

**Salutations on the occasion of the Investiture of
Fr Primitivo E Viray Jr SJ as AdNU President
01 July 2011
Ateneo de Naga University
Naga City**

The Honorable City Mayor John Bongat, Very Reverend Jose Cecilio Magadia SJ, Provincial Superior of the Jesuits in the Philippines, Chairperson Monico Jacob and the Ateneo de Naga University Trustees, Fr Primitivo Viray Jr SJ, President of AdNU, CHED Regional Director of Region V, Dr Freddie Bernal, the Presidents of Jesuit universities and other schools, colleges and universities, members of the AdNU community, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, *marhay na hapon sa indo gabos*.

Together with the members of the Jesuit Higher Education Commission, a group of top Jesuit and lay leaders representing eight Jesuit Higher Education Institutions in the country, I wish to congratulate Fr Jun as the new AdNU President. Despite his strands of white hair, he can rightly be considered as a “baby” president.

Many of you in AdNU did not know him before he came here. I heard you tried to gather as many pieces of information about him as possible to appease your curiosity and even anxiety. Some went to the facebook.com to look at his pictures. So I’m told, when you saw his pictures, some exclaimed “puwede na.”

My friendship with Fr Jun or as I fondly call him “Primo” started in 1984 when he entered the Jesuit novitiate. He came across to me then as sharp, thinker, simple, direct, insightful, passionate, intelligent, organized, orderly, decisive, intense, resolute, conscientious, competent, committed, disciplined and prayerful. Having known him for twenty-seven years now, these impressions are more or less still true today. We can add a few more words that we can associate him with: Norwich City Football club, coffee, basketball, tennis, photography, and “pa-cute” – but only when necessary.

I will leave the other aspects of his life for the AdNU community to discover. Here are two points why I believe Fr Jun is the person of the hour for AdNU.

First, he comes into AdNU with his own gifts and talents. He stands on the shoulders of his two great predecessors: Fr Rolly Bonoan SJ and Fr Joel Tabora SJ. To them, AdNU is deeply grateful. The legacies they left behind enable him to

have a good view of the horizon looming large especially as AdNU prepares for the celebration of its Diamond Jubilee year in 2015. His election as the 3rd University President of this institution puts AdNU in very good stewardship and standing. Consider his previous leadership ministries: Rector of the largest Jesuit community in our Philippine Province – Loyola House of Studies where future Jesuit priests and brothers are trained, Superior of the Jesuits in Ateneo de Zamboanga University – please spare me from describing our Jesuit community in Zamboanga lest I be in trouble, Assistant to the AdZU President for Formation, Parish Priest of St Joseph the Worker Parish in the former Prelature of Ipil, and Director of Arvisu House – a Jesuit Pre-novitiate program. All these responsibilities he assumed speak well of his people-oriented, decisive and empowering brand of leadership. Being in formation work for many years now and having to deal with all sorts of personalities and issues, I have all the confidence that Fr Jun is best suited to build, deepen further and accompany the Ateneo community here. He is best in forging community spirit, teamwork and enabling people to be the best that they can. He prefers not being at the center of attention or being at the limelight of leadership roles although at times this is unavoidable. I would like to believe that he will easily connect with the words of the wise Chinese Philosopher Lao Tse: “A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: ‘we did it ourselves’.” In AdNU, I trust that he will be an empowering leader, one who will put primacy on community effort over his personal inclinations; the welfare of the university over his personal preferences.

Second, Fr Jun brings with him his own expertise as a social scientist. He finished BS Business Economics at the University of the Philippines in 1981, became an Economic Researcher at the then Center for Research and Communication from 1982 to 84, did part time research work with the Institute on Church and Social Issues, finished MA in Rural Development at the University of East Anglia, UK, in 1998 and obtained a doctoral degree in Development Studies in the same institution in 2004. He was a lecturer in AdZU and AdMU after his finished his postgraduate degrees. His dream as he openly told people while pursuing his postgraduate studies was to go back to his beloved Ipil, Zamboanga Sibugay, and pursue a micro-finance program for the rural poor. To that, I always had to lower my eye-brow and temper his romanticism with these words: “Mangarap ka lang.” He pursued this specialization in Development Studies not so much because he wanted to go up the ladder of the academic hierarchy, but precisely because he wanted to go down to the poor, be with the poor and assist them in reducing poverty. I hope that given his competence and commitment, the poor will always be at the heart of the mission here in AdNU and in the Bicol Region.

In closing, I would like to address Fr Jun. Primo, I spoke to your Nanay a few days ago and asked her what she has to say to you on the occasion of your investiture. Nanay is unable to come because of her illness. She told me she is very grateful to the Lord for giving her a son like you. In her own words she described you as *buotan ug mapinanggaon gayud*, very caring and loving. Mothers really know best. When I asked her what advice she can give you, she just said: “You already know your duties and responsibilities. I pray that God may continue to guide you.” These are simple words from your aging and ailing mother, and yet they mean everything.

Congratulations to Fr Jun and the Ateneo de Naga University community!

Antonio F Moreno SJ

1 July 2011

Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus