholders, executive authorities of the University and its academic and research units, University

and faculty councils, University-wide and department-wide officials, faculty members and non-academic staff, especially our students,” said Fr. Sipalay.

“I know this is not an easy journey,” Fr. Sipalay acknowledged, adding that “What we need is to encourage and give words of hope to everyone: We can do this together... We join the community of UST to bring hope to all involved in the education of our students. May this synergy of working for the realization of the plan of God, in this academic setting, bring hope during this pandemic.”

At the end of the Mass, the Vice Chancellor declared the Academic Year 2020 to 2021 officially open.

Due to the declaration of the modified enhanced community quarantine in Manila, the Installation of the Rector, which was set on the same day immediately after the Mass of the Holy Spirit is rescheduled for a later date.

## UST launches Minecraft campus tour for freshmen, conducts ROARientation online

The ongoing pandemic has caused many schools to get even more creative, and the University of Santo Tomas remains ready to adapt its traditions online. The 409-year old University showcased its premises to its freshmen online through a virtual tour of the Manila campus, reconstructed in their own Minecraft server, on August 28, 2020. The UST Minecraft Launch and Tour began synchronous streaming at on the UST Tiger TV Facebook page, with builders and representatives of the different faculties, colleges, and institutes introducing the virtual UST campus to the community.

This took the place of the traditional Thomasian Welcome Walk, where — since 2002 — thousands of freshmen symbolically enter the University through the historic Arch of the Centuries at the

beginning of each academic year to signify the beginning of their Thomasian life.

The freshmen explored the 21.5-hectare UST-Manila campus and saw its iconic structures, which were reconstructed in detail through Minecraft by around 80 UST students.

The two-hour virtual campus tour located in the UST Minecraft server was held on August 29, August 30, September 5, and September 6, with each academic unit having its own schedule.

### ROARientation Program

With its ROARientation program now solely online, the University of Santo Tomas (UST) continued to bridge the distance among its freshmen at home and invited them to connect with the greater Thomasian community. The week-long

online program live streamed through the UST Cloud Campus was held from August 24 to August 28, 2020.

The 97th Rector of UST Very Rev. Fr. Richard G. Ang, O.P., Ph.D., started the program with an online Welcome Mass and Welcome Rites.

“To the freshmen, the new members of the Thomasian family and community, the road ahead may be a bit rough, and the current situation might take some time getting used to, but it also presents numerous opportunities to discover and successfully navigate new and exciting learning experiences,” said Very Rev. Fr. Ang.

### UST LAUNCHES MINECRAFT CAMPUS TOUR TO PAGE 4



The overhead view of the virtual UST campus in the UST Minecraft server (Photo courtesy of @minecraft\_ust on Twitter)

**UST LAUNCHES MINECRAFT CAMPUS TOUR FROM PAGE 3**



UST Rector Very Rev. Fr. Richard G. Ang, O.P., delivers the homily during the Welcome Mass (photo courtesy of the official UST Facebook page).



UST Secretary-General Rev. Fr. Jesús M. Miranda, Jr., O.P., welcomes Thomasian freshmen in a pre-recorded message during the online ROARientation.



The Arch of the Centuries — the original entry way to the University when it was still in the Intramuros campus — is rebuilt in Minecraft and ready for freshmen's avatars to walk through (Photo courtesy of @minecraft\_ust on Twitter).

The Mass was immediately followed by a Welcome Address from the UST Secretary-General Rev. Fr. Jesús M. Miranda, Jr., O.P., Ph.D.

The “Life at UST” series by Tiger TV became available for asynchronous stream on August 24. Thomasians are known as “Tigers”, and fittingly, “Life at UST” has for its daily themes the acronym “T.I.G.R.E.”: Traditions, Inspiration, Guarantee, Resiliency, and Engagement. Each day of the orientation corresponds to one themed episode.

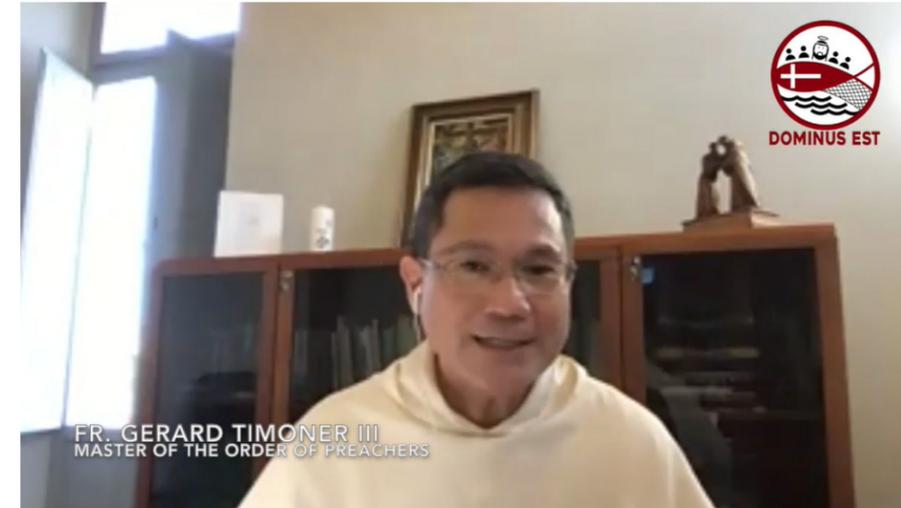
The first episode features “Tradition” and tackled the history and culture of UST, the Thomasian Identity, school spirit, campus life, and the Thomasian cheers for UAAP games. Among the speakers for this day is UAAP Season 81 and 82 courtside reporter Makayla Chavez. For August 25, the theme of “Inspiration” highlighted Thomasian role models, namely, St. Thomas, St. Dominic, the Thomasian Saints and Martyrs, and its notable alumni that include the National Hero, Dr. Jose Rizal. UST Vice Rector for Religious Affairs Rev. Fr. Pablo T. Tiong, O.P., and Atty. Mae Diane Azores, the 2019 Bar Examinations Topnotcher for the UST-Legazpi College of Law, were speakers.

“Guarantee” was released on August 26 and introduced new Thomasians to the UST Brand of Education, the Enhanced Virtual Mode, Thomasian perks and advantages, and student services. TV host and UST alumna Winnie Cordero and UST Vice Rector for Academic Affairs Prof. Cheryl R. Peralta, Ph.D., led the discussion.

“Resiliency” was the topic on August 27, and tackled mental health, the new normal, and *Diskarteng Tomasino*, with Thomasian scholars and athletes taking part in the conversation. For the final day of the program, “Life at UST” put the spotlight on “Engagements”, namely, the Central Student Council, the Student Organization Coordinating Council, and other student organizations, student affairs, and the Thomasian Code of Honor.

Through the adaptation of community traditions to a web-based medium, Thomasians continue to roar as one.

**On first episode of ‘In Depth’: Master of the Order reflects on St. Dominic, Order’s mission, history**



The Master of the Order, the Very Rev. Fr. Gerald Francisco Timoner III, O.P., speaks about the arrival of the Dominican Order in the Philippines in an online forum.

On the feast day of St. Dominic de Guzman, the Master of the Order of Preachers and UST Chancellor Very Rev. Fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner, III, O.P., was featured in the first episode of “In Depth,” a webinar series by *Dominus Est* (It is the Lord). He discussed the first Missions in the Philippines in the episode that was streamed on the *Dominus Est* Facebook page on August 8, 2020.

*Dominus Est*, an online evangelization ministry launched by His Eminence Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle when he was still the Archbishop of Manila, is headed by its Founding Director Fr. Jason H. Laguerta, who served as reactor for this particular episode. *Dominus Est* Editor-in-Chief Ms. Margaux Salcedo was the moderator.

Within the 90-minute session, Fr. Timoner spoke on the life of St. Dominic, the mission of the Order of Preachers, and the arrival of the Dominicans in the Philippines.

He mentioned that the first community of the Dominican faithful arrived on July 22, 1587, coinciding with the feast day of St. Mary Magdalene, one of the matrons of the Dominican Order.

