



PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURAL ADDRESS
Dr. Luís María R. Calingo
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Members of the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, students, alumni, parents, and friends of Holy Angel University, good evening. *Mayap a bengi pu kekayu ngan! Magandang gabi po sa inyong lahat!*

Today, I am gratified and humbled to be inaugurated as the ninth president of this great institution. The investiture of a new university president is inherently about the individual who is inducted to the leadership role, but today is really more about our hopes and dreams for the future of this historic institution. As political scientist Hugh Hecló reminded us in his groundbreaking work *On Thinking Institutionally*, vibrant institutions are crucial to sustaining meaning and purpose in our lives and in the world.

So, today is about our shared values that are grounded in the mission of this university ... our dedication to expanding the power of education to improve lives and communities, and our optimism. But before we delve into these issues that we all care about deeply, let me make a few personal comments.

I owe thanks to many people. I thank the Board of Trustees and the Nepomuceno Family for their confidence in my abilities, and I pledge to carry out the duties of this office with integrity and with steadfast attention to the ideals of Holy Angel University. I am honored to build upon the strong foundation and legacy of Holy Angel's eight presidents before me, and I am grateful for their contributions in creating a tradition of high-quality Catholic education taught by a caring faculty and staff.

Beyond the Holy Angel learning community, I am also thankful to a number of special people in the audience today whose support and guidance has shaped the course of my life. They are led by members of my family—my wife of 34 years Gemeline and our three daughters Ashley Marie, Alexandra Nicole, and Arienne Louise. We had the opportunity to show our appreciation to them during the Thanksgiving Mass earlier this afternoon.

Let me also acknowledge the schools, colleges, and universities who have honored Holy Angel University by sending their presidents, officers, and delegates to participate in our inauguration. Finally, I am thankful for the University Chorale for their magnificent rendition of "Light of a Million Mornings," the song that rung in my heart the day I was entrusted this leadership position and my once-in-a-lifetime opportunity:

- to give back as an *iskolar ng bayan* [people's scholar] to the Filipino people who supported my studies from high school to graduate school,
- to return to my country of birth after a long absence of 35 years, and

- to assume the much-appreciated opportunity to spend the legacy years of my life to help alleviate poverty by contributing to the transformation of Philippine higher education as we face a more highly competitive environment as one of ten countries vying for students from the ASEAN Economic Community.

Honoring the Past, Embracing the Future

Now, let us return to the institution. Today, let us begin the work of engaging in conversations about the future of Holy Angel University. And, although an inauguration speech is certainly an appropriate setting to consider where we are going, I am mindful of the fact that I have been here for only eight months. During that time, I have tried to focus on listening and forming the institutional strategy of Holy Angel University. I will continue to do so in order to present my thoughts about the Holy Angel of the future.

But, before we can think about what lies ahead, we must consider both our past and our present. Don Juan De Dios Nepomuceno created this institution to meet a pressing need. In 1933, 137 years after Don Ángel Pantaleón de Miranda established *Lakanbalen ning Angeles* [Angeles City], there were no more than about 60,000 Angeleños at that time. However, Don Juan understood that a citizenry educated in the Catholic intellectual tradition would be essential to the future growth, prosperity, and sustainability of the city.

By establishing the first Catholic school in the Philippines founded and run by the laity and opening it to both girls and boys, our founder proved himself to be an entrepreneur—an innovator who was willing to take risks that offered rewards.

About ten years before Don Juan founded Holy Angel, my Tagalog paternal grandfather left the comforts of his family's abaca plantation in Paete, Laguna, to settle in the less developed town of Guagua, Pampanga. There he married my Kapampangan grandmother and they established the Calingo family of Pampanga, with my late father as their eldest child.

Getting out of one's comfort zone, taking intelligent risks, establishing ventures, and engaging in honest self-reflection have, therefore, also been part of the DNA of my family.

Fast forward from 1933 to today. A willingness to dream big is still very much a part of Holy Angel today. We see it in our students and their parents who make great sacrifices of time and money to dream big. We see it in our faculty and staff whose passion and commitment are predicated on the big dreams of our students. Yes, we are all about students.

Holy Angel University today is proud of our countless alumni who have realized success by forming the minds of our young through their teaching; building businesses both large and small; becoming noted engineers, psychologists, guidance counselors, and other professionals; establishing accounting firms; designing the built environments where we live and work; holding public office; and more. Holy Angel University today is proud of our close to 21,000 students who mirror the socioeconomic diversity of Central Luzon. Holy Angel University today is proud of our workforce of almost 900 employees.

