

A Pedagogical Ministry for the Cultural Heritage of the Church in the University of Santo Tomas

*Isidro C. Abaño, O.P.**

Faculty of Sacred Theology, Ecclesiastical Faculties,
University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines

Abstract: The paper is a narration of the University of Santo Tomas's response to the call of the Church to form most especially the clergy in the area of cultural heritage. As part of her response, the University has established special subjects in the Ecclesiastical Faculties, a Master's program in Cultural Heritage Studies at the Graduate School, the CCCPET – Center for Conservation of Cultural Property and Environment in the Tropics, and continuous upgrading and development of the UST Museum. All of them have the same end in view, that is, for the formation of the Christian community and Evangelization that started in this country 500 years ago.

Keywords: Church Cultural Heritage, University of Santo Tomas, CCCPET, UST Museum, Pedagogical Ministry

* Isidro Abaño can be contacted at icabano@ust.edu.ph.

In 2021, the Philippine Church celebrated the 500th anniversary of the coming of Christianity when the Magellan expedition made a stopover in the Philippine Islands in 1521. Drawn from Matthew 10:8 “Freely you have received, freely give,” the chosen banner theme for the celebration is stated as, “Gifted to give.”¹

Certainly, the gift primarily alludes to the outpouring of Christian faith that has helped shape the beautiful history and culture of this country that should be at the very core of the celebration.² However, faith, to be a living faith, is also expressed in the concrete lives of the believers whose human and noble activities produce cultural objects. These concrete cultural objects that give testimonies to the faith of the community of believers are designated as the Cultural Heritage of the Church. Thus, a celebration such as this is bound only to succeed meaningfully and last memorably if there are concrete materials that can speak for themselves as evidence of a long history and cultural development.

The big question is “How many Church cultural objects can still be identified in the Philippines?” It has become an open knowledge that many of them have been unrecognizably altered, damaged, destroyed, stolen, or simply lost for reason that the ones responsible, particularly the clergy, for the care of the cultural goods did not perform their jobs or were ignorant of this concern that forms an integral part of their ministry. The identified reason for such a situation is that the clergy did not have adequate preparation, or simply did not have any during their formative years.

Responding to the call of the Church to form most especially the clergy in the area of cultural heritage, the University of Santo Tomas, a Dominican institution, has established special subjects in the Ecclesiastical Faculties, a Master’s program in Cultural Heritage Studies at the Graduate School, the CCCPET – Center for Conservation of Cultural Property and Environment in the Tropics and continuous upgrading and development of the UST Museum. All of them have the same end in view, that is, for the formation of the Christian community and Evangelization that started in this country 500 years ago.

For the reason that the library and the archives are clustered under the management of the office of the Prefect of the Library, they are not included in this presentation, but it goes without saying that they are also important instruments

¹ Gifted to Give 500 Years of Christianity in the Philippines, <https://cbcp-ecsc.org/gifted-to-give-500-years-of-christianity-in-the-philippines>.

² Ibid.

for the formation of the clergy and other responsible individuals, and the cause of Evangelization.

Vision of Saint Pope John Paul II

The term Cultural Heritage³ formally entered the jargon of the Catholic Church almost three decades ago. On March 25, 1993 St. Pope John Paul II in his apostolic letter given *Motu Proprio*, “*Inde a Pontificatus*,” changed the name of the Pontifical Commission for Preserving the Church’s Patrimony of Art and History to the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church. In this document, he expressed his desire that culture be the privileged mode for the Church to dialogue with the contemporary world. As the Pope stated, “In particular, I have sought to foster the encounter with non-believers in the privileged area of culture, a fundamental dimension of the spirit, which places people in a relationship with one another and unites them in what is most truly theirs, namely, their common humanity.”⁴

He recalled the creation of the Pontifical Council for Culture in 1982 whose aim was to fortify the Church’s pastoral presence in faith and culture. By this, he aimed to promote an authentic dialogue with non-Christian religions and with individuals and groups not claiming any religion, in the common search for a cultural communication with all people of good will.⁵

However, five years earlier than his “*Inde a Pontificatus*,” on 28 June 1988, he established the forerunner commission, the Pontifical Commission for Preserving the Church’s Patrimony of Art and History that closely worked briefly with the Pontifical Council for Culture. This is based on his conviction that “by its very nature faith tends to express itself in artistic forms and historical testimony having an intrinsic power and cultural value to which the Church is called to pay the greatest attention.”⁶

³ Preference for the term Cultural Heritage is based on the English nomenclature used by references(https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_commissions/pcchc/index.htm) for the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church. Other English terms used interchangeably in the documents issued by the commission through the years were, Cultural Goods, Cultural Patrimony, Cultural Assets and Cultural Property.

⁴ Apostolic Letter Given *Motu Proprio*, “*Inde a Pontificatus*,” https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_jp-ii_motu-proprio_25031993_inde-a-pontificatus.html.

⁵ Letter to Cardinal Agostino, Secretary of State, 20 May 1982; *Insegnamenti*, vol. V/2, 1982, pp. 1777 ff.

⁶ “*Inde a Pontificatus*,” https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_jp-ii_motu-proprio_25031993_inde-a-pontificatus.html.

After giving the new name to this, the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church dicastery, he granted it an autonomy from the Congregation of the Clergy while it retains its own area of competence established by article 100 – 103 of *Pastor Bonus* and consults with the Pontifical Council for Culture as regards the activities of the Academies.⁷ There are two important things to note from Art. 4, III. First is the former affiliation of the Pontifical Commission for Preserving the Church's Patrimony of Art and History to the Congregation of the Clergy; and second, the involvement of the newly declared autonomous dicastery with the Academies in their concerns for the church's cultural possessions. Undoubtedly, this brings to the fore the crucial duties of the ones who are responsible for the safeguard and promotion of the cultural heritage of the church for the noble purpose envisioned by St. Pope John Paul II. These are the priests, religious, and other church juridical persons upon whom the task is laid down, but at the same time are expected to be equipped with proper preparation and training to ensure their pastoral and cultural competence in this particular area of responsibility.

In the personal recollection of Francesco Cardinal Marchisano, who was the first president of the said Pontifical Commission, he said that the saintly pope was truly convinced that the cultural heritage of the Church has the language that all can understand and thus, is very useful to initiate a dialogue that might be impossible if done through other means. Expressing privately to the cardinal, he said, "When I was the Archbishop of Cracow, I could make something good with ones who are far/outside, it is because I always began with the cultural goods of the Church, that have a language that all understand, the language of beauty and which all accept; with this language I could initiate a dialogue that through other way might have been impossible."⁸

Addressing the members of the same Pontifical Commission during their audience with him on October 12, 1995, he expressed his conviction that cultural heritage is important in the life of the Church that should be given a precise meaning and placed at the service of the Church's mission. In other words, the wealth of

⁷ The Pontifical Commission for Preserving the Church's Patrimony of Art and History shall henceforth be called the *Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church*. Retaining its own area of competence established by articles 100-103 of my Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus*, it will no longer constitute part of the Congregation for the Clergy, but will be autonomous, having its own President, who will be a member of the Pontifical Council for Culture, with which it will maintain periodic contacts in order to assure a harmony of purpose and a fruitful mutual cooperation. Furthermore, it will consult with the Pontifical Council for Culture in regard to the Academies whose activities concern the Church's cultural possessions.