“It’s very interesting that the historian who chronicled this wrote that ‘this is the arrival of the first *barkada*’, because the missionaries were on a *barka* (boat). That word, *barkada*, came to our language to mean ‘a group of close friends.’ That’s very interesting to me because it tells us something: that these brothers who came were really friends, and people associated that word [referring to a group of missionaries who came by *barka*] with a group of friends because the community is an evangelizer. So it is not just one person who evangelizes, but rather it is the community, and the credibility of that community will determine the effectiveness of preaching the Gospel.”

Such an arrival was in line with “what St. Dominic asked the first brothers to do, which is to study, to preach, and to build community.”

Salcedo noted during the interaction the Dominicans’ impact on education in the Philippines, pointing out that the Order is known for being educators and establishing schools, such as the University of Santo Tomas, known as the oldest university in Asia, and the Colegio de San Juan de Letran, known as the oldest high school for boys in the country.

Fr. Laguerta also commented that “The Dominicans have contributed to the growth of the faith and the Church in our country, and we can only be grateful for them, including the universities, the beautiful churches, the *Doctrina*, and of course the Dominicans who continue to preach the Word.”

Touching on the topic of the future of the Church after the celebration of the 500th year since the arrival of Christianity in the Philippines in 2021, “I may not know what the Church would look like 50 years from now, but this I know: The future Archbishop of Manila, the future priests of the Philippine Church, are already learning their Catechism now. The future lay leaders of the Philippine Church are already attending Mass in our parishes. The way people are brought up in the faith is important now, because the way they know, live, and assimilate that faith in their life will determine the kind of Church, the kind of nation, we will have 20 or 50 years from now.”

**MASTER OF THE ORDER REFLECTS TO PAGE 6**

## On St. Dominic's feast day: Vice Rector urges Thomasians to 'continue St. Dominic's legacy'



Fr. Tiongco, O.P., shares the life of St. Dominic.

UST Vice Rector Fr. Isaias Tiongco, O.P. led the Eucharistic Celebration for the feast day of St. Dominic de Guzman at the Santisimo Rosario Parish Church (UST Chapel). The online Mass was live streamed on August 7, 2020 via the official Facebook page of the Chapel.

With the celebration's theme of "O *Spem Miram* (O Wonderful Hope)! Dominic's promise, our wonderful hope," the title of a responsory that details St. Dominic's promise of heavenly intercession for those who share and live his ideals, Fr. Tiongco emphasized the need for the Dominican way of life, which is "a legacy we need to continue in our increasingly complicated times."

Reflecting on St. Dominic's life, Fr. Tiongco shared that he "was a man of remarkable character and broadness of mission, possessing such great integrity, and was so motivated by Divine Love that without doubt he proved to be a bearer of honor and grace."

Like St. Dominic, the faithful are urged to share in the evangelizing task of sharing

to others the fruits of contemplation to live as St. Dominic's family. According to Fr. Tiongco, it would be "our own humble way of proving and effecting Dominic's usefulness as he continues interceding for us in Heaven [in fulfillment of St. Dominic's promise]."

"As sons and daughters of Dominic, we must lead by word, example, and life, helping others find answers for their basic need to search for God through our prayers, assiduous study, and community sharing, for it is only then that, like Dominic, we can make promises of hope to others," said Fr. Tiongco.

St. Dominic de Guzman is the founder of the Order of Preachers, more popularly known as Dominican Order, the religious order to which Fr. Miguel de Benavides, OP, the founder of the University of Santo Tomas belongs. St. Dominic's feast day falls on August 8, a holiday in UST. Thus, it has been the tradition in UST to celebrate his feast day with a Eucharistic Celebration on August 7, that in the past was attended by the Thomasian community.

### MASTER OF THE ORDER REFLECTS FROM PAGE 5

In his closing message, the Very Rev. Fr. Timoner encouraged the Dominican Family to read his Letter to the Order on the occasion of St. Dominic's Feast Day, which tackles the responsory hymn "O *Spem Miram*" (O Wonderful Hope).

"It may be paradoxical that we sing this song of hope as we commemorate the departure of Dominic from this life. But it is 'wonderful' because Dominic promised that he would be more useful to us when he is already with the Father in heaven. Dominic passed from this life surrounded by his brothers, and that is what hope is: *Walang iwanan* (No one is left behind), because God abides in the joyful even sorrowful, and glorious mysteries of our lives. God remains with us as our hope: O *Spem Miram*," shared the Master of the Order.

## Fr. Pedregosa, O.P., launches book in remembrance of St. Dominic's life

On the Feast Day of St. Dominic, the UST Central Seminary Rector Rev. Fr. Quirico T. Pedregosa, Jr., O.P., launched his book titled "A Preacher's Calling: In Remembrance of Dominic." The book launch was conducted on August 8, 2020, through an online video on the official Facebook page of the Dominican Province of the Philippines.

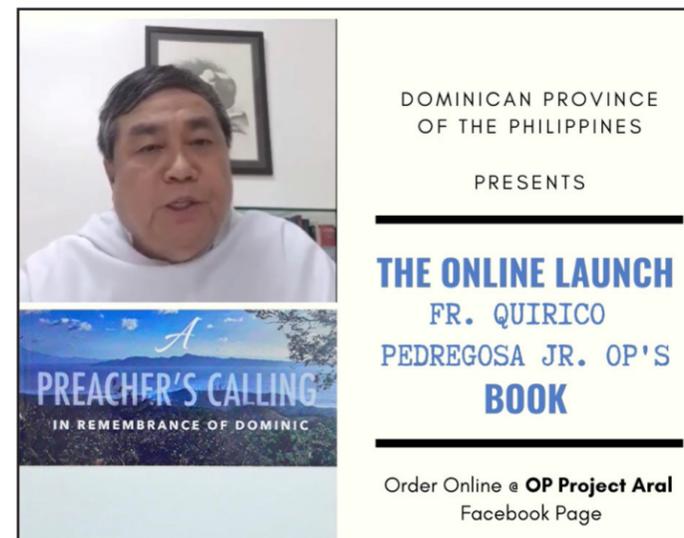
In the video, Fr. Pedregosa, shared that the book is divided into four parts, namely, "The Missionary Impulse of Preaching," "A Life of Preaching," "The Preaching Life," and "A Preaching Life in the Peripheries."

"We should aim to make our preaching life into a life that witnesses — through the good news that we preach — people seeing the beauty in the Gospel of Christ," urged Fr. Pedregosa.

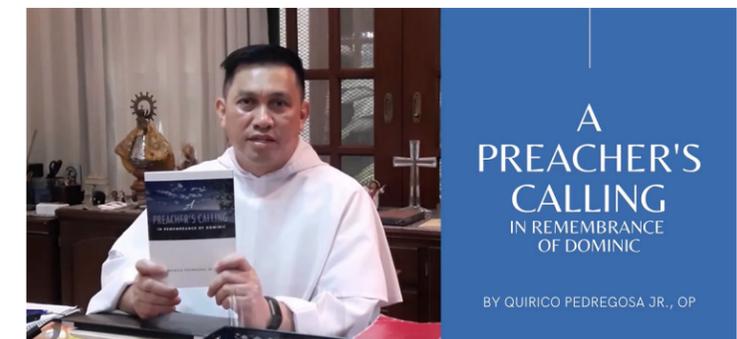
Noting that the book is released in anticipation of the 800th death anniversary of St. Dominic, Prior Provincial of the Dominican Province of the Philippines and UST Vice Chancellor Very Rev. Fr. Napoleon B. Sipalay, Jr., O.P., recommended the book in another video message.

Fr. Sipalay said, that "It's very important for us to understand the integration of teaching and practice, and this book encourages us to apply that by integrating what we say into what we do to a Dominican life, a Christian life, with St. Dominic as an example."

The book can be ordered online through the OP Project Aral Facebook Page.



Fr. Pedregosa, O.P., gives a preview on the contents of the book (upper photo), the book cover (below), and the announcement poster (on the right).



