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An exciting time to be alive
Touchstone, the word, is taken from the coffee table book entitled “Adamson University: 75 Touchstones at Year 75.” Originally, it was a hard black stone, such as jasper or basalt, used to test the quality of gold or silver by comparing the streak left on the stone by one of these metals with that of a standard alloy. It came to mean an excellent quality or example that is used to test the excellence or genuineness of others, a yardstick, a criterion. In a more loose sense, it can mean quality itself, a highlight or an important feature or milestone of anything, and in our case, in the life of our organization which is Adamson University.

Touchstone, the magazine, features selected write-ups, articles, and photos done by our faculty, administrators, and employees.

- RDA

Traditionally here in Adamson we celebrate Teachers’ Day in October to coincide with the United Nation’s Declaration of Teachers’ Day and every last week of January, Catholic Educators’ Day. This day is supposed to coincide with the Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas, the patron saint of Catholic teachers. His feast day is on January 28.
Today we celebrate the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. It is the only feast day in the Church’s calendar where we celebrate a conversion. The Church instituted this feast because it was St. Paul’s conversion that actually became the start of the spreading of the Gospel especially to those outside the Jewish faith. In a sense, it was through St. Paul’s conversion that we came to know about our faith.

Today also marks the birthday of the Congregation of the Mission. It was on this day in 1617 that St. Vincent de Paul preached his first mission sermon in the pulpit of a tiny church owned by the Di Gondi family in their estate in Folleville, southern France. That mission sermon gave birth to a community of priests and brothers that was later called the Congregation of the Mission. The motto he gave his community was “He sent me to preach the Good News to the poor,” (Lk: 4:18). Our mission as Vincentians is therefore to preach the Gospel or to evangelize through our ministry of word, sacrament, action and presence. This evangelizing mission underlies all that we are and all that we do; it is the rationale behind our identity and mission. You can rightly say that the initials C.M. after our names stand for Community for the Mission because this is our identity. This is also the overriding reason why we, the Vincentians, decided to administer Adamson University. We wanted to make it a venue by which we could evangelize students especially the socially disadvantaged.

We are all aware that Catholic schools are privileged places of evangelization. According to the Declaration on Christian Education: Among all educational instruments the school has a special importance.(19) It is designed not only to develop with special care the intellectual faculties but also to form the ability to judge rightly, to hand on the cultural legacy of previous generations, to foster a sense of values, to prepare for professional life. (Gravissimum Educ, 5).

Pope Benedict XVI also writes: “Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News. First and foremost every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth (cf. Spe Salvi, 4).” This relationship elicits a desire to grow in the knowledge and understanding of Christ and his teaching. In this way those who meet Him are drawn by the very power of the Gospel to lead a new life characterized by all that is beautiful, good, and true; a life of Christian witness nurtured and strengthened within the community of our Lord’s disciples, the Church. (Message of Pope Benedict XVI to American Educators, University of America, April 17, 2008)

And the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II) whose 20th anniversary we celebrate this year has this to say about Catholic schools:

“Catholic educational institutions have been making a distinct contribution to the total well-being of our country. It is impossible to think of the Philippines becoming what it is today without their contribution. Catholic schools, colleges and universities are among the best educational institutions in the land (PCP II, 622).”

But how do we fulfill the mission of evangelizing of a Catholic school? Let me offer three ways.

1. Learn our faith.

I believe the first characteristic of an evangelizing school is its provision of religious instruction in its curriculum. Non-sectarian schools do not have religion or theology or Christian Living in their curriculum. In Catholic schools, faith formation is not only part of the curriculum; it is supposed to be the core or center of the curriculum.

A Catholic school has to provide “a systematic understanding of the link between faith and life... The classroom provides an opportunity to understand the person through the prism of the various academic fields, with faith as the integrating factor. The school further provides the venue for a systematic reflection of one’s experiences of being evangelized by others, such as the family and parish” (PCP II, no. 626). In other words, faith formation should be the integrating factor in the school curriculum. Said differently, it means that our religious instruction such as is given in Christian Living and Theology courses should be the core of our curriculum and the most important subject in our schools in order to create an authentic Catholic culture.