Holy Angel University today is proud of our commitment to quality, which is reflected in many ways. There is the external recognition, such as being the only Catholic higher education institution in the Asia Pacific that is listed in the Cardinal Newman Society's *Guide to Choosing a Catholic College*, which is published in the United States. There is the designation as a Top Ranking School by the Professional Regulatory Commission because of the exemplary performance of our graduates in professional licensure examinations. And, there is the validation by the accreditors of our various degree programs, including the only business program in the Philippines to be accredited by the International Assembly of Collegiate Business Education, based in the United States.

Holy Angel University today is proud of our reputation for providing a liberal arts-based professional education that effectively prepares students for careers. But a Holy Angel education does more than that. Our emphasis on reinforcing professional preparation with a strong foundation in liberal education is what makes the difference between producing competent graduates who find economic success and competent graduates who are also good citizens of a democratic society.

While we should be proud of these and many other accomplishments that characterize the Holy Angel University of today, education is, at its core, about tomorrow. After all, it was the Spanish poet Miguel de Unamuno who wrote that we should try to be the parents of our future rather than to remain the offspring of our past. In order to create our shared legacy to Holy Angel University, we must establish a shared understanding and commitment about where we are going. Getting to our destination will be the result of our collective effort.

As we begin our journey together, let me share with you my perspectives on higher education and my vision of the path that we will be taking—both informed by my 35 years as a graduate business student, professor, dean, provost, and university president outside the Philippines.

The great American President Abraham Lincoln once said, “The best way to predict the future is to create it.” So together, let us begin this visioning process. To help us focus on the abstraction that is the future, let us consider how we should complete the following sentence: Holy Angel University is the only university that ... fill in the blanks.

This is an important question because, as the late Jerry Garcia of the American rock band Grateful Dead (who was no Abraham Lincoln) had suggested, “You do not merely want to be considered just the best of the best. You want to be considered the only ones who do what you do.”

While I want us to arrive at these decisions together, if you sit back, metaphorically close your eyes, and imagine Holy Angel in the year 2030, here are some ideas about how we could become the only ones who do what we do:

- In the year 2030, I see young women and men flocking to Holy Angel because of the memorable learning experiences that will enable them to solidify their life and career

goals and transform them into graduates who are among the most sought-after by employers and graduate schools. They flock to Holy Angel because our students receive at least three competitive job offers, graduate school admission offers, or similar opportunities by the time of their graduation.

- I see students from other regions outside of Metro Manila and Central Luzon, as well as students from other countries, vying for admission for the limited slots in Holy Angel University Southwest, a new competitive, state-of-the-art, residential college located fifteen kilometers from here. They compete for our limited slots because we have effectively prepared graduates for the ASEAN region, proving that Metro Manila does not enjoy a monopoly of great universities.
- I see one out of every five of our students coming from farm families – the first in their families to go to college – whose Holy Angel education is fully supported by our former scholars who have become successful alumni themselves. I see the university as having become an authentic instrument for countryside development, with many of our graduates staying in the countryside—building enterprises, creating jobs, and helping improve our quality of life.
- I see our graduates being mentored for years beyond graduation to ensure their continuing potential for meritorious performance and professional promise. Truly, an Angelite is an Angelite forever.
- I see our faculty producing a portfolio of research, scholarship, and other intellectual contributions that create new knowledge, advance professional practice, result in commercialized new technologies, or improve the craft of teaching and learning.
- I see every college demonstrating its commitment to high quality and continuous improvement by having the CHED Center of Excellence (COE) designation or the highest possible international accreditation or external peer recognition for each of the degree programs it offers.
- I see the faculty, staff, and administrators working together as one community and increasing the level of connectedness within the campus—of students to faculty, of faculty to faculty, of students to students—as well as the connectedness of the campus to our local, regional, and global communities. Holy Angel has truly become a great university to work for.
- Can you now feel the vibrancy of this high-performing community of teachers, learners, and partners? I see a team of university leaders who think institutionally, work collaboratively, are committed to quality and continuous improvement, and who put into practice the principle that the curriculum is the soul of the university and the budget is the conscience of the university. I see Holy Angel as the breeding ground of university leaders that other schools, colleges, and universities seek to lead them, much like what Gen-

eral Electric has done to the development of chief executive officers in corporate America.

