

## **INVESTITURE SPEECH**

### **Fr. Karel S. San Juan, SJ**

#### **Greetings**

Most Reverend Bishop Martin Jumoad; Honorable Dr. Tatti Licuanan, my AVP during my Ateneo years; Honorable Mayor Beng Climaco; Congressman Celso Lobregat; Councilors of Zamboanga City; Board of Trustees of Ateneo de Zamboanga, past and present, now headed by Engineer Efren Wee; Ateneo past presidents Fr. Ernie Carretero, Fr. Bill Kreutz, and Fr. Tony Moreno; Presidents of Jesuit schools and universities; Presidents and heads of other schools and universities; Representatives of government agencies and private offices; Benefactors of the University; Partners in business and industry; Brothers and sisters in the religious vocation; Brother priests from the Archdiocese; Administrators, faculty, and staff; Students, parents, and alumni; Colleagues from the other Ateneos; my Jesuit brothers; my family; friends.

*Buenas tardes a todos mis amigos y amigas! Magandang hapon mga kaibigan! Maayong hapon mga igsoon! Good afternoon my dear friends! Special welcome to those of you who came all the way from Manila, from Cagayan de Oro, Bukidnon, Davao, Cebu, Iloilo, Naga, Western Mindanao and the island provinces, and other places outside Zamboanga. Thank you for traveling all the way here to Zamboanga Hermosa. Bienvenidos!*

It has only been a month and a half since I started my term as the new President of Ateneo de Zamboanga. And now I am here, already invested, wearing for the first time this heavy toga, this heavy medal of the University, addressing all of you. I guess the heaviness of what I am wearing now is a symbol of my heavy responsibility. Inside me I can still feel fear and trembling. I can feel doubt and anxiety: am I ready for this? Can I do this? I can also feel excitement, much excitement, especially seeing all of you here.

#### **Arrival in Zamboanga**

I arrived in Zamboanga City in the evening of October 7, 2013, thankful that my flight from Manila was not canceled because it had been raining in Zamboanga. I officially started my term as President the day after, October 8, and as I woke up early that day, my predecessor OIC President Fr. Willy Samson advised me to announce the cancelation of offices. That was my first act as President, to announce no classes and work on Facebook. Heavy torrential rains started to pour that night I arrived – I hope I was not the one who brought the rain – and it persisted that week, day-in and day-out, non-stop, flooding many parts of Zamboanga, including this campus. Those rains were unprecedented, I was told by Zamboanguenos.

Zamboanga was then just recovering fresh from the traumatic three-week war in September. A quite unique urban warfare between military and rebel groups. Which paralyzed the city. Which killed and wounded so many. Which shocked and frightened the whole city. Which dislocated lives and livelihoods, burned and destroyed properties, displaced tens of thousands of families, individuals numbering more than 100,000 in evacuation centers, creating a grave humanitarian crisis. Traumatic three weeks followed immediately by rains. A dual calamity. My baptism of fire! Fire and rain!

A few weeks ago, our City Mayor Beng Climaco convened leaders of various groups –Christian and Muslim organizations, civic action groups, peace advocates, schools, businesses – to talk about how the city can move on, proceed in its rehabilitation and recovery, how the city can now undertake the process of healing, of recovering trust, building confidence in each other. Enormous tasks and issues to deal with. Return to their old places, devastated and burned? Relocation and resettlement in new areas? The need to respect religions and cultures in rehabilitation. The need to reaffirm unity in doing all these, as we renew Zamboanga and make it better. *Levanta Zamboanga!*

### **Context of conflict, crisis, and calamity**

We hold this investiture in this difficult context. Zamboanga is still struggling hard. While the siege is over, the crisis remains. Also, we know that our country is facing one of the most terrible and tragic periods in our history. Massive death and devastation in the Visayas due

to typhoon Yolanda, and before that, the earthquake in Bohol and Cebu. Millions of Filipinos still suffering, waiting for help. So much darkness and despair surrounding us.