“For a school to really evangelize the academic community,” PCP II observes, “religion must be the core curriculum that should inform all other courses.” It should not be “relegated as simply one of the many courses” or a minor subject that students in Catholic schools have to take. The result of this misalignment is a “dichotomized perception of faith and life, and the lack of appreciation of the significance of faith in life.” (PCP II, 628)

I notice that many, if not most of our students (and perhaps even our faculty) do not take their theology...
Immersion: A Dialogue of Life

By Roel Delfin

Given a choice, the picture of unsettling and depressing poverty is one that some of us would not even want to have the slightest glimpse of. Perhaps the ugliest of words one can use to describe it would only sound like an understatement. Perhaps then it is forgivable not to try to have a peek into this seemingly completely different world for some of us who are ourselves from the connection we have to the material possessions that set some of us apart, or so we thought to have set us apart, we can find our common humanity. Amidst the dirty environment, amidst the relentless noise that comes from everyone, everywhere and everything and stale smell that hangs thick in the air are real people with real stories to tell. They are people with genuine aspirations for a better life who in spite of their difficult situations have learned to smile and still be happy. They are faced with seemingly unending daily insurmountable predicaments of their own but still are able to commit a part of themselves to the service of others. Perhaps it is a good thing to realize a glimpse of something beautiful and indomitable within us all—hope and greatness of the human spirit.

Marvin and Sheila are a young couple with two small children. The oldest is a three-year-old girl and the youngest a boy aged two. The family is very welcoming to their humble home. “Sirs, please have a seat. I’m sorry the place is full of clutter,” Marvin said with a shy smile as the two cute toddlers stand by the corner near the thin plywood that serves as a door cover, smiling as the youngest clings to his sister’s hands and from time to time bursting into a little laugh, shyly glancing at me and Ole. My eyes wander to have a quick survey of the narrow space of the house, its walls all made of rough hollow blocks, and only rusty tin for a roof that has no ceiling at all. Then I notice the thin plastic curtain tied at both ends with a straw that serves as partition of the house, connected to the head of two nails at both sides of the wall. Shelia comes in and says “Hi!” with a big smile. I ask them politely, “How’s life here?” A little chat reveals that the couple has no permanent means of livelihood. The husband has not even finished high school. Sometimes he gets to earn some money for his family at a trucking company but work doesn’t come regularly, so they have to “tighten their belt” until a new opportunity for work comes along for him. I thought to myself: How tight? Two kids?! A family to raise?! Must be hard to breathe! This time I noticed the two kids now running inside the house playing and laughing heartily, with another small girl from the next house, seemingly used to their guests’ faces already. The atmosphere in the house is very light and filial. I can tell

It is heartwarming to realize that we have a capacity to care, contribute in a positive way to other people’s lives, and give others hope and inspiration even amidst our very own predicaments.
from their faces and hear from their voices that they are a loving and happy family. Perhaps one can get used to poverty and just deal with it or perhaps one can really be happy even with the lack of material things.

Our stomachs start grumbling even as we tell the family not to bother anymore to prepare food for us. As I and two other friends stroll along the dark and tambay-filled main street and then through some narrow alleys looking for a turo-turo to have our dinner, we finally found one, with some help from kids who are still hanging around. “Actually you cannot really get hungry in here,” I tell my friends. There are small sari-sari stores everywhere. I can even see a bakery and countless ihaw-ihaw stands at every corner. Waiting for my sticks of isaw, tengas, and adiadas, I ask the manang tending and fanning the sticks of meat vigorously how long she has been selling barbeque. She said she’s been selling for as long as she can remember. She has four kids who go to a nearby elementary school and her husband has no permanent job at the moment. She sells barbeque at the same corner every day from dusk until late night or until all the sticks of barbeque have been sold. She said she just has to help support her family and selling barbeque is the only way she knew how. Then she adds smiling, “Maybe one day I will get lucky and get my children to finish their education.” As I eat my sticks of ihaw-ihaw, I thought to myself, Manang was right; we just have to aspire and hope for the best while doing what we can in any given situation, be it poverty or something else. Life is like a stick of isaw, fan it vigorously from time to time, get choked by thick and dark smoke, and just wait till you get to taste it - my version of a famous line from Forrest Gump!