⁸ +Francesco Marchisano, *Presentazione*, *Enchiridion dei Beni Culturali della Chiesa (EDBCC)*, Grafiche Dehoniane, Bologna, 2002, p. 7. The translation is by the author of this article.

artistic works, of books in the libraries and documents in the archives of ecclesial communities are considered meaningful when they are placed at the service of the Church. Considering the academic dimension of the Church's cultural heritage, he proposed that schools could specialize in this field and follow the pilot program that was already established at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.⁹

On September 25, 1997, the saintly pontiff said in his message to those taking part in the second plenary assembly of the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church in relation to the preparation for the Jubilee, that "the cultural goods are meant for human advancement and, in the ecclesial context, acquire a specific meaning since they are ordered to evangelization, religious practice, and charity."¹⁰ In this context, the Pontifical Commission further viewed the cultural heritage of the Church as means of a "New Evangelization" through its concrete instruments, namely, the ecclesiastical libraries, archives, and museums. He considered the ecclesiastical libraries as "the privileged places of true wisdom," the museums of sacred art as "enduring nurseries in which the genius and spirituality of the community of believers is handed on," and the ecclesiastical archives that "lead to a meditation on the action of divine Providence in history; the preserved documents there become a memorial to the evangelization carried out in time and an authentic pastoral tool."¹¹

St. John Paul II was truly convinced that the cultural heritage of the Church is of utmost importance to the life of the Church because through the long centuries of her existence enormous wealth of cultural goods were accumulated because of the many continuous works of evangelization, worship, and charity. In order that their true meaning and value be understood in the contemporary setting, they must be placed at the service of the Church and be effective instruments of dialogue and evangelization. Ultimately, he believed that the ultimate reason for these cultural goods can be found in God, "... offering man even now the possibility of having an experience of God, who contains within Himself all that is good, beautiful and true."¹²

Indeed, he was a visionary as regards the cultural heritage of the Church because he also believed that it was necessary for the celebration of the jubilee in 2000. He saw that the Church must be able to present concrete testimonies, through

⁹ John Paul II, "Culture Can Aid the Search for God," *L'Osservatore Romano* (OR), weekly edition, N. 41 (25 October 1995): 5.

¹⁰ John Paul II, "Art Celebrates the Mystery of Faith," *L'Osservatore Romano* (OR), weekly edition, N. 43 (22 October 1997): 2.

¹¹ John Paul II, OR, N. 43 (22/10/1997): 2.

¹² John Paul II, OR, N.41 (25/10/1995): 5.

her cultural heritage, that could affirm her two millennia of existence that derives her life from the God-man Jesus who walked on this earth 2000 years ago.

How are these to be realized and pastorally transmitted to the faithful? The responsibilities fall on the priests, religious, and other juridical person of the Church who must be trained and academically formed in the Church's cultural heritage.

Major Historical Events

For a better appreciation of the development of the Cultural Heritage of the Church, provided below is a terse outline of important major historical events:¹³

- 3rd century – Pope Zefirinus (198-218 A.D.) placed the Christian catacombs under the care of the deacon Callixtus, who became pope himself from 218 – 222. Today the burial complex is known as the catacombs of St. Callixtus.
- 1820 – Cardinal Pacca initiated in his decree the basis of modern civil legislation regarding the historical-artistic patrimony of many European nations.
- Pope Pius VII (pope 1800 – 1823) was the first to impose limits on the sale of works of art through the famous Bulla of Cardinal Pacca in 1820. The first law of the Italian State for the preservation of its cultural heritage, also regulating the sale and export of art treasures, dates from 1909 while the basic law on the matter was issued in 1939 and is still in force.
- 28 June 1988 – with the reorganization of the Roman Curia, the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus* was issued by John Paul II, wherein he included the establishment of the Pontifical Commission for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Heritage within the Congregation of the Clergy (See art. 99 – art. 104).
- 10 April 1989 – the commission sent its first circular letter to all the presidents of the episcopal conferences of every nation in order to present itself as a new commission and to make a survey of the present status of church heritage through its ten formulated questions.

¹³ + Marchisano, *Presentazione*, 8-14. This citation excludes the *Motu Proprio Data Pulchritudinis Fidei* of Benedict XVI and the *Laudato Si* of Francis.

- 10 March 1992 – a synthesis of the answers was sent back to all the Episcopal conferences in various nation. It was found out that though there may be general problems, the present situations of the cultural heritage of the Church all over the world are very diverse. Secondly, there were many persons interested in this church concern, but very few were prepared to take up the work.
- 15 June 1992 – occasioned by the opening of the European nations' frontiers that placed the cultural heritage in great dangers against theft and illegal trafficking, a second circular letter was sent by the same commission to the European Episcopal conferences to call their attention to such dangers.
- 15 October 1992 – a directive was sent to all the bishops calling their attention to the urgent necessity of preparing future priests and their collaboration with the laity regarding the care of the cultural heritage of the Church. The conferences were asked to incorporate in their ratio *fundamentalis studiorum* in the seminaries for the future priests, the care and appreciation of the Church cultural heritage. And, to give an example, a higher course on Church Cultural Heritage (Corso Superiore per I Beni Culturali della Chiesa) was established at the Gregorian University, Rome, during the academic year 1991-1992.
- 25 March 1993 – Pope John Paul II established the new dicastery with the title “Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church,” which was taken from the formerly established Pontifical Commission for the Conservation of the Artistic and Historical Patrimony of the Church.
- 10 April 1994 – a circular was addressed to the religious congregations to call their attention to the problems of the cultural heritage of the Church but citing the great contributions that the Benedictines have done through the centuries. Also, having included art, archives, and libraries within the proper competence and theme of this Pontifical Commission, a specific letter, Church Libraries, was addressed to all the bishops, instructing them of the value and function of ecclesiastical libraries, with emphasis on the historical, theological, and cultural contents, which scholars have used to bring the message of the Gospel through the centuries.

- 2 May 1994 – in the presence of some resistances (because others viewed inventory can provide a lead to solving theft), another circular was sent to the same conferences to provide for the inventories of church cultural heritage.
- 10 September 1994 – a circular was issued to all the catholic universities in the world to request them to create a formal course on the cultural heritage of the church, like the program offered by the Gregorian University. At present, these are the universities which made such program: L’Institut Catholique di Parigi, L’Universita cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano, Catholic University of Lisboa, Catholic University of Monterrey in Mexico, Seton Hall University, USA, La Universidad de Alcala, Madrid, University of Sto. Tomas, Manila (M. A. Cultural Heritage Studies)
- 13-14 September 1995 – the International Congress of Catholic Publishers in Graz, Austria further took up this theme and created an international association of ecclesiastical libraries.
- 2 February 1997 – the pontifical commission issued a document with the title, "The Pastoral Function of Ecclesiastical Archives." The document took the famous phrase of Paul VI who defined the ecclesiastical archives as “testimony of the Transitus Domini in the Church,” presenting them as recording of essential face in the life of the Church. And, further commented that the ecclesiastical archives are pure unparalleled treasures of life, of culture, of traditions, and of civilization of a community and people.
- 25 September 1997 – There was the Second Plenary Gathering of the Commission in view of the Jubilee 2000. See John Paul II’s message, 28 September 1997.
- 4 April 1999 – Pope John Paul II issued his letter to Artists. Among the important points he tackled were the connections of art and the mystery of the Word made flesh. Sacred Scripture has become a sort of source from which both Christian culture and art have drawn. He spoke about the noble vocation of artists and their relation to the Church, and further making an appeal to them to be aware of the many different paths that lead to the infinite Ocean of Beauty and hoping that they may be guided

and inspired by the mystery of the Risen Christ, whom the Church contemplates with joy on Easter.