The Very Rev. Fr. Sipalay, O.P., recommends "A Preacher's Calling," in a video message.

## UST honors 37 faculty retirees through online tribute



UST Rector Very Rev. Fr. Richard G. Ang, O.P., Ph.D., lauds the academic efforts of the faculty retirees in his video message.

Thirty-seven faculty members of the University of Santo Tomas (UST) who retired from teaching were honored through an online video tribute on July 30, 2020.

Through a video message posted on the official Facebook page of the University, UST Rector Very Rev. Fr. Richard G. Ang, O.P., Ph.D., extended his gratitude to the seasoned mentors and lauded their academic efforts.

“Our Thomasian teachers, you have truly made a mark in your students’ lives. Retiring is not about leaving; it is about the lasting legacy that you will leave behind as your students face the world armed with the knowledge and values you have taught and inculcated in them. You will always be an inspiration and a beacon of hope to the lives of everyone you have deeply touched. This is the precious gift that the teacher receives — the gift of gratitude, both from your students who look up to you and whom you have inspired to be better versions of themselves, and the University that acknowledges that a higher-learning institution is as good as its teaching force, and

the University of Santo Tomas is known to be one of the best universities in the Philippines, largely due to the tremendous role played by its faculty,” said Father Ang.

Acknowledging that this is the first time that the annual tribute is held online, UST’s 97th Rector said that “Today’s event may be a new experience for us all since this is usually held in the University, but it doesn’t mean that [this year’s testimonial for retirees] is less solemn and meaningful.” He added that since the spirit of the occasion is genuinely present, it can be approximated in a virtual environment.

Out of the 37 retirees, Prof. Evelyn R. Laurito, Ph.D., former Chemical Engineering Department chair from the Faculty of Engineering served the longest, having taught for 44 years.

Also in the same group were Office of Faculty Evaluation and Development Director Prof. Editha Fernandez, Ph.D., from the College of Education, and Assoc. Prof. Angelina Silverio from the College of Science, who both served for 43 years.

**UST HONORS 37 FACULTY RETIREES TO PAGE 9**

### UST HONORS 37 FACULTY RETIREES FROM PAGE 8

Here is the complete list of retirees for Academic Year 2019-2020:

#### College of Accountancy

Atty. Jose L. Ngo, Jr.  
(24 years)

#### College of Architecture

Asst. Prof. Demeterio D. Alcaraz Jr.  
(13 years)  
Asst. Prof. Armando L. Miranda  
(23.5 years)

#### Faculty of Arts and Letters

Asst. Prof. Carmelita V. Cabrera  
(40 years)  
Assoc. Prof. Anita P. Garcia  
(40.5 years)  
Dr. Arlo Luis R. Salvador II  
(25.5 years)

#### College of Commerce and Business Administration

Asst. Prof. Carmen E. Mazo  
(38 years)

#### College of Education

Assoc. Prof. Aurora L. Domingo  
(40 years)  
Prof. Editha A. Fernandez  
(43 years)



Office of Faculty Evaluation and Development Director Prof. Editha Fernandez, Ph.D., from the College of Education



Faculty of Engineering mentor Prof. Evelyn Laurito, Ph.D., who served for the most number of years, 44 years

Asst. Prof. Glicería May O. Lagniton  
(30 years)

Assoc. Prof. Zenaida F. Velasco  
(31 years)

#### Faculty of Engineering

Prof. Evelyn R. Laurito  
(44 years)

#### Junior High School

Ms. Aileen Catherine B. Hernandez  
(36 years)

#### Faculty of Civil Law

Atty. Rene B. Gorospe  
(40 years)

#### Faculty of Medicine and Surgery

Dr. Eduardo Vicente S. Caguiao  
(27 years)  
Dr. Prof. Ruben D. Cardenas  
(29 years)  
Dr. Stephanie Marie B. Javier  
(30 years)  
Dr. Mary Jocelyn Y. Laygo  
(36 years)  
Dr. Redario C. Laygo  
(29 years)  
Dr. Rolando A. Lopez  
(36 years)  
Dr. Ray B. Malilay  
(31 years)  
Dr. Sandra Teresa V. Navarra  
(38 years)  
Dr. Leoncia N. Olonan  
(37 years)

Dr. Mary Agnes S. Regal  
(34 years)  
Dr. Prof. Mercy G. Santi  
(28 years)  
Dr. Manuel B. Zacarias  
(29 years)

#### College of Nursing

Asst. Prof. Elizabeth D. Cortez  
(38 years)  
Assoc. Prof. Ma. Socorro S. Guan Hing  
(32 years)  
Assoc. Prof. Maria Corazon S. Olayres  
(34 years)

#### Faculty of Pharmacy

Asst. Prof. Carmelita C. Cardona  
(42 years)

#### College of Science

Assoc. Prof. Mary C. Martin  
(35 years)  
Assoc. Prof. Angelina A. Silverio  
(43 years)



Assoc. Prof. Angelina Silverio from the College of Science

#### College of Tourism and Hospitality Management

Asst. Prof. Remedios P. Abuton  
(30 years)  
Assoc. Prof. Evangeline E. Timbang  
(42.5 years)

The tribute video may be watched through this link: <https://www.facebook.com/UST1611official/videos/4420187588021709/>

## Eng'g student leader shares Shell Young Leaders Program experience

For eight months, from September 2019 to July 2020, Ariel A. Salvador, Jr., president of the Operations Research Society of the Philippines UST Chapter, together with 77 other student leaders representing 15 selected student organizations from seven universities in Metro Manila participated in the first Shell Young Leaders Program (SYLP). The sessions were held at the Finance Center in Bonifacio Global City in Taguig until COVID-19 took over and virtual sessions became the new normal for carrying out the remaining two sessions and the awarding ceremonies.

As the company fuels the economy with oil, the company considers SYLP as its way of powering and strengthening the leadership skills at the university level to produce future-ready and well-rounded Filipinos once they begin to pursue their respective career paths.

From the University of Santo Tomas, two student organizations were selected, the Thomasian Junior Association for People Management from the College of Commerce and Business Administration

and the Operations Research Society of the Philippines (ORSP) UST Chapter from the Industrial Engineering Department of the Faculty of Engineering. The organization presidents and their officers were part of the leadership program.

The program, according to Salvador, who graduated in June 2020 with a degree in Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering, was designed for executing five Capability Building Sessions and two Mentorship Sessions. The topics, he said, were useful to student leaders in running their organizations. The Capability Session topics included Organization Branding, Internal Relations, Finance and Marketing, Project Management, Sustainability and Nation-building, and Digitalization.

“Aside from the plenary sessions, there were team-building activities and capability tasks, one mid-year presentation in February and the year-end presentation in June. It was in these presentations when we talked about our organizations in terms of accomplishments, problems, challenges, resolutions and learning. For the year-end presentation, since it was already during

the COVID pandemic, we tackled how our organization still become operational despite the pandemic, what were our future plans under the new normal and even in the post-COVID setting,” shared Salvador.

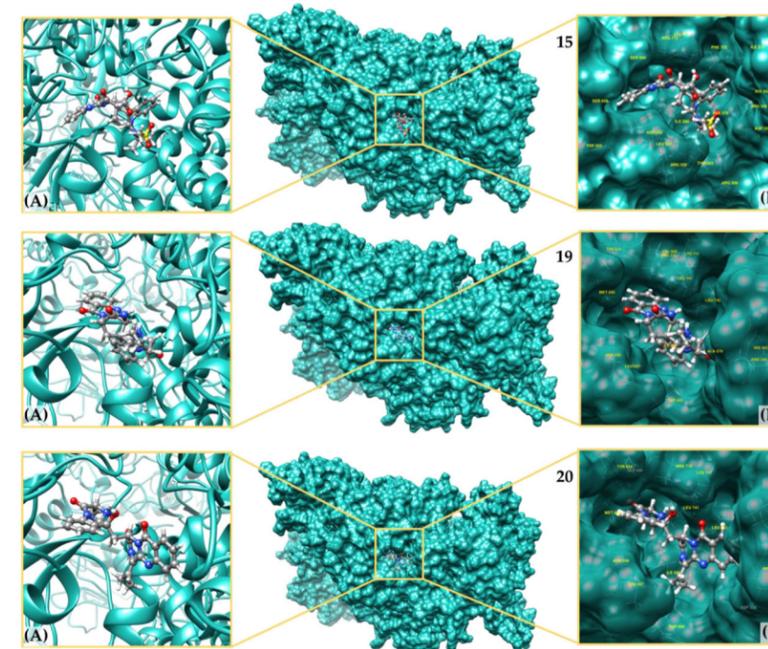
Salvador looks at the Shell Young Leaders Program as a forum that enabled student leaders like him to have an optimistic and effective approach in leadership, and to realize that there are always opportunities for growth. He also underscored the value of being a good and a critical decision maker and a problem solver who always considers the benefit of the larger group, stressing the fact that the main role of the student leader is to be of help.