Still, there are others who just don’t wait for things to happen. Among them was Ate Dory, who is already in her mid-sixties but still an image of youthful energy, compassion, and sincere willingness to serve others. Although her house is far better looking compared to most of the houses in the area, Ate Dory is not insensitive to the plight of her neighbors. Despite her age and her own problems in her household, she still manages to give part of herself to people who were once homeless like her, visiting them, giving voice to their plight and needs, and organizing activities to uplift the quality of their lives. There is genuine happiness in her actions and it is undeniable. Her compassion makes others happy, and that same feeling of happiness also glows in her. Perhaps the Dalai Lama was right when he said, “If you want others to be happy, practice compassion; if you want to be happy, practice compassion.” It is heartwarming to realize that we have a capacity to care, contribute in a positive way to other people’s lives, and give others hope and inspiration even amidst our very own predicaments.

“Mahirap ang maging mahirap” (It is hard to be poor). You can hear that cliché in TV tearjerkers and melodramatic Pinoy movies. But try hearing the same line from someone who has been poor all his life and you will get the real essence of the statement.

An overnight communion with our less fortunate countrymen in Bulacan is an experience that stirs different kinds of thoughts and feelings among us who joined the immersion - well, mostly uncomfortable and disturbing. But in the shambles of poverty are people — real people who teach us that we all can be happy no matter what, that we can aspire and hope for a better life - better than our current situation, and that no one is so poor that he cannot care for and be compassionate towards others.

“If you want others to be happy, practice compassion; if you want to be happy, practice compassion.”

Dalai Lama

The author is an MBA student at Adamson University. This piece was originally submitted for his Vincentian Heritage class under Fr. Gregg L. Bañaga, Jr., C.M.
Thank you so much for such a warm welcome.

Thank you Rev. Father Bañaga, Dean Marquez, Jen Derillo, and to the other Adamson University faculty and administrators who had a hand in selecting me for your first Media Award.

I think this award may be more a reflection of you than it is of me. You could have chosen someone more popular, the star of a prime-time show.

I have family members with close ties to the university who rendered many years of service here. One of my uncles, Attorney Pons Subido, was for many years the dean of your law school. My granduncle Jose Certeza taught architecture here for many years, and an uncle, Carlos Certeza, taught Spanish here. Those three are not only smart but among the most decent people I know.

I still don’t think I deserve this award over colleagues who have done as much and even more. But I will humbly accept it because it will help me mark a milestone year, for me and much more importantly, for the country.

I’m turning 50 this year, a time for reflection for most people who reach this age. I knew people close to me who never lived this long, so I have much to be thankful for.

I will be the first to admit that much of my professional success has been due to the good fortune of having talented colleagues, who have made me and my work look good.

One of those colleagues is here today, my longtime cameraman Egay Navarro, one of the best in the country, and perhaps in the world. Stand up Egay! Salamat, Egay.

One of the other things I have always been thankful for is the lucky coincidence that I was born exactly 100 years after Rizal. So as I mark one personal milestone, we can all mark Rizal’s 150th birthday this year.

We all know what Rizal did in founding our nation. But for an aging journalist like me, Rizal has a special significance because he taught us the value of freedom, especially the freedom to speak truth to power. For a journalist, freedom is like oxygen.

Freedom is also the theme in another national milestone this year—the 25th year after the EDSA Revolution.

Some skeptics would rather call it the EDSA Revolt, as if it only led to a...
change in leaders and not in our social system.

I like to think that there are two kinds of revolutions, the fast and bloody kind, and the ones on a slow burn.

Our revolution is still unfolding. The 1986 EDSA Revolution gave us back our freedom to speak out and the power to choose our leaders.