- 8 December 1999 – a circular letter, *Inventory Catalogue of the Cultural Heritage of the Church: A Necessary and Urgent Task*, was addressed by the commission to all the bishops. In part, it aimed to answer the problem of illegal trafficking of artwork and archeological materials that ranked second to drug trafficking. It emphasized the fact that the historical-artistic-cultural patrimony can only be valued and appreciated if they are known.
- 15 August 2001 – a document, *The Pastoral Function of Ecclesiastical Museums*, was published. It treated primarily the pastoral function of these museums rather than their material value. These museums must be able to pose to the visitors the question: “Si isti et illi, cur non ego?”
- September 15, 2006 – *Inventory of the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life Cultural Patrimony: Some Practical Orientations*.
- July 13, 2012 – In the *Motu Proprio Datae Pulchritudinis Fidei* of Benedict XVI, the Pontifical Heritage of the Church is joined to the Pontifical Council for Culture to form a section of multi-dicasteries.
- May 24, 2015 – Pope Francis issued his encyclical the *Laudato Si*. As mentioned particularly in number 143 of the document about the care for our common home, Francis further included the concern of the Church for the environment and the natural heritage.

Necessity For Formation

It is important to note that in the Vatican document on the sacred liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 4 December 1963, something related to cultural heritage was already implicitly mentioned in line with the formation of the candidates to the priesthood. In chapter VII, number 129, it reads, “During their philosophical and theological studies, clerics are to be taught about the history and development of sacred art, and about the basic principles which govern the production of its works. Thus, they will be able to appreciate and preserve the Church’s ancient monuments, and be able to aid by good advice artists who are engaged in producing works of art.”¹⁴

¹⁴ Austin Flannery, O.P., “*Sacrosanctum Concilium (SC)*,” *Vatican Council II* (Indiana: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 36.

However, the emphasis was on sacred art, of how it should be understood from the point of view of its history and development and the basic principles of its production. The goal of the formation was that the candidates would also have an appreciation of the Church's ancient monuments to be preserved and to be equipped with basic knowledge about the making of art in order to guide specifically the artists involved in the production of works of art.

An explanation on why the appreciation and preservation of the Church's ancient monuments was underscored could be that with the establishment of the Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archeology by Pius IX on January 6, 1852, the formal subject on Christian archeology was already in place and could be the area where sacred art could be introduced.¹⁵ One hundred forty (140) years later, on October 15, 1992, the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church recommended that as part of the cycle of formation of the candidates "... be included courses in which one can deal with in more depth and in systematic way the history and principles of Sacred art, Christian archeology, archive science, library science."¹⁶

Moreover, it recommended that the formation of the clerics be done during their philosophical and theological studies. At this very pristine stage, the cultural heritage as it is now understood was limited to sacred art, for reason that the main subject of this document is liturgy and worship which is just one of the several ministerial objectives of the Church cultural heritage. As regards the formation of the clerics, it was just a very general admonition because chapter VII placed the responsibilities for the implementation of the said formation into the hands of the Ordinaries and the Conferences.

The care for the cultural heritage of the Church requires primarily persons with a good level of understanding on the importance of this area. Within this proposition, the formation of the candidates is of particular importance because of three reasons: first, they are the primary custodians of all the materials and instruments of the cultural heritage of the Church; second, they responsibly use the cultural heritage in their pastoral works; and third, they are commissioned for the new and necessary things for the development and progress that are compatible to

¹⁵ Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archeology, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_commissions/archo/inglese/documents/rc_com_archo_pro_20011010_pcas_en.html.

¹⁶ Pontifical Commission for the Conservation of the Artistic and Historical Patrimony of the Church, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_commissions/pcchc/documents/rc_com_pcchc_19921015_futuri-presbiteri_en.html.

and worthy for the mission of the Church. For this, the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church laid out a pedagogical itinerary for the formation of the candidates.¹⁷

The importance of formal training for clerics along this area has been hinted in *Pastor Bonus*, Art. 103, when the then Commission for Preserving the Patrimony of Art and History was tied up by John Paul to the Congregation for Seminaries and Educational Institutions, and the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. In consultation with these two, the said commission “has the task of striving to make the people of God more and more aware of the need for and importance of conserving the artistic and historical patrimony of the Church.” The way to concretize such task of the commission is to prepare those who would actually take responsibilities of the Church patrimony.

To make the said alluded formal formation come into reality, on October 15, 1992, a directive was sent by the commission to all the bishops to call their attention to the urgent necessity of preparing future priests and their collaboration with the laity regarding the care of the cultural patrimony of the Church. The conferences were asked to incorporate in their ratio *studiorum fundamentalis* in the seminaries for the future priests, the care and appreciation of the Church cultural heritage. And, to present a pioneering specific program, a higher course on the Cultural Heritage of the Church (Corso Superiore per I Beni Culturali della Chiesa) was established at the Gregorian University, Rome, during the academic year 1991-1992.¹⁸

Pedagogical Direction

The directive to the bishops contains the details of the formation in the *Circular Letter Regarding the Pastoral Training of Future Priests in Their Upcoming Responsibilities Concerning the Artistic and Historic Heritage of the Church*, October 15, 1992. The aim of this document is spelled out in numbers 9 to 12 that can be understood as follows:

1. To aid those responsible for the formation of candidates for the priesthood by defining the educational itinerary, suggesting the operative ways and initiatives turned toward making future priests aware of their task along this area by including these ways within the educational curriculum.

¹⁷ Carlo Chenis, *Introduzione*, EDBCC, 67.

¹⁸ The author participated in the diplomate group of the academic year 1993-1994. There were 23 students, mostly laity from 19 different countries. Now, the program has developed into Masteral and Doctoral degrees under the Church History Department.

2. The intended candidates include those for the priesthood in diocesan clergy, institute of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life, but extended also to the candidates in institute of consecrated life and lay societies of apostolic life, male and female, to prepare how this area be useful in their apostolic activities.
3. It is not intended to prepare experts in the management of the cultural goods, but that the pastors acquire a level of sensitivity and competence that give them knowledge on how to evaluate the extent of the cultural goods and to be able to collaborate with experts without depending on excessive delegation, and at the same time to educate the community under their care.
4. To understand that the area referred to here is not limited solely to sacred art manifested in architecture, painting, sculpture, mosaic, music, and art forms connected to liturgy and worship, but also covers libraries, archives, and museums that are placed for the service to the entire Christian community.¹⁹

The commission was fully convinced that there be formation of the clergy because of real troublesome occurrences that were happening in the Church. Among them were the improper use of several artistic and historic collections taken from the location in the Church and became properties of private collectors for their houses. This happened because the ones responsible did not take action; this contributed to the increasing cases of theft. For this, it is an indispensable responsibility of the clergy to care, protect, and guard the artistic and historic collections of the Christian community.²⁰ The reason pointed out why the lack of concern from the clergy was that in many cases the preparation of the clergy for this particular task for many years has been quite weak and incomplete if not entirely absent.²¹ In the Philippine setting for instance, Barbie Harper lamented that another reason for the neglect on the part of the clergy was because, “Unlike our neighbors in Southeast Asia, the Philippines seems to be making a concerted effort to eradicate vestiges of the past.”²² In other

¹⁹ *Pontifical Commission for the Conservation of the Artistic and Historical Patrimony of the Church* (PCCAHPC), Circular Letter Regarding the Pastoral Training of Future Priests in Their Upcoming Responsibilities Concerning the Artistic and Historic Heritage of the Church (CLPTFP), October 15, 1992, nos. 9-12.