“My most significant takeaway in the program is to make sure that the core purpose of the organization you are trying to build is well-defined. This will serve as the backbone of every plan and action for the members (of the organization). In addition, sustainability shall be administered so it can create a long term impact for the beneficiaries and other stakeholders,” Salvador added.

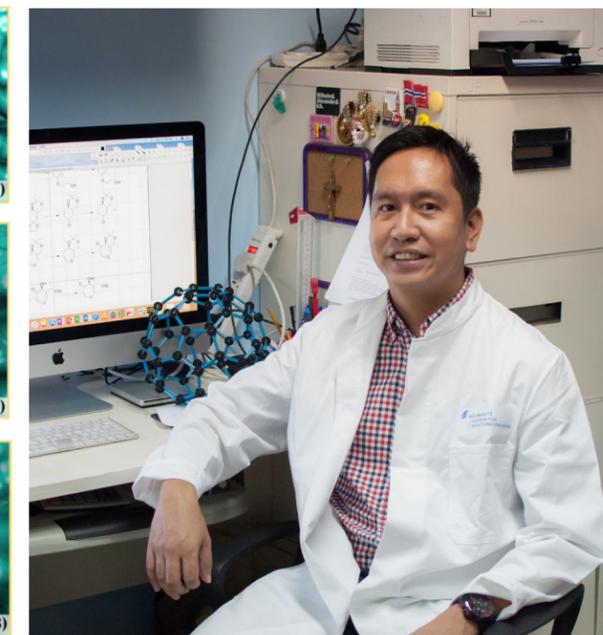


The UST-ORSP Executive Board, led by Ariel Salvador Jr., (front row, center), are participants in the Shell Young Leaders Program.

## UST researchers find SARS-CoV2 enzyme-inhibiting compounds through molecular dynamic simulations



Docked poses of scedapin C (15), quinadoline B (19), and norquinadoline A (20) against SARS-CoV2 PLpro shown as (A) ribbon representation and (B) molecular surface representation.



UST Research Center for Natural and Applied Sciences researcher Prof. Allan Patrick G. Macabeo, Dr. rer.nat. [Photo provided by Fotomasino]

A team of researchers from the University of Santo Tomas (UST), led by Prof. Allan Patrick G. Macabeo, Dr. rer. nat., conducted molecular dynamics simulations to screen compounds from fungi against SARS-CoV2, the virus which causes the COVID-19 disease. The UST team worked in collaboration with researchers from the Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU) in China.

The research is one of the few published studies that have identified inhibitors against nsp15 – a non-structural protein essential to the virus’ evasion of host immunity.

“It’s becoming increasingly clear that inhibiting viral evasion of the host innate immune response perhaps holds the key to tackling COVID-19,” emphasized Macabeo, adding that “Accumulating

clinical observations now support that it’s not the effect of the virus per se, but rather the delayed, exuberant inflammatory response, a “cytokine storm”, which is largely responsible for morbidity/mortality from SARS-CoV2. The ability of SARS-CoV2 to evade early immune recognition is mediated by its production of the non-structural protein 15 (nsp15). By inhibiting nsp15, then it would be easier for the immune system to recognize and eliminate the virus.”

The UST team, composed of Mark Andrew O. Mendoza, Justin Allen K. Lim, Jehiel Karsten H. Ong, and Luis Agustin E. Pilapil (Research Center for the Natural and Applied Sciences); Kin Israel R. Notarte, Adriel M. Pastrana, and Rey Arturo Fernandez (Faculty of Medicine and Surgery); Mark Tristan J. Quimque and

Rhenz Alfred D. Liman (Graduate School), and the SJTU researchers Abbas Khan and Dong-Qing Wei found five compounds with promising anti-COVID properties in silico.

Out of 97 metabolites in the study that were aimed to target five SARS-COV2 proteins through two docking protocols, of note was quinadoline B, a fungal-derived natural product. It was found to be multi-targeting and can inhibit multiple enzymes within SARS-CoV2. As Macabeo — a prolific researcher of both natural products and synthetic chemistry — pointed out, quinadoline B was also predicted to have favorable pharmacokinetic properties, which means it has strong potential for an anti-COVID-19 drug.

**UST RESEARCH FIND SARS-COV2 ENZYME-INHIBITING COMPOUNDS TO PAGE 12**

## UST-engineered telepresence robot 'LISA' improves frontliner protection with new disinfection function



The Logistic Indoor Service Assistant (LISA) with independently driven Mecanum wheels and adjustable holder

Remember the robot that a faculty member of the University of Santo Tomas (UST) invented to minimize contact between the patient and the medical practitioners in this time of the dreadful COVID-19? It was named LISA robot invented by Mechanical Engineer Anthony James C. Bautista, Ph.D.

The first Logistic Indoor Service Assistant (LISA) robot caught the attention of the public in April 2020 as it was an attempt to help medical practitioners in the performance of their hospital duties in terms of communicating with their patients. The robot could be controlled remotely from a distance of between five to ten meters from the medical practitioner to the patient and is equipped with a tablet mounted on a mobile base. Communication is through internet-based platforms such as Skype, Viber or Facetime. The robot also has a compartment box that allows delivery of medicines for conscious and stable patients. Bautista's idea was: with minimized physical contact, using the robot may help medical frontliners to conserve PPEs.

The first version of LISA robot was given to the UST Hospital and the Pasig Medical Doctors Hospital in April. Bautista's friend, a Thomasian medical doctor Rodrigo C. Santos, a cardiologist, did not only prod him to invent LISA but also acted as his consultant in this endeavor.

On June 20, 2020, four units of the second version of LISA robot were deployed to four hospitals: Premier Medical Center (Paranaque), Binangonan Lake View Medical Center (Rizal), Pasig Doctors Medical Center (Pasig) and Marikina Valley Medical Center (Marikina).

With initial feedback from the doctors who used the first version of the robot, the second version had been improved. For one, it now has four independently-driven wheels of the Mecanum type that allow the robot to turn efficiently in a single spot. The other changes include enclosed wiring connections in a casing, and more adjustable tablet and holder.

"I am very happy with the feedback from the UST Hospital. Their (medical practitioners) subsequent feedbacks have been included in

### UST RESEARCH FIND SARS-COV2 ENZYME-INHIBITING COMPOUNDS FROM PAGE 11

"The bioavailability and potency of the drug are directly associated with its pharmacokinetics, and in our study, quinadoline B was predicted to be easily absorbed by the gastrointestinal tract making it a good candidate for oral formulations. In addition to that, the compound was also predicted to have poor blood-brain barrier crossing capacities indicating that as a candidate drug lead, this compound may not be able to cause harm to the nervous system," Macabeo explained in an online interview.

Having paved a path to develop novel compounds against the COVID-19 disease, Macabeo and his team remain enthusiastic in building upon their results through a follow-up paper. He shared that "We plan to further work on quinadoline B through structural modification to enhance its activity against SARS-CoV2 target proteins. We are in collaboration with a team from Italy where we use artificial intelligence to generate synthetically viable structures. With this work, we hope to discover more potent and selective inhibitors against SARS-CoV2 target proteins."