- I see an innovative, agile institution—with colleges that have a strong sense of entrepreneurship that leads to the creation of new market-driven programs, especially as we face a more intensely competitive higher education sector come 2018.
- I see other schools visiting Holy Angel because they have heard of Holy Angel's best-in-class processes to support faculty and staff professional development, serve students' needs according to their stage in university life, and create the future.
- Finally, I see other Catholic schools visiting Holy Angel because we have become the center of excellence for faithful Catholic education.

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My dear friends, this is our Mount Everest. This envisioned future will not be the result of an accident or wishful thinking, but by our collective effort. I challenge you to join me in this climb to Mount Everest. And I promise you that, as your leader, I will be with you in that expedition and I will try my best to serve as your *sherpa*. Your *sherpa* will follow the axiom of author and leadership expert Max De Pree, who suggested that “The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between, the leader is a servant and a debtor.” The leader, therefore, reduces the gap between what is reality and what is possible.

During my first general assembly in this lovely campus, I articulated the core values that define my behavior as your leader. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my top five. My first core value is *community*—working together, embracing our diversity, recognizing our mutual dependence, being accountable to each other, and appreciating the unique gifts that each of us have in this entire body that we call Holy Angel University. My second core value is *honesty*—integrity, truthfulness, openness, transparency, achieving goals through honest means, honoring commitments, and being worthy of the trust of others. My third core value is *excellence*—the quest to continually improve and the commitment to deliver an “unblemished, well-polished, professional product that is produced with the best possible human competence.” My fourth core value is *stewardship*—responsible use of the resources and competencies, such as the ability to lead, which our good Lord has entrusted to us. My fifth core value is *abundance*—the belief that sustainable progress is accomplished when everyone works together to achieve “win-win” solutions that enlarge the pie rather than simply divide it. I firmly believe that one can accomplish many great things if you do not mind who gets the credit.

So, as we chart our future, I hope that we can agree on two guiding principles. The first is to continually improve our academic excellence and reputation. The second is to enhance our passionate commitment to articulate and live our shared values as members of a university that is rooted in our mission to transform students into persons of conscience, competence, and compassion—all for the greater glory of God.

Our Cathedral of Learning

I would like to conclude with a message primarily to those who are not part of the Holy Angel workforce but nonetheless part of Holy Angel's extended family. Let me share a story from social entrepreneur Bill Shore:

There once was a traveler who journeyed all over the globe in search of wisdom and enlightenment. In the midst of one village, he came upon a great deal of noise, dust, and commotion. He came across three masons or bricklayers who were working at chipping chunks of granite from large blocks. The first seemed unhappy at his job, chipping away and frequently looking at his watch. When the man asked what it was that he was doing, the first mason responded, rather curtly, "I am senselessly hammering this rock, and I cannot wait 'til 5 when I can go home."

A second mason, seemingly more interested in his work, was hammering diligently and when asked what it was that he was doing, answered, "Well, I am molding this block of rock so that it can be used with others to construct a wall. It is not bad work, but I will sure be glad when it is done."

A third mason was hammering at his block fervently, taking time to stand back and admire his work. He chipped off small pieces until he was satisfied that it was the best he could do. When he was questioned about his work he stopped, gazed skyward, and, with a broad smile and a gleam in his eye, proudly proclaimed, "Can't you see? I...am building a cathedral."

Such is the story of the building of the Italian Duomo, the Cathedral of Milan, which took more than 500 years to build. Imagine the depth of the vision that the builders must have had to create this magnificent structure, especially knowing that they would not live to see the finished cathedral themselves.

As we leave here today, let us remember what has drawn us together—a desire to make a difference in the lives of others and the world. That is our cathedral.

So I ask you to continue our work on our cathedral, and I pledge to do my part helping preserve and strengthen this University with the best possible human competence. I am aware that this is both a privilege and an obligation. The obligation extends back in time to the day in 1933 when Don Juan De Dios Nepomuceno began this institution in a small parish building at the Holy Rosary Church. The obligation extends forward in time to future generations who will come here to learn. I am grateful for the privilege of serving, and I will work hard to meet the demands of the obligation. Let us journey together on a path that fulfills our ambitions and creates a shared legacy our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren will all be very proud of. Thank you!

LAUS DEO SEMPER!