²⁰ PCCAHPC, no. 1.

²¹ PCCAHPC, no. 4.

²² Bambi L. Harper, “Advocating Church Cultural Heritage among Clergy,” *Pintacasi: A Journal of the Cultural Heritage of the Church in the Philippines*, vol. 2 (2006): 39.

words, a twisted nationalism or fundamentalism was invoking the erasure of all colonial heritage including those of the Church.

Academic And Intellectual Formation

The said pontifical commission further recommended that in formulating the direction for the formation of future priests, consecrated life and religious laymen and women, there are two levels or areas that must be clearly understood. The first of these two is the actual experiences that the candidates can have as provided by the environment of the seminaries and houses of formation. Their environment must be able to provide an atmosphere of recollection and increase of growth of their adequate aesthetic sensitivity. These experiences are to be provided by the communal life through active participation and taking on the responsibility. Through the celebration of the liturgy and communal and individual prayer, their spiritual formation should bring about in them an education of aesthetic sensitivity deeply integrated in the experience of faith itself. Consequently, they become exemplary even in an artistic point of view that would guarantee their quality to avoid opposite excesses of carelessness or bizarre and overwhelming refinement both contrary to good aesthetic sense.²³

The second level consists of the academic and formal intellectual and academic formation. Concrete suggestions on the academic and intellectual formation have been laid down as follows:

1. Drawn from the *Ratio Studiorum Fundamentalis*, the number of subjects is not to be multiplied, but to find a way how to integrate adequately the aspects and issues of the historic and artistic patrimony into the already existing ones.
2. Education and cultural training of vocations is to be incorporated in the curricula of studies that ensure a good high school training in the minor seminaries.
3. Courses are to be adequately placed in art history, history of civilization and philosophy during the introductory year of theology.
4. Issues concerning aesthetics should be included in subjects of philosophy.

²³ CLPTFP, nos. 15-17.

5. The transcendental, the true, the good, and the beautiful are to be viewed as the “form of revelation” that can be presented in systematic theology.
6. Subject that contains sacred art, like iconology, can provide experiences that enhance the spiritual theology.
7. The teaching of canon law should include an analysis of important canons that concern the management of cultural goods and works of art.
8. The works of architecture, painting, sculpture, and music are to be valued in the teaching of liturgy so that sacramental celebrations and worship be greatly enhanced.
9. Ecclesiastical history and Patrology can offer a wide range of possibilities to highlight the creativity of the Christian faith that can accept and elevate various artistic expressions, the profound relationship which exists between theological reflection and the inculturation of faith and works of art.
10. Pastoral theology should acquire special attention in ecclesiastical studies so that the themes of sacred art, cultural goods and the role of pastors be the guides to responsibly inform and form the Christian community about such goods.
11. Courses be planned in which history and principles of sacred art, Christian archeology, archivists, and library science are included.
12. Adequately published manuals could present, in a unified manner, the essential subject matters regarding judicial, liturgical, aesthetic, pastoral, and technical issue of conservation, restoration, management and responsibility toward the cultural goods of the Church and the role of future priests in this area of their responsibility.
13. As for their efficient educational experiences, useful activities are to be initiated such as meetings with artists and art critics, participation in some major art events, information, and visits to diocesan heritage institutions, like the diocesan museums, archives and libraries, visits to important religious and civil historical monuments of the diocese.²⁴

²⁴ CLPTFP, nos. 19-24.

Formator's Tasks

Recommendations for the concerned formators are stated in the following:

1. Professors of liturgy, ecclesiastical history, and pastoral theology have significant role in imparting sensitivity to aesthetics and its implementation.
2. Faculty members of seminaries and houses of studies need to exert effort to update their professional knowledge in the field of cultural heritage.
3. Specialized training is needed for those teaching pastoral work, sacred art, Christian archeology, archive science, library science, and such training could be done nationally or regionally.
4. After programs of training have been set up, the responsible formators are to be invited to undergo them.
5. There should be dialogue and exchanges of ideas with institutions where subjects about the cultural heritage of the Church are being taught wholly or partially in view of the formation of the clergy, in places such as universities, museums, libraries, and archives.
6. Getting in touch with the diocesan commission for sacred art or with other church organization is important for the seminaries and houses of studies for exchanges of individuals, information, and initiatives.
7. The formators have the task to disseminate the documents being issued by the concerned pontifical commission.²⁵

UST: A Heritage of Opportunities

Having existed for more than 400 years now, the University of Santo Tomas can truly bask in the testimonies of its cultural heritage. This has been affirmed by a historic prelude to the 2011 Quadricentennial Celebration, on January 25, 2010, when the National Museum by virtue of Republic Act 4846, otherwise known as “The Cultural Properties Preservation and Protection Act,” resolved and declared the Main Building, the Central Seminary, the Arch of the Centuries, and the Open Space Fronting the Grandstand as National Cultural Treasure.²⁶ Of how it was

²⁵ CLPTFP, nos. 25-28.

²⁶ Isidro Abañó, O.P., “The UST Museum and Church Cultural Heritage in the Quadricentennial Celebration (1611-2011) of the University of Santo Tomas,” *Pintacasi*, vol. 7 (2011): 32.

able to come up with such historical activity could be drawn from the mission of UST itself, stated as, “in pursuit of truth, guided by reason, and illumined by faith, dedicates herself to the generation, advancement, and transmission of knowledge to form competent and compassionate professionals, committed to the service of the Church, the nation, and the global community.”²⁷ From this mission statement it can be gleaned that the formation of the professional is aimed primarily at the service of the Church. And, it is along this line, where it can be asked what the university has already done in serving the Church as regards the cultural heritage of the Church.

So now the question is, what does UST have that gives it the capability to respond to the call of the Church to form the candidates to the priesthood, religious life, and those tasked to take care of the Church’s cultural heritage? These are the areas of opportunities that the University has when it comes to their formation, especially the academic institutions that helped shape the minds and hearts of Thomasians: (1) The Ecclesiastical Faculties, (2) The UST Graduate School, (3) The CCPET – Center for the Conservation of the Cultural Property and Environment in the Tropic, (4) The UST Museum, (5) The Library, and (6) The Archive. With these different and yet connected departments of the university those being formed and the formators have all the best opportunities to gain access to cultural heritage materials, actual inside and outside class instructions, supervision of experts and credited degree programs. As already mentioned above, the library and the archive are not included in this presentation.

The Ecclesiastical Faculties

Although Aesthetics is a staple subject offered already in the Faculty of Philosophy and Church Property and discussed in subjects in the Faculty of Canon Law, it is interesting for us to note that subjects such as Christian Archeology, History of Christian Art, and Cultural Heritage of the Church are tackled in the Faculty of Sacred Theology. The inclusion of History of Christian Art and Cultural Heritage of the Church in the curriculum for the bachelor and licentiate programs is quite recent.

