



THE THOMASIAN ALUMNI COMMUNITY

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE UST ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, INC.

VOL. NO. 8 ISSUE NO. 4

Newsletter



Thomasian Alumni Icons Lead UAAP Season 88 Opening at UST



Piolo Pascual lights up the UAAP Season 88 Opening Ceremony (UAAP) (Photo credit: The Varsitarian)

The University of Santo Tomas (UST) opened UAAP Season 88 with a grand and emotional ceremony that paid tribute to its illustrious alumni, as Thomasian icons from different generations led the torch relay, cauldron lighting, and various performances at the UST Grandstand on Friday night, 19 September 2025.

Award-winning actor and proud Thomasian Piolo Pascual set the mood for this season's remarkable Opening Ceremony, taking charge as the spotlight falls on UST in a pre-recorded clip featuring the athletes of participating schools.

This year's torch relay draws inspiration from the Olympic torch relays, which symbolize hope, peace, friendship and tolerance. The flame of hope, handed over at the university's iconic landmarks, was carried by four exceptional Thomasian athletes. Cherry Ann "Sisi" Rondina, a four-time UAAP beach volleyball MVP and a member of the Philippine women's volleyball team, led the torch relay from the Arch of the Centuries. The torch was then handed over at the historic main building to Jervy Cruz, a UAAP MVP and a four-time champion in the PBA who currently plays for the Basilan

Viva Portmasters under the Maharika Pilipinas Basketball League. At the Quattromondial Monument, Sydney Sy ran the next segment of the torch relay. She is one of UST's best judokas, earning the title of "Asian Sambo Queen," and is now the chairperson of the International Sambo Federation Athletes Commission.

Two-time Olympian and Thomasian pole vault star Ernest John "EJ" Obiena took center stage in the last leg of the relay and lit the UAAP cauldron which represents the dreams and aspirations of all participating athletes and unites them in the spirit of sportsmanship and hope.

From the UST Grandstand, with the lights lit and the cheers echoing, Very Rev. Fr. Richard G. Ang, O.P., Rector Magnificus of the University of Santo Tomas and UAAP Season 88 Chairman,

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Caleruega's Healing Mission: A Journey of Resilience, Renewal and Service

Caleruega, Philippines, a sanctuary of nature, prayer, and reflection, has long been a place of spiritual renewal. However, it was not spared from the calamities that swept the nation. In 2020, the eruption of Taal Volcano followed by the global pandemic brought its operations to a halt. The once-vibrant gardens withered, the halls fell silent, the chapel ceased to echo vows, and the pilgrims disappeared.

Despite these challenges, Caleruega remained resilient. The loyalty and patient endurance of its people, coupled with unwavering prayer and hope, proved stronger than any adversity.

After years of uncertainty, Caleruega slowly resurrected, once again welcoming pilgrims in search of direction, meaning, and divine encounter. With the help and support of generous



Dr. Robert C. Sy performs a minor surgical procedure at the Tomasino Hall during the medical mission.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK: *At Your Service*

by Atty. Dwight Ramos

Our Growing AAI Family

As the official federation of UST Alumni Associations or AA's, we are proud of the growing number of local and international alumni chapters and groups joining us. We thank, of course, the Office of Alumni Relations or the (OAR) for helping us in our chartering initiatives, as we continue to embark on building and strengthening the Thomasian Alumni network in the country and around the world. Our membership now stands at thirty two 32 and we continue to grow.

We are happy that we are able to honor our Alma Mater by keeping the Thomasian spirit alive wherever we may be. Truly, our alumni who continue to work and gather together in solidarity with one another are able to draw us all back to our Alma Mater as one family again and again.

Inspired by the University's glorious history and tradition of excellence, we, in the UST Alumni Association Inc. or (UST AAI), have committed ourselves to unceasingly promote solidarity amongst the alumni; keep the core values of competence, compassion and commitment in the hearts of the alumni; and nurture alumni loyalty to the alma mater. We unceasingly create pathways that will bring home the alumni. We are therefore very happy with all the work being done in our different chapters and we do appreciate the giving back of their members' time, talent and treasure. We are also very proud of their accomplishments and achievements, and always look forward to the learnings and stories they share during our homecomings.

Truly, we gather to draw inspiration

from one another. Aside from our life stories that are great sources of hopes and lessons that we are able to share, we are also always trying to enhance our solidarity with one another and with our alma mater by bonding and leading together as one, although we may be physically miles and miles apart. Ultimately, and as members of our respective AA's, together we build a cohesive, pro-active and vibrant alumni association that effectively serves its Alma Mater, the Alumni, the community, and the Church.