### **Grace and strength from the centennial**

As Zamboanga slowly lifts itself up from its own tragedy, we in the Ateneo remember where we are coming from. We remember the tremendous graces of the celebration of AdZU's 100 years. 100 years of excellence, spirituality, and citizenship. We remember this well, not to be diminished, overpowered, and forgotten by the crisis, conflict, and calamity. We are energized by gratitude for 100 years of forming men and women for and with others, serving our country and the world in various fields of endeavor. Ateneo de Zamboanga is the second oldest existing Jesuit university in the Philippines, and its historical contributions have been tremendous. We helped found the Church in Mindanao by being the very first, pioneering diocese in this island. The first parish in Mindanao, the Tetuan Parish of St. Ignatius of Loyola, is celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> or sesquicentennial anniversary this year. The pioneering Archdiocese of Zamboanga later gave birth to the present five ecclesiastical provinces in Mindanao, which are composed of twenty archdioceses, dioceses, and prelatures.

Hence, amid the gloomy cloud of darkness and despair, there is light. We choose hope, faith, and strength. The future is one that is not just about uncertainty and complexity, but a future filled with light, with possibilities, with dreams, with desires. We again proclaim loud and clear, as we have done so in the past century, we will do great things for God and country, *Pro Deo et Patria*.

As Ateneo de Zamboanga launches its journey beyond its centennial, what will the "beyond" look like?

### **New Vision and Mission enshrined**

We crafted a new **Vision** for the University, which is a vision of a new Mindanao at the heart of a new Philippines. We also crafted a new Mission to fulfill this Vision, the **Mission** of educating for leadership that is geared toward social transformation. In fulfilling this role, we will

draw out the best in Ateneo education, an education that is ***Filipino, Catholic, and Jesuit.***

### **General directions for the next three years**

A week after I arrived, I met with our leaders and administrators. We further defined how our Vision and Mission will be pursued. We formulated **three strategic directions**. They are first, ***institutional excellence***; second, ***engaged citizenship***, and third, ***integrated formation***.

Through *institutional excellence*, we will build a stronger Ateneo. Through *engaged citizenship*, we will help build a stronger city and nation. Through *integrated formation*, we will build a stronger Ateneo community. These triple directions cover many things, perhaps, everything that we have to do, and that we need to do in the University, in Zamboanga city, in the country, and beyond, rooted in a spirituality that integrates excellence and service, competence and compassion. For a new President like me I realized that the dream is big, that the temptation is there to do so many things at once.

### **Focusing our strategies**

And thus, I tried to reflect more deeply. And I thought that I need to define more focused strategies, priority actions, and ways of proceeding well, addressing critical factors, generating greater impact.

I imagine the **AdZU Ateneo eagle** – a 100 year old eagle – well-poised to see possibilities and constraints as it launches a new flight. It embraces its strengths and capabilities; it grapples with its weaknesses and limitations. Its eyes are focused on the frontier beyond the horizon, and once again, it is ready to fly.

To begin with, its flight beyond the centennial will be in **continuity** with the lasting legacies of previous immediate University Presidents, my Lolo Presidents, and my Kuya Presidents.

My first Lolo, **Fr. Ernie Carretero, SJ**, here with us tonight all the way from Naga, started the road to University status, elevating the status of

Ateneo de Zamboanga as a distinguished higher educational institution, fully accredited, and energized by faculty development.

My second Lolo, **Fr. Bill Kreutz, SJ**, also here in his second home, during his long, long 18 year term as President – which I do not intend to match – we achieved our University status, and drove the University toward even higher levels of excellence, through leadership formation, faculty development, scholarship development. He worked for a better Zamboanga City, where Ateneo played an important leadership role.

My Kuya President, now Fr. Provincial **Fr. Tony Moreno, SJ**, rationalized the management of resources, both human and financial, improved systems of communication, incentives, performance, planning. He stabilized the University further as it strengthened its leadership in the Region and in the country as a whole.

I would also like to thank another Kuya, our Jesuit superior **Fr. Willy Samson, SJ**, who led AdZU during a semester filled with crises and challenges, who led AdZU with a lot of spirit and care, a much-loved Jesuit in Ateneo.

I am blessed with what they have started and what they have left behind. I would also like to say that the legacies of these Presidents were sustained in constancy and continuity through the **commitment of our lay administrators, faculty, and staff**, most especially the senior ones, whose decades of service and love for Ateneo have made our institution strong and dynamic through the past century. These long-time lay administrators, faculty, and staff, past and present, are here with us, we owe a lot to them, and they deserve a round of applause.

Our more focused strategies and ways of proceeding will thus be another triad: first, **stability**; second, **creativity**, and third, **leadership**.

