

Welcome Remarks of Fr. President

Our distinguished awardees, His Excellency, the Most Reverend Joel Zamudio Baylon, Bishop of Legazpi, Mrs. Susana Madrigal-Eduque, the Chair of the Consuelo Chito Madrigal Foundation and CCMF-Bikol CEO Fr. Wilmer Tria; our eminent guest speaker, former President of Ateneo de Naga and current President of Ateneo de Davao, Fr. Joel Tabora SJ; the members of the Ateneo de Naga University Board of Trustees led by our chair, Atty. Avelino Sales Jr., our esteemed heads of academic institutions and superiors of religious communities here in Naga, our dear school administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents, alumni and alumnae, our beloved colleagues, friends, and guests, *Diyos marhay na hapon sa indo gabos!*

It is my great privilege and deepest joy to welcome all of you to this Ateneo Naga University Awards Convocation. This is a truly blessed time when we convoke, we invoke, and we evoke.

We convoke. We are gathered. We gather this afternoon to celebrate the generous witness of our distinguished awardees. We also come together not just to honor their impressive achievements, but also to bond together in faith and fellowship, to celebrate the ties that bind us. We celebrate our common vocation of service and mission for Church, Community, and Country. And as we celebrate we realize that we are not alone, that as we face the daunting challenges and deep problems besetting our nation, we have each other to turn to, we have the powerful examples of our distinguished awardees to inspire us.

We invoke. We call to mind yet again the high ideals and the deepest values which we share, ideals and values embodied and lived out by our awardees. Generous service. Visionary leadership. Compassionate concern. The passion to care for the last, the least, and the lost among us, the ones entrusted to us by Our Lord. And as we invoke these ideals and values, we invoke too the name of our Loving God who in His goodness has called us to His mission, the mission so selflessly fulfilled by our awardees, the mission which the Society of Jesus has recently articulated as a mission in the service of reconciliation and justice.

We evoke. We allow ourselves to be inspired our awardees and by the words of our convocation speaker, and in doing so, something is surely stirred, something is unmistakably evoked in our minds and hearts. We recall His abiding and unfailing goodness through all of life's trials and tribulations. We recall God's unique call to each and every one of us. We come together in this blessed time and place, and we set forth with a renewed sense of commitment and mission.

And so my dear friends, let us thank God for this wonderful opportunity to convoke, invoke, and evoke, to gather as one, to remember our mission, to be inspired towards greater service, *ad majorem Dei gloriam*, for God's greater glory. Again, my warmest welcome to all, and God bless all of us today. *Diyos mabalos!*