A Personal Academic Itinerary

The subject History 7 with the description Christian Archeology was already part of the curriculum for the Bachelor’s degree in Sacred Theology since I started

²⁷ Pontifical and Royal University of Santo Tomas, <https://www.ust.edu.ph/the-university/>.

to handle it during the Academic Year 1995-1996.²⁸ It has been one of the courses that the first year students have to complete during the first year in their bachelor program. This course is placed in the area of Church history. Based on records, the average number of students enrolled for each year is 45, and they are mostly seminarians of the UST Central Seminary and religious men from various order and congregations, who are candidates for the priesthood. On very rare occasions, there have been one or two religious women who enrolled in the course. Until 1998, History 7 was credited with only one unit. However, starting in 1999 until 2019, the credited unit was raised from one to two, after my recommendation due to two reasons. First, it was observed that the one hour per week allotted for the one unit was not enough to finish the entire content of the course. Secondly, it was already the right time to include in the introduction some concepts of cultural heritage of the Church of which Christian Archeology is included. It was also a chance to abide by the recommendation of the commission not to multiply the number of subjects but to try to insert adequately in the already existing ones new issues and aspects.²⁹ Thirdly, since not all students would have the luxury to travel to the actual archeological sites in Rome, the inclusion of the cultural heritage would give them an experience and a glimpse of Christian archeology and Church heritage in the Philippine setting, and thus, could lead them to a better appreciation of the subject.

Furthermore, as a response to the suggestion of the pontifical commission that in terms of academic orientation, initiatives should be utilized, and among them is visits to diocesan institutions, like the diocesan museums, archives, and libraries, and to other most important religious and civil monuments of the diocese.³⁰ From 2002 until 2019, though not continuously through the years, the students were able to travel to various places with important known Church and civil heritage sites. They were the following: Vigan, Pampanga, Cagayan, Pangasinan, Ilocos Sur, Laguna, Cebu, Panay Island, Bacolod, Bicol, Bohol, and Cavite. To ensure that the travel imparts meaningful learning and to measure the interest and academic gain of the students, they were required to submit, though different in each academic year, post-travel works, such as reaction paper, scrap art book, newsfeed in print media, exhibition, and social media production like the Youtube.³¹

²⁸ Data about the teaching of cultural heritage of the Church in the Faculty of Sacred Theology are drawn from personal experiences.

²⁹ CLPTFP, no. 19.

³⁰ CLPTFP, no. 24.

³¹ Prof. Regalado Jose, an expert on Philippine churches and a faculty in Cultural Heritage Studies at the UST Graduate School, was always present in all the educational tours in order to guide the students.

During its meeting on April 4, 2019, the council of the Faculty of Sacred Theology resolved that “For each unit of academic credit for courses for the degree in Bachelor in Sacred Theology program of UST (except for the Seminar courses), the student is expected to accomplish an equivalent number of work hours for 1.5 ECTS (that is, 38-45 hours). This means then that every 2 units of UST credit is equivalent to 3 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System). Every 2-unit course in the S.Th.B. program requires a total workload of 76-90 hours for the whole Academic Term.” It was done to properly adjust the units of UST to the minimum requirement set by the Congregation for Catholic Education to complete the degree in Bachelor in Sacred Theology and to lessen the load hours that would unreasonably burden the students. Due to this adjustment, CHPA8 (Christian Archeology) with 2 units and Seminar 6 (Cultural Heritage of the Church) with 2 units were reformatted under section of Church history. Thus, an independent subject on the Cultural Heritage of the Church has been introduced in the bachelor program from the year 2020.

However, the case is different in the licentiate program. In 2004, the subject on the Cultural Heritage of the Church was already introduced with 3 units under the section of Church history. What distinguishes it from the one offered in the bachelor program is the approach in the conduct of classes. In the licentiate program, the students are required to choose their individual topics that they research on, report in class and submit a copy of their completed work, whereas in the bachelor program classes are conducted only by lectures. An allied to it is the subject on the History of Christian Art with 3 units that started in 2006, with similar requirement as that of the Church cultural heritage course.

With the present curriculum of the Faculty of Sacred Theology, it can be expected that UST, true to her teaching ministry, must actively be involved in forming future priests and other individuals who will be responsible in taking care of the cultural heritage of the Church that has a significant role in evangelization since the existence of the pristine Christian community.

Cultural Heritage Studies – Graduate School

Forming the candidates to the clergy does not mean that they are being prepared to be experts about the management and technicalities of the cultural heritage of the Church. What is desired is that they acquire a kind of sensitivity and competence that can permit them to attentively evaluate the extent of the values concerned so that they might, on the given occasion, benefit correctly from the

collaboration of experts without depending on excessive delegation.³² Consequently, it is necessary that there are experts in cultural heritage management who will be able to support those information. It means that the training for those who are aiming to become experts in this area is very necessary so that the clergy will have expert individuals to rely on when it comes to the aspects of management and technicalities of the Church heritage. As a response to this necessity, the UST Graduate School opened the MA program in Cultural Heritage Studies.

At the opening of the Academic Year 2002-2003, the UST Graduate School started two new programs in Cultural Heritage Studies.³³ A Diploma program that was to be accomplished for one year and a parallel program of Master's degree in Cultural Heritage that was a non-thesis track for two years. The Diploma program closed in 2013; it was able to produce three graduates. The Master program of non-thesis track lasted until 2014; it produced 33 graduates. In 2014 the program in Master of Arts in Cultural Heritage Studies that requires fulfillment by means of a thesis opened in the graduate school. From that year up to the present, this MA program has been able to produce 23 graduates. Of the total number of 59 graduates, four were clergy, namely, the late Fr. Alex Bautista, Fr. Brian Brigoli, Fr. Herminio Felipe, and Fr. Ted Milan Torralba. With paper works completed and submitted to the approving national educational institution, such as the CHED (Commission on Higher Education), it is hoped that in 2022, the Doctoral program in Cultural Heritage Studies will be offered.

Among the courses that are being offered are the following, Heritage Research and Documentation, Principles and Basic Practices in Conservation of Movable Heritage, Heritage and Interpretation, and Approaches to Archeological Heritage. All of these and the roster of well qualified mentors can be verified on the website of the UST Graduate School.³⁴

Surprisingly, the subjects of the thesis that the graduates chose to develop were related to the cultural heritage of the Church. Examples of the submitted works of the students only for the semester's requirement are the following: Museo Recoleta by Catherine Lajara, Semana Santa Procession at Santa Maria, Bulacan by Joseph Richard Renta III, Proposed Institutional Plan for the Church Museums of the Diocese of Tagbilaran, Bohol: Toward a Normative Pastoral Governance

³² CLPTFP, no. 11.

³³ UST Museum Newsletter (UMN), first quarter, 2002, p. 1.

³⁴ Master of Arts in Cultural Heritage Studies, <https://www.ust.edu.ph/academics/programs/master-of-arts-in-cultural-heritage-studies/>.

