

“LA FILOSOFÍA ES COMO LA RAÍZ, LA BASE Y LA RAZÓN DE SER
DE LAS DEMÁS CIENCIAS.”

DISCURSO

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DE LA

REAL Y PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD DE SANTO TOMÁS DE MANILA

EL DÍA 3 DE JULIO DE 1882

FOR EL

RDO. P. FR. NORBERTO DEL PRADO

DEL ORDEN DE PREDICADORES

PROFESOR EN LA MISMA UNIVERSIDAD

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MANILA

ESTABLECIMIENTO TIPOGRÁFICO DEL COLEGIO DE STO. TOMÁS

Á CARGO DE D. GERVASIO MEMIJE

1882

FOREWORD

PHILOSOPHY IS LIKE THE ROOT, THE BASE, AND THE REASON OF BEING OF THE OTHER SCIENCES

Belen Lorezca-Tangco, OP

Rev. Fr. Norberto del Prado of the Order of Preachers, (OP) addressed the representatives of the Academic Community of the Royal and Pontifical University of Santo Tomas on the occasion of the Annual Opening of Academic Year. He called them “the representatives of knowledge and of letters.” He underscored though that he was focusing more on the students as he started his discourse on the significance of Philosophy.

The children of yesterday are the youth of today, and the youth of today would be the grown men of tomorrow; and as learned men, they are the most influential in the movement of society, giving the tone in all things, same in the good and in the bad. Thence, come the greatest interest and the importance truly transcendental in the literary Education of the youth.

The moral progress of towns is the reflection of its intellectual progress; which prints its direction and tendencies to material progress; and, the three, together united, constitute the true civilization. The predominance over the natural, gathering great number of means to help out in meeting the necessities of life; the predominance over ignorance and errors, treasuring big number of truths; and the predominance over the passions and inclinations of a twisted heart, acquiring in more perfect grade great number of virtues. It has been here that the well being, the peace, and the repose are encrypted as much in society as in the individuals composing it.

Material progress of a Christian will have been drained when clothed anew with a glorious and immortal body, inaccessible to the conditions of pain, absolutely dominating an estate in the skies, and the earth and all the elements of nature. Intellectual progress will touch its ultimate limit with the clear vision of God in Whom all things will be perfectly known. And moral progress will have reached the summit of perfection upon seeing God, loving Him with eternal love. He, by essence, is Holiness. In this manner, material progress, intellectual progress, and moral progress, upon reaching their fulness, are identified as one; these are the same and one thing, consistently in the perfect possession of God.

God is the beginning, the center, and the end of a true and only progress. From God we come and to God we go. Everything that leads us to God is good. It is progress. Everything that keeps us away from Him is positively bad. It is retrogression. For this, material progress has to be subordinated to moral progress: the contrary leads to huge evils. Nothing could be worse than a wildly civilized one. But this healthy subordination, beneficiary and necessary for peace and well being of society, has to come from intellectual progress, to say, from ideas, from

truth, from doctrines, from goodness of scientific and literary education: the moral world is always the reflection of the intellectual world. By this, great before God and before men is the ministry of those who teach others the truth, and because it is yet a much greater responsibility before the tribunal of Jesus Christ and before the tribunal of history, of those who direct and oversee teaching, and of those who instead of protecting it put obstacles to that direction and that vigilance.

The Magisterium refers to the Church of Jesus Christ. To Her is the reign of intelligences and to Her alone has been conceded the power to teach all truth to peoples. The Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church is the pillar, firmament, and the Teacher of Truth.

Pope Leo XIII had stated, "Civil society and Domestic help which are found to be in grave danger as we all know, due to dominance of perverse opinions, would certainly be living more secure and calm, and secure if, in the academes, Universities and the rest of teaching Centres, the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas are taught, which works are healthiest and most conformed to the Magisterium of the Church."

Intending to save society from grave danger, the Vicar of Christ puts very special effort to improve higher studies and to restore, above all, the philosophical sciences. This could be brought about by teaching the Philosophy of the Angelic Doctor in all schools. The University studies would not flourish until the Angel of Schools returns to preside over the seats in class halls. As Pope Leo XIII stated thus:

all sciences, even physical sciences which are appreciated today will receive great help and should expect increased help and great advantages from the restoration of philosophical sciences, as proposed. It is the restoration of the good and solid Philosophy, the purest Philosophy in its doctrines, the richest of truths, the widest and highest in sights, most correct and universal in its principles and consequences, and most vast in end, and most profound, and most excellent among all Philosophies. It is the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas.

The Royal and Pontifical University of Santo Tomas avers that the Lecturer can, by glorifying herself for having obtained her Patron, the Model of the wise, by celebrating literary evenings to extol his memory, and by writing scientific journals of appreciable merit to promote his doctrines. The Feast of the Angelic Doctor, Patron of the University, was properly highlighted in Fr. Norberto del Prado's Opening Discourse.

The renowned Lecturer tackled the various branches of human wisdom. Comparing the human science with the science of angel and with science of God, he indicated the place where Philosophy occupies among branches of human knowledge. To concretize his thoughts, he stated that Philosophy is like the root, the base, and the reason of being of the other sciences, but it needs to turn to the light of the divine teachings.