We thus feel blessed, and I personally thank each and everyone who, in one way or the other, is contributing to our success and growth. Congratulations to all of us and more power... Go USTe!

Thomasian Alumni Icons Lead UAAP Season 88 Opening at UST

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officially declared this year's UAAP Season open. Witnessed by thousands of students, athletes and alumni, this symbolized the enduring UAAP spirit of perseverance and collegiate excellence that continues to inspire the youth.

Adding to the star-studded event, pop icon and Thomasian alumna Sarah Geronimo delivered a show-stopping performance that captivated the crowd. Performing her hits "Dati-Dati," "Tala," and "Ikot-Ikot," Geronimo stunned audiences not only with her vocals but also with a rare political statement

woven into her act.

During "Ikot-Ikot," she declared:

"Parang panloloko sa bansa natin, pinaikot-ikot lang tayo, tama na."

Her remark, interpreted as a critique of the country's persistent corruption issues, drew loud cheers and applause from the UST crowd—transforming her performance into both an artistic and political moment.

The opening ceremonies also featured the performance of the UAAP Season 88 theme song by Kean Cipriano, a drone and fireworks display and the

parade of athletes representing all eight participating universities.

With the theme "Strength in Motion, Hope in Action," UAAP Season 88's opening celebration became more than a sporting event—it was a showcase of Thomasian leadership, excellence and social awareness. The participation of alumni icons Obiena, Rondina, Cruz, Sy, Pascual and Geronimo underscored UST's proud legacy of producing champions and change-makers across generations.

- Mariz V. Manalo, Juris Doctor 1995

Caleruega's Healing Mission: A Journey of Resilience, Renewal and Service

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Dr. Minerva Calimag attends to a young patient at the Pediatric Station located at GazeKubo.

individuals, the sanctuary began to rise, and God's providence was deeply felt. In gratitude to God and the community, Caleruega launched programs aimed at holistic growth and development. One of its most impactful initiatives is the annual Medical, Surgical and Dental Mission, organized in partnership with the UST Alumni Association Inc., the mother organization of all recognized University of Santo Tomas alumni associations.

The first mission was held on 30 July 2023, serving 188 indigent patients from Barangay Kaylaway, Nasugbu, Batangas. The second mission, held on 23 June 2024, expanded its reach to nearby barangays and served 359 patients. On its third year, the mission was held on 7 September 2025, despite inclement weather that postponed its original schedule. The event coincided with the eve of the Blessed Virgin Mary's

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Created by:
Artist Seb Chua

For Inquiries:
Look for Ms. Kaye Bundang
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PROJECT EMONG: GIVING COMPASSIONATE SERVICE

The UST Golden Cross and Saber Alumni Association, Inc. (GCSAAI), the alumni association of UST Advance ROTC graduates, heeded the call of a distressed brother, Fr. Glenn Nino of UST ROTC Class '87, to provide relief efforts for his affected flock in Barangays Cabungan and San Jose in Anda, Pangasinan. A state of calamity was declared over Pangasinan after a series of typhoons ravaged the province.

Humanitarian aid and relief efforts held on 16 August 2025 was a collaborative effort among the UST GCSAAI, Operation Brotherhood Community Foundation, The Medical City (TMC) Pangasinan, the Philippine Coast Guard and Phil. Coast Guard Auxiliary 109th Squadron. The mission was able to provide care packages for 200 families. Each family care package contained 2 kilos of rice, 4 canned goods, 6 pieces instant noodles, 4 pieces instant coffee, 4 pieces powdered



milk, one pack of biscuits, pre-loved shirt, jacket and hygiene kit with a sachet of shampoo, bath soap, feminine care pads, wet wipes, toothpaste, toothbrush and cotton buds. Medicines for maintenance and common illnesses were provided by TMC Pangasinan led by Past National Commander, Dr. Rory Tuazon of UST ROTC Class '85. He is currently the Chief Medical Officer of TMC Pangasinan.

The mission was fuelled by the passion and generous support of the UST GCC International led by Manny Amolat '73, Michael Mora CL '82,



Apinky Bautista Singh '72, Juan Pagaduan '86, Nhello Reyes '78, Ernesto Benitez '78 and Ralph Alo '05.