**First, stability.** We think of our context, and we know how context has become even more complex, more fragile, more volatile. Climate change causing more devastation. Patronage, corruption, scandals, never-ending issues further damaging our politics and governance. Social media creating greater interaction, and demanding better management

of information and communication. More voices to listen to, more interests to balance, more difficult decisions to discern. A future that seems to be more confusing, more unpredictable, more uncertain.

In this context, AdZU will strive to be an **icon, an icon of stability, strength, and support.**

- AdZU will continue to be a **home** where its alumni can remember and revitalize youthful ideals and commitments, where they can refresh themselves amid their complex and confusing and tiring engagements with the world of power, wealth, and temptation. AdZU will continue to be a place where people feel safe and secure to listen to each other and dialogue even on contentious, divisive issues.

We are proud of our alumna, Mayor Beng Climaco, a leader we can call our own, Ateneo's very own child, as she leads Zamboanga. We salute her leadership especially during the crisis, and how she exercised the use of power and authority with compassion, courage, and discernment, modeling for us the true Ateneo spirit. Like many Ateneo alumni, Mayor Beng goes back to Ateneo for prayer, discernment and community. Ateneo is her home.

I have also been impressed with our young alumni. Many of them are helping the Mayor run the city government. During the war, they heroically braved bullets and bombs, endured sleepless nights and frightening days, helped rescue hostages, negotiated for peace. These alumni told me that they would always like to come home to Ateneo and enjoy the peace and spirituality of the place. Some of them still manage to teach part-time, and they continue to do so, in order to remain connected with the Ateneo. They say that Ateneo reminds them that they need to be courageous and intelligent in terms of discernment, and patient in listening to their conscience, a conscience formed in Ateneo. We are proud of our alumni. Last Wednesday I held my first press conference in Zamboanga, and lo and behold, most of them, many senior journalists and broadcasters, are also Ateneans. Ateneans everywhere staying in Zamboanga, serving Zamboanga. They asked me, can we encourage more graduates to remain and serve

in Zamboanga, rather than leave and work in Manila. I said, we will try our best to do so.

- AdZU can also be better **financially and institutionally**. Through systematic human resource development programs, which will include academic and professional training, scholarships, leadership and management development, competitive compensation and benefits, we will strengthen our capacity to attract the best people and keep them, countering the trend of turnover and transfer to other institutions due to better pay. We will also be better in fund-raising and campus master planning and construction, optimizing the use of our limited space and logistics.
- AdZU will continue strengthening our **quick reaction mechanisms** for emergency situations, ever focused to be of help to those who need it most. During the weeks of the conflict, hundreds of students, alumni, faculty, and staff volunteered for relief operations, preparing food and water for thousands of evacuees.
- AdZU will re-energize its **involvement with the local church**, through the Archdiocese of Zamboanga. We will harness our devotional culture, expressed beautifully in the Zamboangueno's love and devotion to the *Nuestra Señora La Virgen del Pilar*, our great icon and inspiration, our indestructible fortress of faith and fortitude in Zamboanga.

***The second point is creativity.*** In the search for new creative and compelling solutions to persistent problems and challenges, AdZU will support pioneering and innovative endeavors.

- We will increase our capacity to **create new things** through scholarly research and publications, through production of creative materials in arts, sciences, and literature, involving all units, from basic to higher education.
- We shall harness the **role and power of the arts, languages, and cultures** in addressing socio-economic-cultural-political-and-

ecological issues. We shall support the performing arts of music and theater, formative sports development, the visual arts, and new and traditional multi-media like digital animation, as means of social engagement. AdZU has a strong tradition in theater, and we will revive it even more.

- We will support **pioneering initiatives** in all schools and colleges, and share them with the rest of the world, like the cutting-edge, world-famous innovations in our School of Medicine. We will explore how we can be better in the area of Islamic culture and studies.
- We will increase our **capacity for creative problem solving** to address so-called “wicked problems” where solutions have been elusive and highly complex, especially those concerning the centuries-old challenges of peace in Mindanao. We shall pursue this through greater inter-disciplinary engagement, cultural integration, and entrepreneurial endeavors, to allow ideas to incubate, gestate, and crystallize. We will work closely with the other Ateneos, and with other universities especially in Zamboanga.

**The third point is leadership.** In the complex and elusive dream of attaining peace, progress, and development in Zamboanga and in Mindanao, AdZU will work with leaders and provide guidance and direction for socio-culturally sensitive and competent governance and development.