The total and complete science is the certain and evident knowledge, adequate and comprehensive in all things with its essences and properties, with its causes and effects, with its principles and consequences, with relations which mutually unite them and enchain them and together straighten them, and walk towards God, Supreme Principle from whom one

proceeds, and ultimately ends where one turns and stops all that be. Perfect science is the real order entirely transported to the ideal order; it is the same reality of things; the sphere of thought photographed and faithfully reproduced. These are the same things that live, and have being, and exist in excellent, delicate and highest manner in the understanding of natural spiritualities: God, angel, and man.

When one talks of God, the language of mortals, for sublime and eloquent reason that could be, will never have perfect signification nor completely adequate sense. The most inspired songs of a poet are deaf murmurs and inarticulated words; and the most lofty concepts of a philosopher simulate ideas which by colors and by light would have been formed blind from birth. The things that touch Divinity are about all language and about all sense, and about all intelligence: indescribable, highest and incomprehensible.

Before undertaking the study of beings, their properties and their relations in particular, it is useful, most important, indispensable to have a scientific knowledge of beings, their properties and their relations in general. The study of Philosophy is necessary to acquire with perfection the lower sciences and to enable them to resolve the scientific demonstrations in their ultimate principles. Without the lights that spread the questions on Metaphysics, understanding walks like groping in all classes of speculations, ignoring the height in which it is met and not knowing in a certain manner the point where it leads itself. Nobody without profound knowledge of Philosophy, deserves with Justice the glorious renaming as “sabio” or “wise” because nobody without Philosophy would be able to perfectly know the relations which unite some sciences with the others, and all of these with Metaphysics possessing a certain and evident knowledge of things by means of superior causes.

The study of Philosophy gives clarity to our ideas, rectitude to our judgments, solidity to our reasonings, amplitude in sight to our spirit, and maturity and weight to all appreciations.

In general, Metaphysics, the tree of the sciences has hidden deep roots, and Philosophy becomes the trunk from which all branches of human wisdom derive in one way more or less directly and immediately, and where, in certain ways they meet and link.

Even if it would be impossible to discover for what mysterious ways the arts and the sciences unite and are linked, even though it would not be dipping into the field of human understanding to see the identity of its origin and contemplate the simplicity of its directions and reach perfect unity, absolute and transcendental among the different branches of knowledge, it would always be certain, as such by all admitted, that Philosophy, understanding it in its object the special objects of the other sciences and examining these from viewpoint so high and brilliant cannot less exercise over these most notable influence, and powerfully contribute to their progress and development. Philosophy considers the causes of the causes, finds the reason for the reason, and investigates the ultimate reasons of everything.

Philosophy, descending from the hills of General Metaphysics, goes paving the land to the lower sciences, and later giving solution to the more transcendental problems related to God, to man, and to the universe, taking all avenues to the truth and tracing its direction and itinerary to the different branches of knowledge.

Philosophy covers the land and penetrates the sky, scrutinizes the secrets of the material world and the mysteries of the world of spirits, runs towards God and investigates all the supreme causes. Philosophy directs and drives man to the possession of the truth, strengthens and perfects its faculties, ordains and regulates its actions to the light of right reason and in harmony with its ultimate end who is God. It conveniently prepares courage to receive the revelation, paves and facilitates the way to the true faith, and defends it against the attacks of the heretics and, in the end, serves the faith with powerful assistance systematizing the revealed truths by way of Theology to which it lends its scientific body.

Philosophy sustains all sciences with its right hand, and to all the arts, protects and directs with its left hand; to the sciences, giving these the general principles that direct them, and to the arts dictating them laws that govern them. Because as the supreme and universal principles, regulators of human intelligence, have their seat in Philosophy, the lower principles and less universals receive from her all the light, intelligibility and certainty; and that, according to the profound expression of Leo XIII, "on Philosophy depends in great part the right teaching of the other sciences, and from Philosophy, like in regulatory science, all the good arts were accustomed to drinking healthy teaching and right method, and the spirit drinks from her like in common fountain of life." All the sciences and all the arts prosper and flourish when united with Philosophy and directed by its inspiration, feel its benevolent influence; all of them shine with inextinguishable brightness when they are pinned and crinkled in her royal robe of precious stones.

The supernatural truths of the revelation are, for Philosophy, a golden crown and a diadem of beauty. If all branches of human knowledge surrender vassalage to Philosophy, this in turn ought to pay tribute and obedience to Theology. If Philosophy is the queen and lady of the sciences and of the arts, Theology is the crown of all gifts and grandeurs of the spirit rendering elevation to science, and amplitude to reason. **PS**

Norberto del Prado Fernandez, OP(1852-1918)