- *Chris Dalida, PRO – Golden Cross and Saber Alumni Association, Inc.*

UST High School Alumni Alliance Elects New Chairman and President in Historic General Council Assembly



Despite the steady downpour outside, a spirit of unity and optimism filled the halls of the UST Thomasian Alumni Center on Saturday, 19 July 2025. Alumni representatives from Batch 1975 to 2000 gathered for the much-anticipated General Council Assembly and Election of New Chairman and President of the UST High School Alumni Alliance, Inc. (USTHSAAI).

Held from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the 3rd floor of the BGPOP Building inside the UST Main Campus, the meeting successfully convened a majority quorum, with 14 out of 26 recognized Batch Representatives present, representing the classes of 1976, 1977, 1979, 1980-1989, and 1991.

The assembly was officially opened by Lito Malabanan of Batch 1977, the outgoing Chairman of the Board. In his opening message, Mr. Malabanan moved for a significant structural change: to expand the Board of Trustees to include

all members of the General Council, each representing their respective batches. The proposal was seconded, discussed and unanimously approved by all attendees, thus marking a new era of broader participation and shared leadership.

With this historic decision, the following alumni officially took their Oath of Office as the new Board of Trustees of USTHSAAI: 1976 - Henry Joseph Herrera; 1977 - Manny L. Estrada; 1979 - Bien Mendoza; 1980 - Rosa Marina "Ina" Valenzuela; 1981 - Avic Balagtas Bartilad; 1982 - Ronnie Gomez; 1983 - Greg Mota; 1984 - Ma. Agnes P. Julian; 1985 - Alvin; Justiniani; 1986 - Marlon Gregory M. Pena; 1987-Rogelio B. Tapang; 1988 - Allan Colico; 1989 - Ruth Felipe; and 1991- Simon Sotacio.

As its first order of business, the newly seated Board unanimously elected Ronnie Gomez of Batch 1982 as the new Chairman. Mr. Gomez, the outgoing President of the Executive Officers, was sworn into office by Mr. Malabanan in a warm and symbolic passing of the torch.

Chairman Gomez then facilitated the election of the new President of the USTHSAAI, resulting in a clear majority win for Alvin Justiniani of Batch 1985, who received 13 out of 14 votes. One

vote was cast for Ms. Ruth Felipe of Batch 1989.

In accordance with the USTHSAAI By-Laws, President Justiniani was given the authority to appoint his Executive Team. He announced the following appointments, which were warmly received by the Board: Vice President - Avic Balagtas-Bartilad (Batch 1981); Secretary- Rogelio Tapang (Batch 1987); and Treasurer - Ma. Agnes Julian (Batch 1984). The new set of officers were formally sworn into office by Chairman Gomez, concluding the day's official agenda with a renewed sense of purpose and solidarity.

The USTHSAAI now looks forward to three exciting years of growth, activity, and stronger alumni engagement under the dynamic leadership of Chairman Gomez and President Justiniani

- *Rogelio Tapang, USTHS 1987*





Thomasians Unite For Relief Efforts - Tomasino Para sa Kapwa Pilipino!

Following the onslaught of typhoons Crising, Dante and Emong in July 2025, the Thomasian Alumni Community Foundation, Inc. (TACFI) and the UST Alumni Association, Inc. (USTAAI), together with the UST Thomasian Alumni Leaders Association (UST TALA), conducted a disaster relief and rehabilitation operations through the Tomasino Para sa Kapwa Pilipino to support affected communities in Metro Manila. These efforts involved distributing essential goods like food packs, hygiene and household kits, and offered financial assistance for home repairs.

USTAAI Advocacy Chairperson Angie Tuazon led the relief operations on 23 July at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary of La Naval de Manila (Sto. Domingo Church), in coordination with its Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Simon Peter Ramos, OP. Barangay admin RJ Bituin Raymond and Kagawad Ariel Rosales helped facilitate and organize the evacuees at Diosdado Macapagal Elementary School in Brgy. Tatalon, Quezon City, where the residents experienced extreme flooding that reached their roofs due to Typhoon Crising. A total of 5,552 individuals and 1,442 families received relief packs, hot meals, bread, and bucket stool organizers for their use, thanks to the generous donations from Bien Enrico Ah, Manix and Sarah Chua, Cha and Sweet Tanedo, Sally and Wilson Neria, Gina Almario, Mitsui Trading Phils and also the Rotaract Club of Chinatown who provided logistics support.