- AdZU is committed to **form leaders and professionals** deeply inspired to serve others especially the poor. We are recognized in the fields of accountancy and nursing, and we have areas of excellence, potential and in reality, in basic education, in law school, in information technology, in the arts and sciences. We will contribute to the formation and training of social development professionals, and strengthen our graduate programs in governance and public administration. We shall also be leaders in the K to 12 innovation and other areas of educational reform, especially in Region 9.

Another alumnus, a doctor graduate of our School of Medicine, tells me that they enter Ateneo to leave Ateneo. This means one's Ateneo identity is fulfilled by going forth and serving others outside Ateneo. One is fulfilled not inside, but outside Ateneo, in the communities that are served. He said that Ateneo provides a platform that makes realities outside visible. He learned how to become a doctor by seeing and dealing with the social realities of people in communities.

- AdZU's leadership role will be **facilitative and integrative**. Solutions to persistent problems require facilitation and integration of spirits and passions, of viewpoints and persuasions. We will help facilitate problem solving, planning, and conflict management events even outside the University.

Just last Monday, the Ateneo and the Movement for a Better Zamboanga hosted a forum with world famous Architect and Urban Planner Jun Palafox on possibilities for urban planning in Zamboanga. This was attended by many sectors of different professions, persuasions, and religions, conversing and even debating on strategies on how to build a better Zamboanga. Weeks ago, the social development units under the leadership of Paring Bert Alejo facilitated a meeting of barangay leaders of the city to discuss the rehabilitation process. Will they opt for return to their burned and damaged locations? Are they open to being resettled to another place?

Through facilitation and dialogue, we recognize common desires of the tri-peoples of Zamboanga and Mindanao – the Muslims, Lumads, and Christians. Common desires amid conflicting claims. Common desires like greater inclusiveness, love and respect for each other's identities and cultures.

- ADZU's leadership role will be undertaken in the **spirit and mode of partnership**. We cannot do it alone. We shall strengthen our partnership with government, schools, religious groups especially of other faith traditions, peace advocates, the military, the police, church organizations. We continue to commit to leadership of private schools in Region 9 through our hosting of ZamBaSulTAPS

regional network and CEAP activities, as our contribution to the critical work of improving our educational system in the country, and to prepare for Mindanao 2020 and ASEAN 2015.

**Stability, creativity, and leadership.** This is how we will work together beyond the centennial. This is how the Ateneo eagle will spread its wings to bring AdZU ever nearer the **frontier** – the frontier of education for justice and social transformation, yes, AdZU at the frontier, *Pro Deo et Patria*.

### **Thank you**

I would like to really thank you all for coming to this investiture, a celebration which I believe is not really just about me as a new President, but about the institution, Ateneo de Zamboanga. When you invest me, when you congratulate me, when you show your love for me, it is also Ateneo de Zamboanga you invest, you congratulate, you love.

I would like to thank my family who traveled from my hometown Marikina to be here, my Nanay, my sisters May and Gigi, my brother Omar, my nephew Kiko.

I would like to thank the Ateneo de Zamboanga community, our faculty and staff, our students, our alumni, our donors and benefactors, our many long, long-time friends, many of whom I have not yet met, friends from government, from NGOs and centers for peace, from other schools and universities, fellow priests from the Archdiocese, religious sisters, fathers, and brothers.

I would like to thank my friends from Manila, especially those who are sending me off, from the Jesuit institutions I spent many happy years working with: Emmaus Center, San Jose Seminary, Ateneo de Manila; and also other Jesuit Apostolates like the Institute on Church and Social Issues, my colleagues in social development, Loyola School of Theology, Jesuit Communications, and parishes in San Juan and Bukidnon. Thank you to my friends too from the other Ateneos: Ateneo de Naga, Ateneo de Davao, Xavier University Cagayan de Oro, Ateneo de Cebu, Ateneo de Iloilo, Xavier School, and other universities.

And thank you to my brother Jesuits. To you, what else can I say. I know I have your support and friendship, and AdZU is our common, very important mission.

And lastly I would like to thank God for bringing me here to Zamboanga, for trusting me enough to lead a great institution, for promising me His grace and His love, for keeping all of us, our community, our friendships deeply close to His Sacred Heart.

This mission, which comes from Him, has been invested on me today, but also it has also been invested on you, this mission is ours to share. This mission is ours to fulfill. *Pro Deo et patria*. For God's greater glory. *Maraming salamat po. Daghang salamat. Muchas gracias a todos. Vaya con Dios. Mabuhay tayong lahat!*