A native of Lorio, town of Labiana (Asturias), Rev. Fr. Norberto del Prado Fernandez, OP, was born on June 4, 1852, received his habit in the Convent of Sto. Domingo de Ocana on September 13, 1868, made his Simple Profession there on December 8, 1869 and his Solemn Profession on December 12, 1872. He was studying Theology, second year, when he arrived in Manila, where he most brilliantly finished his ecclesiastical course in the University of Santo Tomas. In the meantime, he received the Holy Orders: the first haircut and four minor orders on December 19, 1873, the following day the subdiaconate, the diaconate on June 19, 1874 and on June 13, 1875, he received priesthood from the hands of the illustrious Dominican Mons. Francisco Gainza, Bishop of Nueva Caceres (Philippines). He was assigned as Professor of secondary education to the Colegio de San Juan de Letran (Manila), where he resided for three years (1875-1878). In 1878, he was transferred to the University of Santo Tomas as Reader of Philosophy and Director of Colleges (1881). From 1884, he was Professor of Theology, Secretary of the Council of Discipline of the University, and Chronicle of the Province. With Master's and Doctorate degree in Philosophy (1878) and Theology (1887), in the meantime, he was promoted to the Department of Vespers. Having been gravely affected in health during

the academic course in 1889-1890, it was necessary for him to return to the Peninsula. He spent some seasons in Asturias and others in Cadiz, and he was able to satisfactorily recover his health. His fame as excellent Professor and great Theologian did not remain confined in the Philippines and that, in 1891, by designation of Most Reverend Master of the Order, he was assigned as Theology Professor in the Catholic University of Freiburg (Switzerland). He was entrusted with the Professorship of Vespers, or superior course of Moral Theology, that he directed until 1899. In that year, he was promoted to professorship of prima (dogma) performing it until his death. He also lectured on some courses of Metaphysics and Mystical Theology. He was named Master of Theology by the Most Reverend P. Cormier, Master of the Order, on March 22, 1906. He was Diffinitor for the Province in the General Chapter in Viterbo (Italy) in 1907. His fame in professorship and in Thomistic Theology was universally recognized, not only by his classes, but also, and above all, in his writings. With reason, the appellation "divus Thomas redivivus" (St. Thomas recycling) was applied to him. He spent his days in the monotonous task of Professor, Researcher, and Writer, as model to the Religious, "exclusively dedicated to God, to the Church, to the Order, and to his disciples." He was one of the great figures of Theology in the first half of 20th century, "a cultivator and exhibitor of Theology and of Philosophy of a high level, so profound and of so much merit like our great theologians and philosophers of the sixteenth (XVI) century;" like a Thomist who has a place of honor among the grand commentators of all times. One important facet of Fr. Norberto was being a Preacher, and, as such, he enjoyed great fame for the composition, the argumentation, and the style of his oratorical pieces. His homilies are of the best values and beautiful pieces which in sacred oratory were written in Spain at the end of the nineteenth (XIX) century and the first years of the twentieth (XX) century. Same as St. Thomas, he was the center of his academic activity, the Rosary his favorite theme in his preaching. He died with a death of the righteous in the University of Freiburg on July 13, 1918 (A-1922-E)

Writings: Relación entre la filosofía y la teología (discurso de apertura del año académico en la universidad de Sto. Tomás) Manila 1882; Panegírico sobre San Francisco, Manila 1883; Las Corporaciones Religiosas (Discurso pronunciado en Manila), 1886; Panegírico de San Vicente de Paúl, Manila 1885; Panegírico de Sto. Tomás de Aquino ante el Claustro Universitario, Manila 1889; Panegírico de San Alfonso Rodríguez, Manila 1890 (todos estos trabajos magistrales fueron impresos en la imp. de Sto. Tomás, Manila); Guadalete y Covadonga, Vergara 1896; Sermón a la Orden Tercera de Avila, Madrid 1892; Sermón sobre Nuestra Señora de Covadonga, Oviedo 1895; De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio, Friburgo 1907 (3 vols.); De Veritate fundamentali Philosophiae Christianae Friburgo 1911; Sto. Tomás y la Inmaculada, Vergara 1912; Enseñanzas del Rosario, Vergara 1913 (3 vols.); Escoto y Sto. Tomás, Madrid 1914; El Problema Ontológico (con otros artículos), Vergara 1915; San Agustín, Doctor de la Iglesia, Vergara 1916; De concordia Liberi Arbitrii cum divina motione 1903; De natura Physica Praemotionis, 1902-1903; Apuntes de sus clases en Friburgo; Artículos sobre el P. Ceferino, Balmes, etc.; La verdad fundamental de la filosofía cristiana (Ciencia Tomista), 1910; Más sermones, discursos, etc. (Imp. en diferentes lugares y en el tiempo que fueron pronunciados o escritos); Artículos, en diversas revistas científicas, etc. (Más de 54 obras en un catálogo completo (MV V 54-66) (Cf. Manuel González Pola, "La obra literaria del P. Norberto del Prado OP," en *Philippiniana Sacra*, Manila, 1968, pp. 210-252. En este trabajo completo sobre el tema se citan, por orden cronológico y temático, hasta 208 publicaciones del P. Norberto, entre libros, artículos, etc.).

Source: *Misioneros Dominicos en el extremo Oriente 2 1836-1946*, Eladio Neira, OP; Hilario Ocio, OP; Gregorio Arnaiz, OP; pp. 173-174.