But the EDSA Revolution also gave enormous, nearly unlimited, power to the mass media, almost an institutional monopoly on the power to disseminate large volumes of information to the public.

That’s why I think we are living through another revolution today, a revolution brought about by technology.

With cell phone cameras in your hands, you can immediately send evidence of wrongdoing to the public at large, even bypassing traditional media if you wish. In a way, each of you is breaking up the monopoly on information controlled by the mass media.

You can publish your ideas on the Internet without our help. You can engage in debate with strangers.

As so-called citizen journalists, you can influence policy and public discourse by letting the sun shine in dark, secret places. Sunshine is still the best disinfectant, especially if the source comes from millions of suns.

So the freedom given back to us in 1986, coupled with the amazing possibilities of technology give ordinary Filipinos today a kind of political power very hard to imagine when I began my journalism career 23 years ago.

Yet most of us know what Spiderman’s uncle said, with great power comes great responsibility.

Power is a double-edged sword, because we can wield our newfound power to malign others, spread lies, and otherwise harm society and other people.

The kind of restraint and discipline and thoughtfulness that will prevent us from abusing the power in our hands… can only come from enlightenment—the upbringing that we get from our parents and the education we get from quality universities, like this one.

The best use of power in my opinion is service. It need not be public service right away. It can simply be service to family.

There is no better way of learning the documentary craft than to be the documentalist of your family. That’s how I learned to wield the power of technology.
Some Sigh(t)s Along Roxas

By Prof. Radney Ranario

Some morning, when light streaks benignly on the window curtains, laps unto the limbs and is soft and warm on the flesh, I am awakened nimbly by the thought of walking. All else is dulled by this idea that, with a briskness I seldom possess, I abandon the blanket about the bed and leave everything to a minute’s whim. Whereas I have in time prospered with tidiness and grown with the habit of order, I am, for strange reasons, lured by a sudden sense of disorder outside—an anomaly, I suspect.

At six, I hit the road with a resolve: walk the good walk and be gay. Gaiety, I think, has lightness that far outweighs heft. When I feel the ground beneath me and consciousness is lost between strides, solitude breezes through past the pores of the senses. I am alive. From UN Avenue, lined by concrete that sidles close to one another, I cross to the other side without haste and feel the air. A slew of cars drive by noiselessly, tearing at the smog that is fast gathering. Already, I sense a crisp wind on my face. I like it when the air is thick and dense and seems pressed on my face. It wakes my sluggish bones and redirects my perspective. From time to time, I feel dulled by a drudgery of work, of crowded rooms where discourses are fixed. On Camus, Sartre, Barthes, and poetry which, at times, we construe as panacea for our hunger.
A racy brew from Starbucks in the corner wafts and I begin to thirst. The sea glints on my right and is made picturesque by a solitary ship anchored on the far stretch of the water. Not long ago, this bayside area along Roxas, which extends up to the CCP complex, was riddled with lovers and snatchers; lovers who snatched the hours to melt themselves, and snatchers who loved to cavort with peril. People used to shun them, as if disgraced by their presence. Now, one will opt to forget and rid of that past. For in this country, forgetting is a habit. It is an excuse. When one is asked why s/he never learns from the past, s/he will more likely be stumped and not know what to say. S/he forgets. Now, colored bricks take the place of sand and mud. Glossy tiles surround some rows of coconut trees. Revos and Alises litter the place; their owners sporting Nike shirts and seeing the sea in Oakley shades. The beneficence of the reddish sun about to swim is something to ponder. But often, banality keeps its course and brushes aside our appreciation of the ordinary. I do not know what sights the Oakley affords or what riches it misses.

I thirst. My throat dries up badly. The sight of buko huddled in a cart opposite the gate of the Manila Yacht Club prods me on. I quicken my pace, swipe off my forehead with the back of my hand, kick the air and go.