An award winning Thomasian researcher, Dr. Macabeo has been recognized for his outstanding achievements in chemical research including the 2015 Outstanding Young Scientist award in Organic Chemistry, the 2015 The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) award in Organic Chemistry, and the 2013 Merck Young Scientist award. He obtained both his Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in Chemistry degrees from the University of Santo Tomas, and his Doctor of Natural Sciences degree from the Universität of Regensburg – Germany.

### UST-ENGINEERED TELEPRESENCE ROBOT 'LISA' FROM PAGE 12

the next version of the LISA robot that we will deploy, hopefully in the last week of August 2020," Bautista shared in an online interview.

### DOST and LISA robot Version 3

Bautista and his team of faculty members from the UST Mechanical Engineering Department, said that they are now developing the third version of LISA robot using the fund that they received from the Department of Science and Technology (DOST).

"We will design the new model to be multi-functional, meaning that the robot will not only be a remote controlled Telepresence robot, but it can also be used to disinfect a room from bacteria or viruses. However, with this, we will do our best to make the LISA robot affordable," explained Bautista when asked about the features of the third version of the LISA robot.

In March of this year, DOST - Philippine Council for Industry, Energy and Emerging Technology Research and Development (PCIEERD) announced a call for proposals

for immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Bautista said that he submitted a proposal titled "LISA robot: Logistic Indoor Service Assistant Telepresence Robot." On May 14, 2020, he received a letter from DOST-PCIEERD stating that his proposal was approved and that the agency was going to fund the development of the LISA robots for public hospitals in the Philippines.

With Php 5M grant for a three-year project, Bautista, who holds a doctorate in Technology, and has a natural enthusiasm for robotics, sees the possibility of developing a fully autonomous LISA robot. The project will begin in 2021. The grant was intended to develop additional robots and improve on its previous versions.

"The LISA robots that are being deployed now are of Level 1 automation or remote controlled robots. Next year, we will include Level 2 automation that will allow the robot to be controlled anywhere in the world for as long as there is a WiFi connection, and Level 3 automation which will allow the robot to create a map of the hospital and navigate to different locations autonomously using a Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) sensor.

### Grateful to UST; the message of LISA robot

Having taught at the UST Faculty of Engineering for some 11 years, Engr. Bautista, whose Master's degree is in Business Administration, says that his personal objective for inventing LISA robot is to help hospitals and (similar) institutions in the country because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"If the first version of the LISA robot will help different hospitals in our country, I will be very much willing to share the technology," he remarked.

"The Faculty of Engineering has been very cooperative in this work. It has provided me with the facilities to test build and test the robot. My colleagues at the Mechanical Engineering Department give feedback and suggestions on how to further improve the LISA robots," Bautista adds.

"I am very thankful to UST for its full support in this endeavor. I hope that the LISA robot will serve as an alternative tool that our frontliners can utilize in their fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. The LISA robot will serve as a message that we, at UST are behind them in helping solve this problem," Bautista said.

Developing robots is not new to Bautista, who developed agricultural robots for rice farmers, converting commercially-available hand tractors into autonomous robots to help farmers in their labor-intensive agricultural tasks such as ploughing, tilling and land-leveling. In, 2017, he was a Visiting Researcher at the Harper Adams University in the United Kingdom where he focused on developing driver-less tractors for precision farming. In 2019, he was invited for a short-term research immersion at the Toyohashi University of Technology in Japan to work on indoor navigation using Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) and Visual Sensors. Bautista is currently a faculty researcher of the UST Research for Natural and Applied Sciences.



A team from the UST Faculty of Engineering with four LISA units and their remote controls.

### UST-ENGINEERED TELEPRESENCE ROBOT 'LISA' TO PAGE 13

## Transformare is recipient of BAICE Seedcorn Grant for a research on Impact of Covid-19 to Adult Learning and Education in PH

**T**ransformare: A Network of Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning Advocates is spearheading in the Philippines a scoping research to study the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic to adult education and learning. It is an interdisciplinary network of committed academics, practitioners, policymakers and advocates who engage in promoting adult literacy, lifelong learning and active citizenship in the Philippines.

As a recipient of the *Seedcorn Grant* from the British Association for International and Comparative Education (BAICE), Transformare will work with organizations from Afghanistan and the United Kingdom.

The proposed project, "COVID-19 and its impact on Adult Learning and Education: a scoping research in the UK, Afghanistan and the Philippines" aims to explore the

(potential) effects of the pandemic to adult learning and education programs by drawing from reflections on contrasting contexts of the three countries.

This project will be managed by the British Association for Literacy in Development (BALID) and will be led by Dr. Ian Cheffy from Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) and BALID, in collaboration with UEA UNESCO Chair team. Findings from this research will form part of a policy brief which contains recommendations to the governments concerned on the means by which governments and non-state actors could be able to take into consideration the needs of adult learners as COVID-19 continues to rampage.

The project lead of this research in the Philippines is Gina M. Lontoc, Ph.D of the Research Center for Social

Sciences and Education (RCSSED) of the University of Santo Tomas and the President of Transformare. Members of the research team are its officers from various universities namely, Arceli Amarles, Ph.D. (Vice President) from the Philippine Normal University, Katrina Ninfa Topacio (Secretary) from the University of Santo Tomas, Ma. Joahna Mante-Estacio, Ph.D. (Treasurer) from De La Salle University, Rosalie Quilicol (Auditor) and Grace Reoperez, Ph.D., both from the University of the Philippines.

*Transformare* was launched on November 21, 2019 during the *1st Gender, Adult Literacy, and Active Citizenship for Social Transformation (GALACST) International Conference* which was held at the University of Santo Tomas, Manila in November of last year.



Gina Lontoc, Ph.D.  
University of Santo Tomas



Arceli Amarles, Ph.D.  
Philippine Normal University



Katrina Ninfa Topacio  
Philippine Normal University



Ma. Joahna Extacio, Ph.D.  
De La Salle University

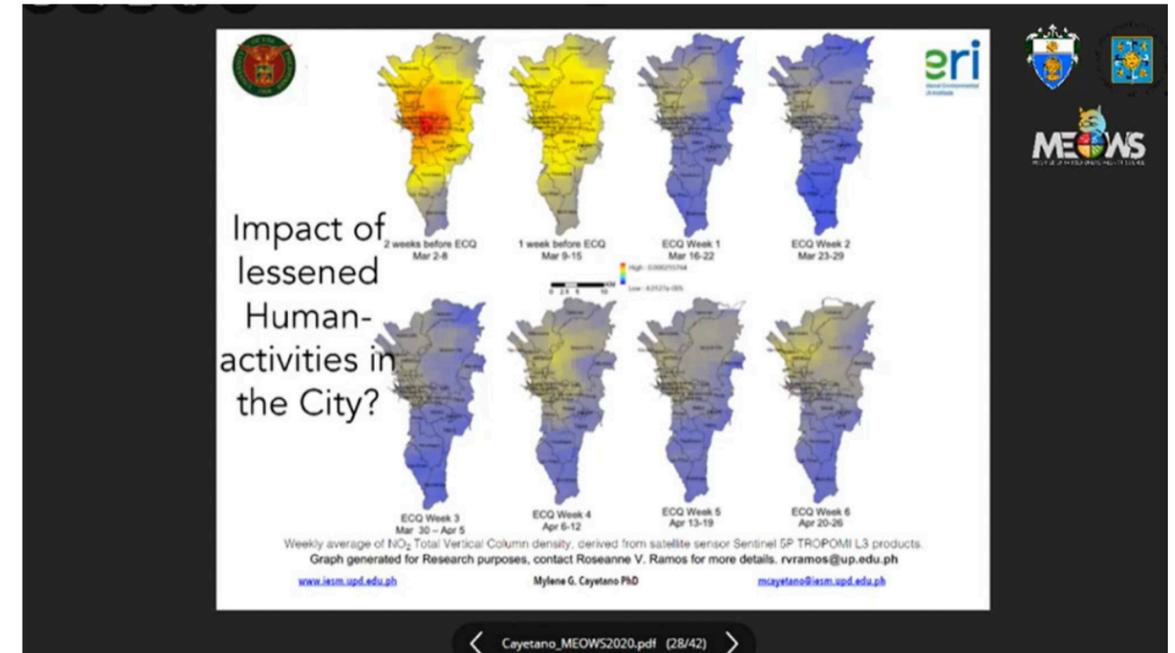


Rosalie Quilicol  
University of the Philippines



Grace Reoperez  
University of the Philippines

## Science webinar tackles air quality, human-induced issues in Metro Manila



Cayetano shares a graph by her colleague Engr. Roseanne Ramos which maps the decrease of nitrogen oxide, a pollutant from motor vehicles, in Metro Manila from before and during the ECQ.

