"DOMINE OPUS TUUM"
THE WORK IS YOURS

CONVOCATION ADDRESS
DE LA SALLE WEEK
ST. MARY’S COLLEGE OF CALIFORNIA
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06 APRIL 2011

INTRODUCTION

My dear Br. Ronald Gallagher FSC - President of St. Mary’s College, Brothers Stanislaus Campbell FSC and Thomas Jones FSC – Visitor and Auxiliary Visitor respectively of the San Francisco District, Brother Donald Johanson FSC – In-coming Visitor of the San Francisco District, Members of the Board of Trustees and Regents, Brothers, Administrators, Faculty, Staff, Students, and very dear Friends.

I am deeply honored by your invitation to be conferred a Doctoral Degree Honoris Causa in Educational Leadership – and share with you my thoughts and reflexions on the “The Work is Yours” in context of St. John Baptist De La Salle’s frequent exhortation to the Brothers on the words of the Prophet Habakkuk 3:2 “Lord, the Work is Yours.” I hope my presentation will be thought-provoking enough for us all to see beyond our own horizon in creating possibilities that we can undertake in our personal life and ministry as members of the Lasallian family.

COMING TO ST. MARY’S – A VITAL ASPECT OF MY MINISTRY

I came to America for the first time in 1980 as a young Brother to pursue my graduate studies in Educational Leadership at St. Mary's College with a scholarship grant. I resided at Assumption Hall with a Community of Brothers and Scholastics who were sources of inspiration in my Religious and professional life. This was a journey of growth and development for me in my future career path from High School Principal at La Salle-Greenhills in Metro-Manila to several responsibilities after in school administration and classroom teaching. My graduate studies at St. Mary’s College were moments of grace during which every situation were golden opportunities of a lifetime that made me the person I have been through the years where I was able to make a difference as I taught minds, touched hearts, and transformed lives. I was encouraged not only to create possibilities but also to make them happen. All these I saw as God’s work that I acknowledged with gratitude for the rare privilege of having been associated and worked with among many great and admirable men and women who continue to have an impact in my life.
OUR ROLES AS LASALLIAN UNIVERSITIES

As we walk through our reflection today, I would like to invite you to ponder on some points that hopefully may provide us with a deeper grasp of our ministry as Lasallian tertiary institutions:

FIRST, as Lasallian tertiary institutions, we are the face of how Lasallian education has evolved from creating possibilities for young boys to providing opportunities for young people to be ready to become responsible members of society. Our programs and instructions should open opportunities and therefore be geared towards that direction. We should be instrumental in transforming Lasallians into becoming agents of social change. Our goal is to become catalysts for social transformation, regardless of what society we are in.

SECOND, as Lasallian tertiary institutions, we are called to respond to the signs of the times. In his message to the Presidents of Lasallian Universities during its 8th General Assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil, the Superior General, Br. Alvaro Rodriguez FSC mentioned “I have the impression that the wonderful growth experienced by our Universities is for us, today, a sign of the times.” We should be ready to guide those entrusted to our care in answering the important question: What can Lasallians do in the world today? In doing so, let us be reminded by what Br. Alvaro mentioned in the same assembly as he presented the challenge: “the faith we wish to develop is not only notional. It is a faith that is committed to action, it is a faith that looks to understand and transform: A passionate faith, a passion for God and a passion for the poor. The experience of voluntary service would also find a privileged place here”.

THIRD, as Lasallian tertiary institutions, we should be venues for critical assessment of reality as the basis for the kind of education that must be undergone. Lasallian education has to offer not just teaching to learn but teaching to reflect and to empower.

FOURTH, amidst our respective realities, as Lasallian tertiary institutions, it is our collective calling to be venues of hope. Ours is a mission that is replete not just with the needed tools to live a humane life but needed virtues for a truly Christian life.

On the points we have pondered upon, what is it that we can learn from each other? What is it that we can do together?

OUR OWN EXPERIENCE

In our Philippine experience, the demand for social transformation is a felt need. In a country where poverty has marginalized so many of our fellow Filipinos, education is imperative to alleviate their condition. As Lasallians, we take and confront this as a real challenge. Education is the only weapon to combat this dehumanizing social inequality.