"Buko, boss?" the tiendo asks when I approach. His toothless grin seems to hide his own thirst. "Iba," I say. He grips his bolo, tosses the buko in his hand and presses it against the wooden board. The sharp edge slices at the shell and punctures a hole the size of my mouth. I take the buko in my palm, lift it to my mouth and gulp. I do not care how it tastes. All I need is something for my throat. Buco reminds me of my childhood, of some thick reeds and grass among coconuts and crops. I used to run too in a clearing my father swiped clean, chasing grasshoppers. Now, I do not exactly know what I chase or what chases me. It may be the view of the sea or something, quaint and familiar. I enjoy the sea more than the weed-riddled bushes. The vast and marvelous stretch beyond the thin line at the far edge of the blue slopes overwhelms me. Nature is a grand canvass. Its beneficence indelibly etches itself in the heart of its seer. For sure, I have not forgotten. But these strangers in the bayside areas are rather queer. They come with their SUV's, park them nearby, sit lazily in the iron benches, fold their arms across their chests and chat. They are often oblivious to the people around. Lost, it seems, in the world behind their colored spectacles. I have seen one of them brush aside a little boy whose arms were outstretched.

The Cultural Center of the Philippines stands majestic from across. Its box-like figure, enmeshed in the luxury afforded by lavish patrons, is, as always, breathlessly solid and solitary. I walk slowly toward the side of the road thinking on one end of the pleasure this stroll gives me and on the other, the pain it induces. Not that it is physically tiring but that by nature, walking goads a hiker to self-possession and asceticism so that s/he loses tract of the strides eventually. The exertion of the mind takes precedence and presses on her/him the many contradictions of her/his personal and social existence. The buko juice keeps me to my feet. I move towards the Folk Arts Theater where I intend to rest a little before proceeding. I reach the façade of the Cultural Center just fine.

The fountain shoots up water, which falls briskly and disturbs the otherwise placid surface below.

Walking serves me well, I think. But there are always moments when, waiting for a ride back to U.N., the sight of mothers and children in tattered, holed shirts freezes me. They run to and fro, arms outstretched, knock on the back of passengers, cling to the edge of their jeans, pick up a coin flung to the black, hard asphalt, and move about. In such occasions, I cross to the other side of the road mindlessly. These rather odd, life-sized figures of a slew of Madonna and Child gall me.

Head bowed, I finally take an old, cranky shuttle bound for the main road, which, quite queerly, seems to swallow anyone in its path. I shall have time to walk again when the urge is there. And gladly, I will hit the road as usual. But for sure, it will be elsewhere. I want it badly to be elsewhere.

Prof. Ranario finished his MFA in Creative Writing at De La Salle University. He teaches literature in the Foreign Languages Department.
classes seriously; they think it is one of the minor subjects they have to take before they can proceed to the major courses. I hope our teachers of Christian Living and Theology are also making every effort to communicate the faith as a living encounter with God and not a “transmission of doctrine very much like an academic subject dissociated from considerations of morality and elements of worship.” (PCP II, 629)

2. Live our faith.

It is not enough to just learn about our faith; we have to make it felt or “tangible.” “Is faith tangible in our universities and schools?” asks Pope Benedict XVI in his message to Catholic educators at the Catholic University of America in 2008. “Is it given fervent expression liturgically, sacramentally, through prayer, acts of charity, a concern for justice, and respect for God’s creation?” (Message to American Educators in the Catholic University of America on April 17, 2008 by Pope Benedict XVI)

Among the things the Pope mentions to make our faith tangible and alive are the following:

Fervor in our liturgical and prayer celebrations. Making effort to attend masses on campus and on special occasions or feastdays. Participating actively in masses by responding, singing and doing the appropriate gestures. Praying devotedly before classes. Engaging in quiet prayer at the prayer room at the back of the chapel. Attending recollections and other liturgical celebrations organized by the Campus Ministry Office.

Doing acts of charity. Being charitable and loving in our relationships with one another. Taking care of each other. Assisting our needy and less fortunate students. Involving ourselves in charitable work and assistance to the poor. Volunteering in any of the outreach programs of the Integrated Community Extension Services Office.