**A** webinar on the topic "Living on the Impacts of Environmental Pollution in the Philippines: Issues, challenges and managing what we know" was conducted by the UST College of Science with Assoc. Prof. Mylene G. Cayetano, Ph.D., who has over 15 years of experience in the environment sector. Through the UST Cloud Campus and the UST-Science Facebook page, the webinar was live streamed on July 7, 2020.

Department of Biological Sciences Chair Dr. Richard B. Pavia, Jr., emphasized in his opening remarks that one of the most noticeable phenomena after the Enhanced Community Quarantine was declared was the normally ubiquitous 'urban haze' from vehicle emissions that gave way to clearer skylines.

"People started realizing that we do have a large effect, mostly negative, on the environment, but we realized that just by staying home, by not using cars, [the environmental situation wasn't] as hopeless as they seemed. Since it led to such a remarkable improvement in our immediate surroundings, it gives us hope that if we do more, we really can push environmental recovery," said Pavia.

However, Pavia warned, with this development came a worrying compromise — a "delivery culture" that increased the use of plastic disposable utensils and packaging materials that are building up in addition to reports that used Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), one-time use only by necessity, are being found washed up on shores and clogging up waterways.

### Air quality improvement in time of quarantine

Having begun on the topic of the anthroposphere and the interaction of humans with nature, Cayetano's lecture focused on why urban environments need particular attention and the impact of air pollution.

Presenting data from the Land Transportation Office showing that the registered motor vehicles in the Philippines have exceeded the 12 million mark as of 2018, Cayetano cautioned that motor vehicle emissions, in comparison to other sources of pollution, produce airborne particulate matter which produces the haze shrouding cities.

**SCIENCE WEBINAR TACKLES AIR QUALITY TO PAGE 17**

## UST collaborates with DepEd for Webinar Series on Teacher Education

### Webinar Series on 'Understanding Teacher Education Noticing Behavior During COVID-19 Pandemic'

The Teacher Education Council (TEC) of the Department of Education (DepEd) and the University of Santo Tomas, Research Center for Social Sciences and Education (RCSSSE) will collaborate to bring the "TECOVID-19 Colloquy Series: Understanding Teacher Education Noticing Behavior During COVID-19 Pandemic-Mindfulness, Decision-Making, and Adaptation" on August 29, September 5 and 19, and October 3 and 17, 2020 via the UST Cloud Campus.

The series will provide understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic is shaping and reshaping the ontological, epistemological and axiological directions and attributes of today's higher education delivery in most parts of the globe. It will describe the contexts and dynamics of teacher education institutions' internal and external environments that are critical in their overall operations during the pandemic; explicate how challenges, imperatives and implications are calibrated, understood and interpreted by teacher education institutions; and elucidate key strategic responses, policies and guidelines enacted by teacher education institutions at the institutional, program and individual levels.

Additionally, the series will help leaders and program implementers of teacher education Institutions in institution-wide level initiative such as policy design, and support to organization and internal quality assurance systems; in program level which comprises actions to measure and enhance the design, content and delivery of the program within a department or a school; and in individual level which includes initiatives that help teachers achieve their mission, encouraging them to innovate and to support improvements to student learning and adopt a learner-oriented focus.

Speakers are Assoc. Prof. Robert Kleinasser, Ph.D., of the MLFTC-Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation, Arizona State University, USA; Assoc. Prof. Leslie Dietiker, Ph.D., Wheelock College of Education and Human Development, Boston University, USA; Shaun Nykvist, Ph.D., Senior Lecturer, School of Teacher Education and Leadership, Queensland University of Technology, Australia; and Ee Ling Low, Ph.D., Dean of Teacher Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

The issues to be discussed include: Closing the Digital Divide and Strengthening Distance Learning, Promoting Authentic Learning and Assessment, Developing Student Agency and Metacognitive Skills, Ensuring Support for Students' Social and Emotional Learning, Redesigning Schools for Stronger Relationships, Expanding Learning Time, Using Formative Assessments that Support Growth, and Sustaining Early Childhood Education Programs.

The poster features logos of the University of Santo Tomas, the National Educators Academy, and the Teacher Education Council. The title is "Understanding 21st Century Democracy" under the "A TECOVID-19 Colloquy Series" with the strand "Understanding Democracy as a Human Enterprise". It lists the date as August 15, 2020, from 9:45 am to 12:30 pm on Microsoft Teams. The featured speakers are Prof. Tina Nabatchi, Ph.D., Director of the Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict & Collaboration at Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, USA, and Assoc. Prof. Edson C. Tandoc, Jr., Ph.D., Director of WKWSCI PhD and Master's by Research Programs at Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Contact information for the Democracy Project Secretariat is provided at the bottom.

Webinar poster

Expected participants are deans of teacher education institutions, teacher educators, in-service teachers, principals and supervisors.

### Webinar Series on 'Understanding 21st Century Democracy: A Call for Teacher Agency'

The University of Santo Tomas and *Fondazione Gravissimum Educationis* in cooperation with the National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP) and the Teacher Education Council (TEC) of the Department of Education will conduct the "TECOVID-19 Colloquy Series on Understanding 21st Century Democracy: A Call for Teacher Agency" on August 15/22, September 12, October 10/24, November 14, 2020 and January 9/23, 2021 via the UST Cloud Campus.

The series is divided into three strands, namely: *Strand 1: Understanding Democracy as a Human Enterprise*, *Strand 2: Embracing Democracy as Educational Commitment*, and *Strand 3: Doing Service Learning as a way to democratize Philippine Society*

UST COLLABORATES WITH DEPED TO PAGE 17

UST COLLABORATES WITH DEPED FROM PAGE 16

### CONVERSATION SPEAKERS



**Robert Kleinsasser, Ph.D.**  
Associate Professor  
MLFTC – Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation  
Arizona State University, USA



**Shaun Nykvist, Ph.D.**  
Senior Lecturer  
School of Teacher Education and Leadership  
Queensland University of Technology, Australia



**Leslie Dietiker, Ph.D.**  
Associate Professor  
Wheelock College of Education & Human Development  
Boston University, USA



**Ee Ling Low, Ph.D.**  
Dean, Teacher Education  
Office of Teacher Education  
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

It will describe the nature, role, and processes of democracy that shape human affairs; discuss how education serves as a vehicle in advancing democracy and its underlying processes; and apply principles of service learning as education's proactive contribution to strengthen democracy. The audience for the series are Master Teachers in Social Studies, Regional Supervisors, and Democracy Local Antenna Units in 13 Countries.

The speakers for the August 15 colloquium were Prof. Tina Nabatchi, Ph.D., Director of the Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, USA; and Assoc. Prof. Edson C. Tandoc, Ph.D., Director, WKWSCI PhD and Master's by Research Programs, Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

Part of the organizers is the Teacher Education Council to which Prof. Allan B. de Guzman, Ph.D., belongs as the Representative for Luzon. He teaches at the UST College of Education and the Graduate School. He is also the coordinator of the Philippine Local Antenna with Prof. Belinda V. de Castro, Ph.D., and Assoc. Prof. Joel L. Adamos, Ed.D., as members.

### SCIENCE WEBINAR TACKLES AIR QUALITY FROM PAGE 15

This is potentially dangerous because "when we inhale [in polluted surroundings], we take in particles in the atmosphere, and particulate matter smaller than 2.5 micrometers (PM2.5) may linger in the gas exchange regions of the lungs, which may cause diseases," shared Cayetano.