System by Fr. Ted Milan Torralba. This would indicate that first, the Church in the Philippines is so fortunate to have a vast collection of cultural heritage materials and monuments that need to be explored, studied, and managed. Second, the students of this Catholic university are readily inspired by the religious ambience of the campus that makes them choose topics related to the Church. Third, they feel that because of the vastness of the cultural heritage of the Church, they will have a better chance to practice their acquired skills, not necessarily for financial gain provided by the ecclesiastical institution, but maybe by the civil or private establishments. Example of this is the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), an executing agency of the government that funds the restoration and conservation of Philippine churches declared as national cultural treasures. Lastly, their faith prods them to find meaning in what they see and experience in all the materials that are identified as cultural heritage of the Church.

The four priests who completed their master's degree have been very much involved in the promotion of the Church cultural heritage in the Philippines. One of them is Fr. Alex Bautista who was also an architect. Before his demise on July 9, 2020 at the age of 50, for several years he used to teach Church Architecture and Liturgical Art in the College of architecture and in the College of Fine Arts and Design. He was very active in many Church projects, particularly in the Diocese of Tarlac where he was assigned. He designed the Shrine of San Josemaria Escriva in Gerona town, which featured a "drive through" for visits to the Blessed Sacrament at the back of the main Tabernacle with a glass window and designed the altar at the Quirino Grandstand for the visit of Pope Francis in 2015. He designed the papal chair for the same event. He also helped design and restore other churches, like the Our Lady of Piat in Cagayan; the interior of the Our Lady of Peñafrancia Minor Basilica in Naga City, the sacristy of the Our Lady of Manaoag; the interior of San Sebastian Cathedral in this city and several churches in Batangas. He served as the executive secretary of the Commission on Cultural Heritage of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, and later became architect consultant there. He is also the chair of the Tarlac Diocese's Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church.³⁵

Fr. Ted Milan Torralba is an Associate Judge of the Tribunal of First Instance and the Chair of the Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church, Diocese of Tagbilaran, Bohol. Since 1996, Father Ted is the executive secretary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines' (CBCP) Episcopal Commission

³⁵ Priest who, as architect, designed iconic PH churches dies, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1304607/priest-who-as-architect-designed-iconic-ph-churches-dies>.

for the Cultural Heritage of the Church (ECCHC). A canon lawyer by training, Father Ted was secretary of the Apostolic Nunciature in the Philippines, 2005-2008. He was founding chair of the Bohol Arts and Cultural Heritage (BACH) Council, 2002-2005. He once served as vice-head of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) National Committee on Monuments and Sites (NCMS). He was co-recipient of the 3rd Guhit Awards for Cultural Heritage Preservation given by the Design and Architecture magazine in 2000. He trained in world heritage sites management at the United Nations' Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), Hiroshima, Japan, in 2008. He obtained degrees in Philosophy (PhB, AB Classical, PhL), Theology (SThB), and Canon Law (JCB, JCL, JCD [cand.]), earned his master's degree in cultural heritage studies (MCHS), pursued MA Linguistics degree, and gained academic units in Music, all from the University of Santo Tomás, Manila.³⁶

Fr. Brian Brigoli, while he was still a seminarian in the UST Central Seminary, already prepared the paper works on the cultural significance of the UST Central Seminary that paved the way for its declaration by the National Museum as one of the four National Cultural Treasures of the country during the celebration of the 400th anniversary of UST's foundation in 2011. For him, the UST Central Seminary is culturally important because it is the only pontifical seminary in the Philippines and the whole of Asia chartered by the Holy See. The building itself is in the art-deco style constructed in 1932 that was designed by Fernando Ocampo, a National Artist for Architecture. It was once visited by Saint John Paul II on the Fifth International Youth Forum, at which the Holy Father celebrated the Holy Mass at the chapel of the seminary on January 13, 1995.³⁷ As priest, he serves as the chairperson of the Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Archdiocese of Cebu up to the present. In 2009, he co-authored the publication of "Balaanong Bahandi" that showcases all the churches in Cebu from the missions to contemporary parishes.³⁸

Fr. Herminio Felipe is the Director of the Diocesan Commission on Church Heritage and Patrimony and is member of the Diocesan Prebyteral Council.³⁹

The achievements and the positions held by these graduate priests could be considered as an important indicator that it is possible for some candidates to

³⁶ Catholic Devotions as the Church's Intangible Heritage, <https://intramuros.gov.ph/2021/05/13/catholic-devotions-as-the-churchs-intangible-heritage/>.

³⁷ Abañó, O.P., "The UST Museum and Church Cultural Heritage," 38.

³⁸ Balaanong Bahandi book launch, <https://simbahan.net/2009/11/26/balaanong-bahandi-book-launch/>.

³⁹ Diocese of Kalibo, <http://www.claretianpublications.com/index.php/catholic-directory/diocese/diocese-of-kalibo/97>.

the priesthood to be trained with more than the basics on cultural heritage so that they will have the guiding role as regards the concern for the cultural heritage of the Church of their respective dioceses.

CCPET – Center for Conservation of Cultural Property and Environment in the Tropics

Certainly, the MA program in Cultural Heritage Studies in the UST Graduate School is the first of its kind in the country’s academic field. But another pioneer and trailblazer is the CCPET – Center for Conservation of Cultural Property and Environment in the Tropics. The center was officially inaugurated on September 4, 2003, at the UST Thomas Aquinas Research Center (TARC). Its mission is “To value, promote, protect and preserve through its function of research and technology, education, training and service the cultural property and environment specifically in the tropics often at risk in the changing world.”⁴⁰ At the beginning, the center was under the direct supervision of the UST Museum, but in 2009 its supervision was transferred to the cluster of research in humanities at the Graduate School.

Today the center has numerous compilations of interesting research done by students and professionals who are into Philippine cultural heritage. Several tie-up projects have been or are being accomplished with some municipalities, communities, and non-government organizations. The fruits of all these endeavors can be verified in their effective implementations.⁴¹

The center is committed to be an active agent for the development, preservation, protection of the Filipino cultural heritage in partnership with institutions both in the local and national level. It has worked very closely with the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines’s Permanent Committee for the Cultural Heritage of the Church. It has performed the duties of the secretariat during the biennial conventions and special fora led by the permanent committee from 1999 to 2019. Below is an overview of the establishment of the CBCP’s Permanent Committee for the Cultural Heritage of the Church, the biennial conventions and special fora that were celebrated in different parts of the country.

July 8, 1996 – The CBCP established the Permanent Committee for the

⁴⁰ Center for Conservation of Cultural Property and Environment in the Tropics, <http://graduateschool.ust.edu.ph/center-for-conservation-of-cultural-property-and-environment-in-the-tropics/>.

⁴¹ Abaño, “The UST Museum and Church Cultural Heritage,” 34.

Cultural Heritage of the Church with Bishop Leopoldo S. Tumalak of Tagbilaran as the first chairman.

October 1998 – The Manual on the Conservation of the Cultural Heritage of the Church in the Philippines was drafted.

February 1-5, 1999 – The 1st Biennial National Convention of Church Cultural Heritage Workers was held in Tagbilaran.

September 17-20, 2001- The 2nd Biennial National Convention was held in Butuan City.

July 1,2 & 4, 2002 – The Regional Fora of the Church Cultural Heritage Workers were held, for Luzon on July 1 at UST, and for Visayas and Mindanao on July 2 & 4.

August 19, 2002 – The Church Heritage Conservation Seminar was held in Holy Angel University, Angeles City.