Concern for justice. Making a stand against injustice, corruption and violations of human rights. Speaking out for victims of injustice, displaced farmers, OFWs, and other socially disadvantaged groups. Living a life of integrity and honesty and teaching these values to our students.

Respect for God’s creation. Taking care of Mother Earth by preserving and enhancing our environment. Being responsible in keeping our campus and the surrounding streets clean, orderly and green.

“Only in this way,” concludes Pope Benedict XVI, “do we really bear witness to the meaning of who we are and what we uphold.” (Ibid)

3. Proclaim our faith

Learning about our faith and living it leads to proclaiming or witnessing to it—both inside the campus and outside. Perhaps this is the most challenging aspect of our Catholic life. Yet, it is also the most powerful means of communicating our faith and creating a Catholic culture within our campus. “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers,” Pope Paul VI remarks, “and if he does listen to teachers, it is also because they are witnesses” (Evangelization in the Modern World, 41). In today’s world of conflicting values that compete for the attention of our students, they are looking for role models to emulate. When we, their teachers live our Catholic values, they come to realize that the values that we preach are not abstract and impossible ideals to live by. They need women and men who will inspire them to live their faith. They are always in search of role models. Then when they graduate from the university they will remember to live out their faith and witness to it in their daily lives because they have seen us do it. Remember, as they say, Christianity is caught, not taught. We have to walk the talk and be credible witnesses to our students. Jesus in the Gospel today urges us his followers to go out and preach the Gospel to everyone and to those who believe. He assures us that miracles and wondrous signs like healing, driving out demons and the like will accompany our faithful preaching. We need not go far; within our campus we can and are called to share our faith, to witness to it and to evangelize others by our words, actions and presence.

I conclude by quoting PCP II: “The church looks with gratitude on teachers, administrators, and employees of Catholic educational institutions who at great personal sacrifice have served in these institutions and have thus immensely contributed to the Church’s growth and our country’s well-being. Through them and the Catholic educational institutions they serve, the Church continues to be a leaven in Philippine society” (646).

In the name of my Vincentian brothers who serve in Adamson, I wish to thank and encourage all of you for being our partners in the challenging task of evangelizing our students and our colleagues. May God bless you and renew your zeal and enthusiasm to evangelize our students.

This piece was delivered by the University President as homily during the Eucharistic Celebration commemorating the Catholic Educators Day last January 25.
An exciting time to... from page 7

Many years ago, I pointed my first video camera at my grandmother, my Lola Charing, who I discovered still stored in her hard drive of a brain precious unre corded family memories many decades old. She did not stop talking until I ran out of tapes.

I thought I was just practicing a craft, but I ended up with a family treasure of documentation. Now that she is gone, the power of her words and laughter remains for future generations of my family.

That experience taught me many things about my craft, but it also gave me another reason to be thankful for being in my prime during such an exciting time.

I think we should all feel lucky to be living through this year of milestones for our country, with the freedom and technology to make ourselves heard, and make even small voices matter.

I truly have a lot to be thankful for. But so do you.

Thank you to my family for sharing this moment and supporting me. Thank you Adamson University for this unique and profound honor. Mabuhay kayong lahat. ■

On the Value of... from page 12

woman at birth and believe that giving birth is something that a woman does. However, physicians “deliver” babies and believe that having a baby is something that happens to a woman. Midwives are inclined to believe that a woman giving birth needs to be the one making the decisions about her birth experience. The woman giving birth needs to believe in her own body and feel responsible for her own body, while at the same time grappling with the need of letting go of control of oneself; however, she cannot.

For the physician, pregnancy and birth is an infirmity, not a condition of being, that needs treatment and medical care. They are so conscious on any fault-line during pregnancy and giving birth, since all doctors are trained to look for any problem (that is why they diagnose the problem very well) and decide what to do about it (that is, to provide the best and proper treatment necessary). Midwives, on the other hand, are trained to go beyond the boundaries of medical care and empower women to achieve perseveringly their goals for themselves and their babies.