The lecture also highlighted the sharp decrease in nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) averages from comparing the levels from two weeks prior to ECQ (March 2 to 8) to the sixth week of ECQ (April 20 to 26), as mapped by her colleague Engr. Roseanne Ramos from the University of the Philippines. NO<sub>2</sub> is a pollutant that 'primarily gets in the air from the burning of fuel, i.e., emissions from cars, trucks and buses, power plants, and off-road equipment.'

One of the questions she let the audience contemplate at this point was "Does the population really need to be in quarantine just to attain this air quality improvement?"

Since the quarantine is a temporary solution to a different problem, more efforts need to be undertaken in order to scale back air pollution and improve air quality, especially in urban spaces. Cayetano shared that, in the short term and personal level, the community can avoid unnecessary idling of cars, burning waste in open spaces and smoking in

public places. For long-term solutions at the national and local government level, Cayetano echoes the calls of fellow experts to avoid urban sprawl by following proper urban planning, having a sustainable and reliable mass transport system, ceding road space to non-motorized transport systems like bicycles, and switching to clean energy that can power more green cities, among others.

"Human-induced issues and challenges can be solved by human-driven solutions. We must continue measuring the impact of human activities [on the environment] because we can only manage what we know," she shared with the listeners, adding that if maintaining good air quality is the goal in the 'new normal', conscious and responsible choices have to be made in usual human activities.

Currently an Adjunct Research Professor of the International Environmental Research Institute at the Gwangju Institute of Science and Technology in South Korea, Dr. Cayetano also teaches at the Institute of Environmental Science and Meteorology at the University of the Philippines - Diliman, where she is the Founding Head of the Environmental Pollution Studies Laboratory.

The webinar was held as part of the Modified Enhanced Online Week of Science (MEOWS), which the UST College of Science celebrated remotely in the third academic term.

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## CRS organizes telerehabilitation program for parents, caregivers of visually impaired children

The College of Rehabilitation Sciences (CRS), aiming to promote self-reliance and resilience to its partner community, the Parent Advocates for Visually Impaired Children (PAVIC), recently conducted a community development project titled: "EYE-Rehab: A Telerehabilitation Program for Parents and Caregivers of Children with Visual Impairment."

The objectives of this project were: to provide telerehabilitation home programs by assessing children with visual impairments (CVI) and training parents and caregivers in carrying out simple and safe instructions; and to educate the parents and caregivers about the condition of their children and to introduce interprofessional approach.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the rehabilitation programs of the children with visual impairments (CVI) as in-person sessions were prohibited due to the community quarantine. This project is

based on the concept of telerehabilitation which is recognized by the World Health Organization and global and national professional organizations.

Telerehabilitation is the use of telecommunication technology to deliver and support rehabilitation services and it is the clinical application of consultative, preventive, diagnostic and therapeutic services via interactive telecommunication technology. It enhances rehabilitation access and it made rehabilitation possible even during this time of pandemic. The concept of interprofessional collaboration was also applied allowing multiple health professionals from different backgrounds to work together with the children and their parents in a holistic manner.

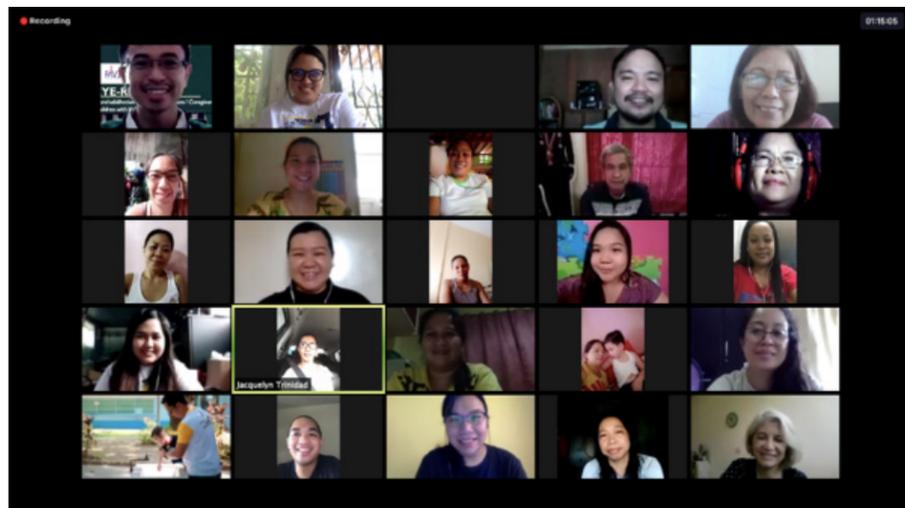
However, community quarantine restrictions did not hinder CRS from carrying out its mission to respond to the needs of the society as the program was delivered online via Zoom and FB Messenger. The project was able to cater

to 21 parents/caregivers of these children. Each CVI was assigned to a team of healthcare professionals that consisted of a rehabilitation doctor, physical therapist, occupational therapist, and speech-language pathologist practitioners. A total of 41 health professionals participated in this project.

The project started with a general orientation held on June 27, 2020. A survey was also conducted among the participating parents and caregivers to assess their internet connectivity, network availability and preferred online platforms.

The online sessions were conducted for an hour each on two Saturdays, July 4 and 11, 2020. The interdisciplinary team approach allowed a more collaborative management and avoided duplication of

### CRS ORGANIZES TELEREHABILITATION PROGRAM TO PAGE 19



Orientation with the parents and caregivers via Zoom



Screenshot of the Zoom session

## Calumpang of UST is recognized by Pontifical University in Rome for outreach program



Rev. Fr. Joel P. Agad and Chrisma B. Calumpang (right)

University of Santo Tomas Ecclesiastical Faculties mentor Chrisma Bangaol-Calumpang and Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Joel P. Agad received the first Program of Church Management (PCM) Capstone Project Award from the Markets, Culture and Ethics Research Center of the *Pontificia Università della Santa Croce* (Pontifical University of the Holy Cross) in Rome.

Calumpang and Fr. Agad were recognized for "Love for the Poor," an outreach program they spearheaded which provides catechism, aid, and sacraments to its recipient community. According to the contestants' overview message, it has been ongoing for the last five years at a parochial level and they have reached out to about 1,500 families in the Diocese of Dipolog in Mindanao. Because of its success, they are looking into expanding their operations, to support 24,000 recipients from around 4,000 families.

According to its website, the PCM is a "course of formation for priests, lay

persons, and members of religious orders who work for the Church in economic and administrative capacities, where students learn a wide range of management skills that prepare them for using the resources of the Church in accordance with Catholic Social Teachings." The prize for first place is 1000 Euros to help fund the project.

In a video message, Fr. Agad and Calumpang said, "Our hearts are full with joy and gratitude. Thank you for choosing our capstone project. You inspired us to continue our mission works, to reach out to more people, and to evangelize and transform lives."

The Capstone Projects were evaluated by a panel of judges that included PCM organizers and teachers, Catholic entrepreneurs, managers, investors, and members of the International Business Leaders Advisory Council (IBLAC).

Calumpang, a lay missionary who is pursuing a Licentiate in Canon Law at the University, currently teaches at the Faculty of Philosophy and the Faculty of Arts and Letters.

### CRS ORGANIZES TELEREHABILITATION PROGRAM FROM PAGE 18

assessments while providing a more holistic approach for the child's overall development. The first session was allotted for the assessment procedures where the parent or the caregiver, along with the professionals, set functional objectives for the child. Questions were asked to the parent or caregiver to have an overview of the child's current performance and concerns. The child was also observed all throughout the session and was asked to perform some tasks to determine strengths and things that need improvement.

Meanwhile, the second session focused more on the home instructions to empower parents and caregivers. Specific instructions and demonstrations were provided to ensure that the parent or caregiver would be able to carry out the intervention even after the program has concluded. With this sustainable rehabilitation program, the College is certain that even if it will take a long while for their participants to receive direct interventions from healthcare professionals, these children will continuously make progress. After all, little progress each day is what it is all about. The program concluded on July 18, 2020 where program evaluation was conducted involving all the participants.

