



UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

UST:SO06-00-CI23
AY 2022-2023

TO : THE THOMASIAN COMMUNITY

FROM : OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

**RE : 115th ANNIVERSARY OF THE CANONICAL CORONATION
OF LA NAVAL DE MANILA**

DATE : 5 OCTOBER 2022

Last year, the Office of the Secretary-General (OSG) provided a circular on the link between *Our Lady of the Holy Rosary and the University of Santo Tomas* (UST).¹ This second part of the series highlights the devout involvement and participation of the Thomasians during the 1907 Canonical Coronation of *La Naval de Manila*, the first in the Philippines and in Asia, which happened twenty (20) years before the formal inauguration of the UST Main Building in Sampaloc. The Vatican has acknowledged that *La Naval de Manila* is historically old, popularly acclaimed, and, in times of need, has been serving as a beacon of faith, hope, and love among the faithful up to the present.

The University's Initiative

As early as October 1904, the editorial of the UST daily newspaper *Libertas* initiated the idea of soliciting papal approval for the canonical coronation, which generated the enthusiastic response from the devotees.² Eventually, the Prior Provincial, Fr. Santiago Paya, OP (1848-1916) requested Pope Pius X (1835-1914) to approve her canonical coronation. To everyone's joy, the petition was granted on 4 April 1906. The Apostolic Delegate to the Philippines, Most Rev. Ambrose Agius, OSB (1856-1911) was delegated to canonically crown the image of *La Naval* on 5 October 1907.

Thomasian Service to Our Lady

The University, through its printing press, disseminated news about the event throughout the archipelago, and also through the writers, theologians, and preachers of the University, who wrote and spoke on doctrinal issues relevant to the event.³

Distinguished Thomasians became members of the different Committees, who proposed and approved several activities such as the forging of golden crowns for the images of Our Lady and the Child Jesus; publication of a historical study on the image of *La Naval*; production of a commemorative medal; intensification of mass media endeavors; and fund-raising projects.⁴

¹ Office of the Secretary-General, *Circular UST:SO06-00-C107*, 7 October 2021.

² cf. De Castro, Ma. Eloisa, "The Spectacular Coronation of Our Lady of the Rosary" in *The Saga of La Naval, Triumph of a People's Faith*, 2007, pp. 282-299.

³ cf. Rodriguez, Mariano OP, *Crónica de la Coronación Canonica de Nuestra Señora del Rosario de Manila*, Tipografía del Colegio de Santo Tomás, 1908; cf. Villaroel, Fidel OP, *A History of the University of Santo Tomas*, Vol. II, pp. 252-254.

⁴ *Libertas*, 29 May 1907.





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Thomasians' Love Offering to Our Lady

Lay professors of the University donated two (2) star-shaped brooches with precious colored gems, which symbolize the different academic units of the University at that time, and were affixed to the center of each crown.⁵ On 7 September 1907, the Prior of the Santo Domingo Convent received the crowns, and the deeds of donation, which was signed and certified by the Rector, Fr. Raimundo Velazquez, OP (1855-1913); the Deans of Law, Medicine and Pharmacy, the Secretary-General; and thirty-six (36) UST professors.⁶

Illuminated Celebration

Every evening of the first two weeks of October 1907, the Santo Domingo Church, UST, and the Colegio de San Juan de Letrán were magnificently illuminated with electric lights, which was witnessed by ships anchored off Manila Bay, and all the way from Santa Mesa and San Juan del Monte.⁷ In the evening of 5 October 1907, the Fr. Provincial tendered a banquet at the University, attended by forty-six (46) guests, and it was reported that "the cloisters and the royal stairway of the University were decorated as in the days of the greatest solemnities in this educational institution."⁸

Epilogue

After more than three decades since the Canonical Coronation, UST in Sampaloc offered to *La Naval* the sanctuary of the UST Chapel as a place of refuge during the Second World War in 1941 until 1954 when her new shrine in Quezon City was constructed.

The love story between the University of Santo Tomas and *La Naval de Manila* is a manifestation of God's providence. UST did not only offer her donations of gold and gemstones, but also the service of her talented and devout Thomasians as a testimony of their love and devotion to the Mother of God. The strong bond of history and faith still continues today, and will forever be etched in love as the inscription engraved in the inside brace of the crown states: "*Real y Pontifical Universidad de Santo Tomas, Manila / los Profesores a su Patrona la Santísima Virgen del Rosario en su Coronación / 5 de Octubre de 1907.*"⁹

*Da[nos] tu bendición, Madre del Salvador.*¹⁰


FR. LOUIE R. CORONEL, O.P., EHL
Secretary-General

⁵ cf. Villegas, Ramón, "Our Lady's Jewel" in *The Saga of La Naval, Triumph of a People's Faith*, 2007, pp.132-175.

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ *Saga*, p. 300

⁸ *Libertas*, 7 October 1907.

⁹ Translation: "*The Royal and Pontifical University of Santo Tomas, Manila / the Professors to their Patroness the Most Holy Virgin of the Rosary on her Coronation / 5 October 1907*".

¹⁰ Translation: "*Grant us your blessing, Mother of the Savior*"; Excerpt from the lyrics of "*Despedida a la Virgen*".