Just like Socrates, teachers acting as an intellectual midwife while carrying the Socratic spirit will reassure calmly and encourage birthing of new ideas from students. Midwives are honest, open, and direct in their dealings with their clients, not patients, and show an intimate woman-to-woman approach. However, a physician has no egalitarian relationship with his patients. His/her superior knowledge⁴ and status are enough to teach his/her students. Such contentment is contemptuous of any form of genuine learning.

Reading is not just a passive browsing of words but gives birth to new and fresh ideas. It gives us an opportunity to discourse with the text and decipher as it unfolds the meaning of the text to the reader. For a teacher who acts like a physician, reading is a lived quandary or a burden and his/her established knowledge (or belief) is indubitable and salvific to the patient. But for a teacher who acts as an intellectual midwife, reading is passion and passionate.⁵

Without reading, education miscarries. The real challenge to educators is not merely what but how to invite and encourage⁶ their students to read and love reading. This is not merely an academic issue in the department but a university-wide concern. Anybody who passively says that this is our “culture”? and we can’t do anything about it is a mediocre and doing a serious academic misdeed. That is why we need a conscientious and concerted effort if we aspire fervently and remain committed to the word “excellence” in our mind and “virtue” in our heart in our vision-mission in the university. ■

Prof. Tan teaches Philosophy at the Social Sciences Department.

⁴ For the most part, such teacher who imparts knowledge in an absolute sense and edifies the students with unquestioned truths is perilous. Moreover, there is a common belief that a teacher, like a doctor, can perform wonders and knows everything, and this is far more precarious.
⁵ “Passion” here means a profound love for learning and “passionate” means an attitude for learning.
⁶ Even sometimes force (kindly) the students to read and push them to read even beyond their understanding, just to form the habit of reading.
⁷ I use the word “culture” here as passive acceptance of spoken and written symbols without careful thinking and examination. It also means a pre-given reality without considering the possibility of change or progress.
Who wants to read nowadays? Why bother to read if virtually everything is translucent? What is the point of reflective thinking if practically everything is “digested” already by the teacher? What is the sense of reading in an institution where academic excellence is its flagship?

Reading is no longer a part of the leisure activities of a student but oftentimes a burdensome activity, since there are more reasons to do many things other than reading. In this sense, reading is just an archaic piece of learning.

Before, when you are a student, you expect your teachers to read more and assign different readings in class. You really feel you are a student when you enter the classroom and participate in the discussion. It would also be embarrassing if you come to class unprepared.

In other words, when you are staying and studying in a university, reading is an essential part of being a student, since books and libraries are oftentimes your companion to knowledge next to your teachers.

Today, seldom can you find students (or teachers, perhaps) visiting the library or updating their readings unless they are required by their academic heads to bring their preparations up-to-date, since information found in the Internet is already available to everyone.

If students fell out of love with reading, perhaps we can censure our teachers for not engaging the text through reading, since the value of reading is a vital element in academic learning. If teachers are sluggish to read good books, then we may at least expect a lethargic student. If you want to be a good student, follow well your teachers. But if you want to be the best, criticize them well, just like the teacher-student relationship between Plato and Aristotle.

We are what we read. Reading is not merely recollection or transference of ideas but it has to have depth and attitude. The latter simply means reading should have a sense of profundity and reflectiveness. Without which, reading has no soul other than a mere requirement to pass. Reading without understanding is like eating without digesting. Without good reading habits, education would be a mistake.

To cite a simple and close analogy, we have Socrates, who as we all know is the Father of Western Philosophy. Although his existence was still contentious, it was his brilliant student Plato who made him a historical figure in the history of ideas and a paradigm of real learning in his Dialogues. Plato’s remarkable annotations in his Dialogues made Socrates a passionate martyr and an embodiment of the divine comedy.

The word ‘midwife’ is an early English word for “with woman.” The French term for midwife is sage femme, which means wise woman. The mother of Socrates, Phaenarete, was a midwife. Although there had been some apprehensions about midwives or the practice of midwifery in the past, it earned a conspicuous character in the area of medical care.

We may ask then, what does a midwife do? To put it in simple terms, midwives help and support the