This remote community development via telerehabilitation also faced the challenge of poor or weak internet connectivity affecting the health professionals and parent and child.

# ARTS AND CULTURE

## Architecture students' WALL-E inspired design bags third place in int'l competition in Spain



"WALL-E Transforming waste into a floating city" (Photo courtesy of iaac.net)

A Thomasian team composed of five graduates of the BS Architecture program in 2020, won third place in the Institute for Advanced Architecture for Catalonia's (IAAC) "Design for Living" international competition.

Aramis Corullo, Paula Casia, Gellaine Burgos, Althea Poblete, and Angelo Landicho submitted their entry titled "WALL-E Transforming Waste into a Floating City to Restore the Sunken Kingdom of Binuangan." Their project, which competed against over 190 entries from 80 different countries, reimagines 'future human habitats' and presents a concept of how to prevent communities from being washed away by creating livable structures from discarded plastic.

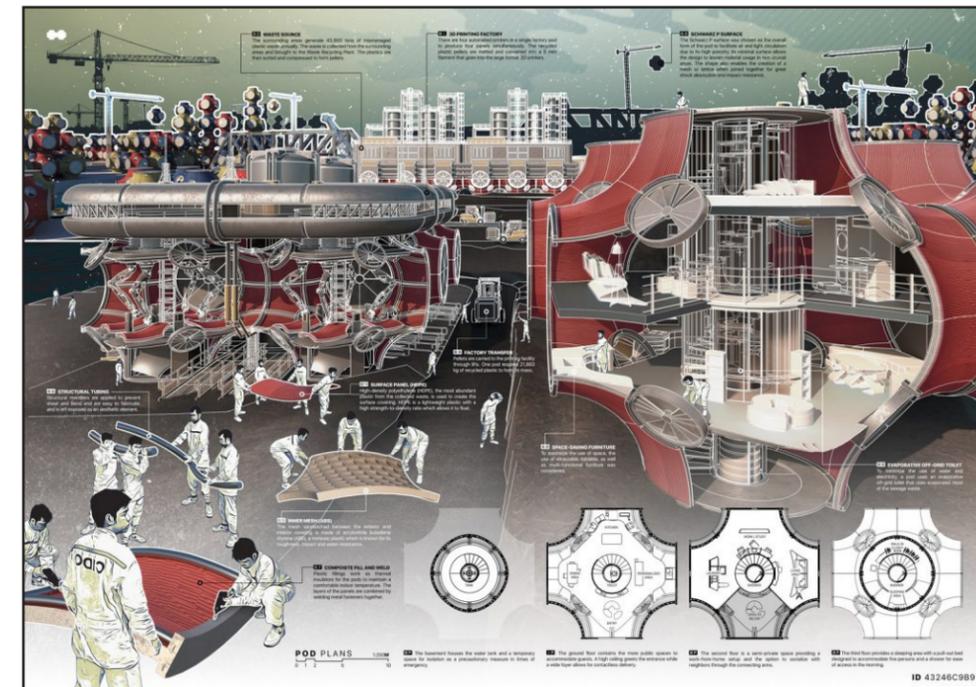
The team described their entry as: "WALL-E presents the opportunity to transform the mistakes of the past to

build an ideal future." With the main idea of finding life in the middle of a wasteland, the project is named after a series of old sunken walls that provide foundation for new settlements above the water. Through utilizing amphibious pods made from recycled plastic waste, the entry attempts to solve problems within the village's fishing community, namely, the slow sinking of land into the ocean, the lack of proper water treatment and lack of solid waste management.

According to IAAC's website, upon receiving the proposals on July 15, 2020, the organization made an initial selection of 133 projects that will appear in a special publication made by Actar Publishers and

**WALL-E INSPIRED BAGS TO PAGE 21**

**WALL-E INSPIRED BAGS TO PAGE 20**

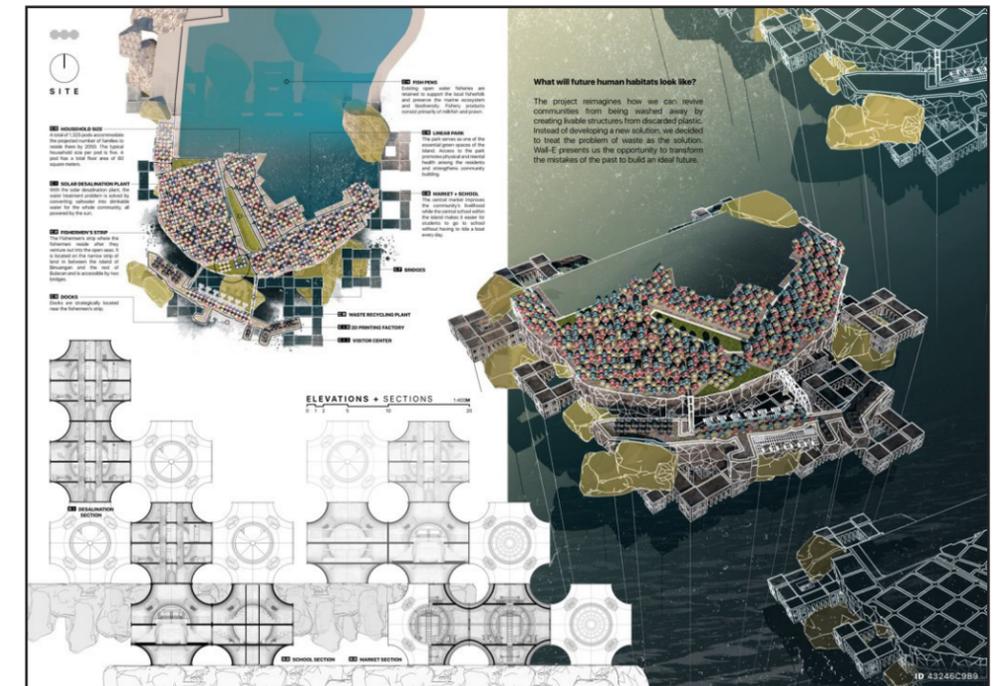


A peek inside the amphibious pods (Photo courtesy of iaac.net)

a second selection with 36 projects that qualified as finalists. The jurors were composed of 33 reputable architects and designers.

Having won third place, each team member will receive a scholarship for a Master's degree at the IAAC as well as a cash prize. According to IAAC's website, "Given the current global circumstances, the Institute for Advanced Architecture of Catalonia (IAAC) will study how to support the winners, especially the finalists, interested in continuing to research their proposals in the academic environment of the IAAC."

An overhead view of the different proposed features within the entry (Photo courtesy of iaac.net)



## Obiena bags 3 medals in int'l pole vaulting competitions



Obiena in training (Photo courtesy of EJ Obiena's Facebook page)

**E**rnest John "EJ" Obiena, a Thomasian track and field athlete currently in training in Italy for the postponed 2020 Olympics in Japan, recently scored three podium finishes in international competitions held remotely in August.

Obiena, currently Asia's top-ranked pole vaulter and World's #16 according to World Athletics' list, won the "Finest Pole Vaulter in the World" silver medal on August 17, 2020 by clearing the height of 5.60 meters. "Who's the Finest Pole Vaulter" was a virtual competition that streamed live the leaps of top pole vaulting athletes directly from their training locations.

The 24-year-old Obiena also won a bronze medal and achieved a 5.70-meter jump at the Diamond League Athletics Meeting held in Monaco on August 15, 2020. Only days before that, he bagged a silver medal at the 13th Triveneto International Meeting in Trieste, Italy, held on August 1, 2020, with a jump of 5.45 meters.

A student of the Faculty of Engineering, Obiena, the first Filipino athlete to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics, is currently officially on leave of absence to be able to train abroad. He qualified for the much-awaited Tokyo Olympics with a jump of 5.81 meters that took place in Italy in 2019.

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