September 29, 30 – October 1, 2003 – The 3rd Biennial National Convention of Church Cultural Heritage Workers was held at the Holy Angel University, Angeles City, Pampanga.

April 18 – 25, 2005 – Jaro, Iloilo, The 4th Biennial National Convention of Church Cultural Heritage Workers.

April 23 – 25, 2007 – Ozamis, Misamis Occidental, The 5th Biennial National Convention of Church Cultural Heritage Workers.

May 4-7, 2009 – Laoag City, Ilocos Sur, The 6th Biennial National Convention of Church Heritage Workers.

May 9-12, 2011 – Palo, Leyte, The 7th Biennial National Convention of Church Heritage Workers.

May 20 – 23, 2013 – the 8th, Dapitan , Zamboanga del Norte

June 1- 4, 2015 – the 9th, Sorsogon City, Sorsogon

April 24 – 27, 2017– the 10th, Tagbilaran, Bohol

May 6 – 9, 2019 – the 11th, Cebu City

During the 11th biennial convention in Cebu City, it was agreed upon by the organizing body that the 12th convention in 2021 be held in Manila, specifically in

the University of Santo Tomas, in time for the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the coming Christianity to the Philippines. However, due to the possible grave consequences and predicaments of the pandemic, the plan did not materialize.

Moreover, the Center, in cooperation with the CBCP's Permanent Committee for the Cultural Heritage of the Church, takes charge of the publication of the *Pintacasi: A Journal of the Cultural Heritage of the Church in the Philippines*. The published journal contains the proceedings of the abovementioned Biennial National Conventions of Church Cultural Heritage Workers, organized by the CBCP. The topics include a wide range of areas about the Church's cultural heritage in the country. Among the topics that are discussed, for instance, are the state of the cultural heritage in a particular diocese, history of church building, education, conservation, legal matters, prevention of theft, movable and immovable colonial cultural objects, etc.

UST Museum

Another important adjunct to the promotion of the cultural heritage of the Church and its pedagogical role is the UST Museum.

Formally established in 1869, the UST Museum is considered as the oldest existing museum in the Philippines that is owned by the Dominicans. It was established to comply with 1865 Reglamento de Segunda Enseñanza that required all first-class colleges to have a Museo de Historia Natural. Originally located in old city in Intramuros, it was later transferred to its present site at the former *paraninfo*, a multi-purpose auditorium, of the main building that was constructed in 1928 in the now Sampaloc district of Manila.⁴²

Since its establishment up to the present, the Dominican fathers have continuously supervised and improved the museum.

The first director was Fr. Ramon Martinez Vigil, O.P. who later became Bishop of Oviedo, Spain. In 1883, he edited in Spain his work "Curso de Historia Natural" that he wrote while still in Manila. His work mentioned over one hundred references to the natural resources of the Philippines, and more than dozen mentions of the collection of the UST Museum. He was succeeded by Fr. Casto de Elera, O.P. who arrived in Manila in 1875. In 1881, he started teaching at the University of Santo

⁴² The University of Santo Tomas Museum, <https://ustmuseum.ust.edu.ph/>.

Tomas, as professor of Natural History and assumed the position of director of the museum. He reclassified the collections and started a system of intercommunication of data and exchange of specimens between the university and the best museums of the world. Furthermore, Fr. De Elera's main interest was the animal life in the Philippines. He organized field expeditions all over the Philippines to collect specimens. In the stocks of the UST Museum there are still many specimens, especially of very small, almost microscopic, shells, of butterflies, birds, etc. that have the field notes attached to them. A definite scientific work of his, and a catalogue at the same time of the animal specimens at the Museum of Santo Tomas is his monumental *Catalogo Sistemático de Toda la Fauna de Filipinas Conocida Hasta el Presente y Alavez de la Colección Zoológica del Museo del Colegio Universidad de Sto. Tomas de Manila – Manila – UST – 1895*.⁴³

In 1936, Fr. Silvestre Sancho, O.P., then Rector Magnificus of UST, ordered the transfer of the Museum from one corridor and two big salles of the University's original building in the old campus in the Walled City of Manila to the present location in the Main Building in Sampaloc. This new location was originally conceived as the theater or the *paraninfo*. This was a large, general-purpose area meant for important gatherings like the Rector's *Discurso de Apertura* to open the academic year, lectures, graduations, and concerts.

In 1937, an earthquake threatened the University's old main building in Intramuros with major damage. This resulted in great part of it being condemned and demolished, and the entire building to undergo a renovation. Subsequently, several black and dusty paintings had to be removed from the walls. Due to his curiosity, he had the paintings restored, that led to the discovery of important works of art, among them a painting by a student of Murillo. This occasioned Fr. Sancho to decide that something was needed to develop the state of art in the Philippines.

Hence, on July 25, 1940, the UST Museum's Art Gallery was formally opened to the public and in 1941 Fr. Sancho organized the First Annual National Painting Contest and began to acquire a quantity of masterpieces of Filipino artists for the Museum and the University. Following this event, the University was able to acquire works by such masters as Fernando Amorsolo, Vicente Manansala, Carlos "Botong" Francisco, and Galo Ocampo. Since then, the UST Museum entered a new phase; it was no longer a museum only for the sciences, but arts as well.

⁴³ Ibid.

During the Japanese occupation from 1941 to 1945, the grounds of the University were converted into an internment camp for civilians of Allied nationalities, but the Museum was preserved intact and respected by the Japanese authorities in deference to the neutrality of Spain. The Main Building was part of the internment camp and some internees requested permission to work on the collections of coins, shells, and rare books. At its peak, the Main Building housed some 3,000 civilian prisoners, a few of whom were allowed to work with the Museum's vast collection. Some of their names may still be found among the records, like Lois F. Croft, Agnes Day, William Ward, Marcella Butler, Senora Ryan, and a certain L. McCarty, who worked in the Museum from August 1942 to May 1943. Another internee named Leila Maynard subsequently wrote a book in which she recounted her experience of cataloging shells and rare books for the UST Museum. The Museum highlights the University's critical role during this period. After the Liberation in 1945, the museum re-opened to the public.

From 1958 to 1972, under the directorship of Fr. Jesus Ma. Merino Antolinez, O.P., the Museum's collections increased with the addition of archaeological specimens, the systematic replenishment of Ethnology, History, and Biology specimens, the establishment of the collection of Christian Art of the Philippines. It was a great insight when Fr. Merino realized the importance of religious images in the molding of Filipino religiosity. He undertook the collection of Philippine religious images of saints, which at that time were appreciated by very few people but which today have become quite precious as collectors' items.⁴⁴

From the early 1980s until 1994, Fr. Angel Aparicio, O.P. held the position of museum director. With the help of museum volunteers, he partially renovated the main gallery and reorganized the permanent exhibition of the collections on display. In 1981, he compiled articles about the various collections authored by some professors of the university, then edited and published them under the title, *The University of Santo Tomas Museum of Arts and Sciences*.⁴⁵

After finishing the course *Studi Superiore per Beni Culturali della Chiesa* from the Gregorian Pontifical University in Rome, Fr. Isidro Abaño, O.P. was appointed as the museum director in 1994. He occupies this office up to the present. However, Fr. Dennis Maquiraya, O.P. was appointed acting director, when Fr. Abaño took a leave to stay in Rome in 2000.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ecclesiastical Faculties, <https://www.ust.edu.ph/eccle/aparicio-angel-a/>.

In all modesty, since 1994 some significant initiatives have been undertaken by the director to further enhance the museum in terms of organization, facilities, and activities. First among them was the major renovation and refurbishing of the main gallery from 1997 to 1998.

It included the re-acquisition of some areas on the third floor of the main building that now serve as the office of the director, the small library, the storage, and small laboratory. With the addition of a catwalk and the transfer of some items to the storage, the spacious area at the center of the main gallery provides a very useful venue for activities such as thematic and seasonal exhibitions, concerts, lectures, shows, and many others. Later, two other areas were re-acquired and transformed in the present Hall of Philippine Religious Images where the *Santo* collection are on display and the *Gallery of the Visual Art* where the painting collection is permanently exhibited. To serve as guide, a catalogue of the painting collection was launched on January 17, 2011.

Under his directorship, the UST Museum initiated the opening of the Diploma and Master programs for the Cultural Heritage Studies in 2000 and the CCCPET in 2003. For some years, these two departments were directly supervised by the museum in cooperation with the Graduate School. Then, afterwards their supervision was directly placed under the Graduate School, although still coordinating some of their activities with the UST Museum.

Located at the TARC (St. Thomas Aquinas Research Complex) in the Graduate School, is the museum's laboratory for art conservation and restoration. The laboratory is a venue where the students of the MA program and allied courses can have actual experiences in handling art works for conservation and restoration under the expertise of a qualified professor. However, the bulk of its works involves the restoration and maintenance of the university's vast art collection that is under the responsibility of the museum. For extended services, it also accepts conservation and restoration jobs of art works from outside institutions and private collectors.

Under the category of an Ecclesiastical Museum, the UST Museum has been aware that its direction is for the purpose of evangelization. As in the words of St. John Paul II, "Museums of sacred art are not storehouses for inanimate finds, but enduring nurseries in which the genius and spirituality of the community of

believers is handed on.”⁴⁶ For the saintly pontiff, ecclesiastical museums, ecclesiastical libraries, and ecclesiastical archives are to be considered instruments of the new evangelization. And so, true to this noble objective, the UST Museum gives primary importance to exhibitions that “awaken spiritual inspiration and serve as interesting pages of catechesis and asceticism.”⁴⁷ First, it has areas of permanent display of religious images and paintings that have religious themes. Second, most of the thematic changing exhibitions dealt with faith and spirituality. In line with the formation of the clergy, worth mentioning is the exhibition “Handurawan: Discovering the Church Heritage of Panay” that was put up by the student-seminarians and religious in Christian Archeology class, as a final requirement after their educational tour in 2016.⁴⁸ Third, the UST Museum has been actively involved in the establishment of both ecclesiastical and civil museums. The Museum was responsible for the reconstruction and reorganization of the Museo de Nuestra Señora de Manaoag in Pangasinan, which was formally inaugurated on April 21, 2010 in time for the feast day of Our Lady. This coincided with the town’s fiesta, the 84th anniversary of the canonical coronation of the image of Our Lady of Manaoag and the 109th anniversary of the return of the Dominicans to Manaoag.⁴⁹ Another important task that was undertaken by the UST Museum was the upgrading and re-organizing in 2013 of the Lyceum of Aparri Museum that houses cultural objects from the different churches of the Archdiocese of Tuguegarao.

By reason of ownership, the collection and activities rooted on its mission, the UST Museum belongs to the typology of an Ecclesiastical museum.⁵⁰ Ecclesiastical museums, more than being under the authority of the Church, comprehend all museal institutions pertaining to diocese, parishes, sanctuaries, religious communities, seminaries, and other Church entities.⁵¹ Certainly, the UST Museum falls under the category of an Ecclesiastical museum for the reason that it was started by the Dominicans who have maintained it for unbroken succession of years. Moreover, it is one of the departments of the University of Santo Tomas that enjoy the title of being a Pontifical University.

⁴⁶ OR, No. 43, 2.

⁴⁷ OR, No. 43, 2.

⁴⁸ UMN, AY 2015-2016, 2nd term, 5.

⁴⁹ Archt. Clarissa L. Avendaño, “Renovating the Dominicans’ Museo de Nuestra Señora de Manaoag,” *Pintacasi*, vol. 7 (2011): 7.

⁵⁰ The Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church, *The Pastoral Function of Ecclesiastical Museums*, 15 August 2001, 2.3.1.

⁵¹ Fr. Isidro C. Abaño, O.P., “Museology and Ecclesiastical Museums,” *Pintacasi*, vol. 1 (2005): 18.

“At The End Of The Day”

The appreciation of the Cultural Heritage of the Church had its greatest moment during the reign of St. John Paul II who understood it well and saw the need to promote and utilize it in order to have a great, memorable, and lasting celebration of the Church’s jubilee in 2000. He believed that the immeasurable value of the celebration should depend also on the concrete cultural products that could attest to the unbroken history of the Church that derives its origin from the *Transitus Domini* in our human world. And, drawing from his personal experience, he considered the cultural heritage as an effective means to communicate the gospel message for the sake of authentic dialogue both inside and outside the Church. Thus, his initiative has been manifested in his well reflected documents and the establishment of the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church that did a great and wonderful job under the leadership of its first president, Cardinal Francesco Marchisano who personally came to the Philippines twice to grace the biennial conventions. However, the commission was aware that the initiatives of St. John Paul II could only become a reality if the cultural heritage was to be brought down to the grassroot level of the Christian community under the care and responsibilities of the local Church leaders who may need training and formation. The University of Santo Tomas was one of those who responded to the challenge.

There is no doubt that the University of Santo Tomas pioneered the formal formation of the candidates to the priesthood and religious life, those who are responsible and those who are simply interested with the subject matter of the Cultural Heritage of the Church. UST still continues to sustain the momentum by updating her academic program, not only in the Faculty of Sacred Theology but also in the Graduate School. UST is leading the trail in serving the Church’s concern for the cultural heritage ministry with end in view for formation, dialogue, and evangelization. On the occasion of the 500th year to commemorate the coming of Christianity in this country, UST has trained already quite a number of clergy with knowledge on the cultural heritage of the Church in the Philippines that is at the very core of a very meaningful memorable celebration. With these pioneering endeavors, UST as a Dominican educational institution adds again to the numerous grace-filled achievements of the Order and, thus, this is another important reason for a meaningful celebration of the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Dominican Province of the Philippines that was formally inaugurated on December 8, 1971.

The availability of allied departments such as the Graduate School, CCCPET, UST Museum, UST Archives and Library provides a wide range of opportunities to

enhance the knowledge of those in formation and those who are tasked to train them. Their training is enhanced by those who have expertise in the practice of cultural heritage. Thus, UST can provide experts to assist in their formation.

Other future directions can be suggested to include the following: firstly, a survey has to be conducted as to the present works of the graduates, especially in their pastoral undertakings or in institutions of formation. There is a need to form formators and educators who really understand this area for them to handle both the experiential and academic training of the candidates. Secondly, schedule of exposures such as educational tour should be carried out at a proper timing considering the requirements of the sites to be visited and the disposition of the host. Thirdly, those in authority should be encouraged more to update their understanding of the Cultural Heritage of the Church, and though varied in their approaches, these should harmonize their activities.^{PS}

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