On 26 July, another relief operation was conducted in Navotas and Malabon, offering essential supplies and

assisting hundreds of families affected by the severe flooding in the area. At San Lorenzo Ruiz and Companion Martyrs Parish Church in Navotas, through the coordination with its parish priest, Rev. Fr. Allan V. Lopez, O.P., a total of 200 families received donations in the form of bucket stools, bread, and water. The volunteers also headed to the Our Lady of Peace Chapel Mission Station at Letre, Tonsuya in Malabon City, where another 200 relief packs were distributed, through the assistance of local volunteers and the mission station priest from Guatemala, Rev. Fr. Luis E. Duarte. This particular mission highlighted the collaborative efforts of the whole Thomasian alumni community, with the member alumni associations UST Golden Cross and Saber Alumni Association, Inc., and the UST AMV Accountancy Alumni Association, Inc. joining the relief operations. This activity was made possible through donations from Megaforce Securities, Jenn Sobremonte, Carlos Lemi, Marilyn Ngo, Sarah Chua, Sally Neria, and the UST AMV Accountancy Alumni Association, Inc. USTAAI and UST TALA officers Ces San Juan and John Peran led the group of volunteers which included the UST Golden Cross and Saber Alumni Association, Inc.'s National Commander, AUX Rear Admiral Jomar de la Peña, members of the UST ROTC Unit Sgt. Jemimah B. David PA (Res), C/CPT Josef Pio E. Delos Reyes, and Cadet Officer Ryan Andrew Laguador and the UST AMV Accountancy Alumni Association, Inc. president John Derick De Recto, who was joined by Jorge Punzalan.

On 28 July, USTAAI, TACFI, and UST TALA collaborated with the UST

Simbahayan Community Development Office's TULONG TOMASINO and the Office of the Vice-Rector for Religious Affairs and the UST Central Student Council, providing relief support to the San Andres Mission Station for the flood victims in Tangos, which is part of the Diocese of Kaloocan. Rev. Fr. Allan Lopez, OP, Director of Caritas Kalookan, helped facilitate this effort at the Tangos Mission Station in Dagat Dagatan, Navotas and delivered ready-to-eat canned goods, noodles, rice, mineral water, toiletries and alcohol, sanitary pads/napkins, and school supplies to the affected community. Additional supplies were also sent to the San Lorenzo Ruiz and Companion Martyrs Parish, this time, for the EJK Typhoon victims in Navotas.

The following day, again with the help of Rev. Fr. Allan Lopez and volunteers from San Lorenzo Ruiz and Companion Martyrs Parish, relief goods were distributed at Pitong Gatang Mission Station in Navotas with donations coming from Bella Lee, Jose and Angie Tuazon, Carlos Lemi, Myrabel Concepcion, Christopher Ong and all their families.

The Tomasino Para sa Kapwa Pilipino program is an integral part of TACFI, USTAAI, and UST TALA's advocacy, delivering urgent and essential aid to individuals affected by emergencies and natural disasters. This includes the provision of food, water, and medical care, and is instrumental in quickly raising the required funds while enabling member alumni associations to coordinate the deployment of volunteers at a moment's notice.

- Jonathan Peran, BS ECE, 1996





Project First One Thousand Days in Caleruega

The first one thousand days of life, from conception to a child's second birthday, is a critical window for growth and development. Proper nutrition and healthcare during this period establish the foundation for lifelong health, learning and well-being.

Believing in this principle, USTAAI's Project First One Thousand Days participated in the Medical Mission held in Caleruega, Batangas on 7 September 2025. Fr. Jeff Aytona, medical mission coordinator, provided the team with a spacious venue called Gazekubo. Team of volunteers, including physicians, attended to the children from 8:30 AM to 1 PM.

The team was composed of volunteers from TALA, Pax Romana Alumni Association (PRAA), College of Education Alumni Foundation Inc. (CEAFI) and Alpha Phi Omega Alumni Association (APOPI). The core group provided nutrition and health services to children and to support families in adopting sustainable practices for improved child growth and development. A total of 75 children benefited from this initiative.

Throughout the day, the four PRAA

physicians assessed the nutritional and developmental status of the children, provided healthcare services for medical concerns and guidance for follow-up care. The parents were also advised to follow up with Rural Health Units, Health Centers, or Regional Hospitals for immunizations and management of chronic illnesses.

The CEAFI nutritionists and dieticians, on the other hand, conducted nutrition counseling with emphasis on breastfeeding and minimum dietary diversity. The children were provided with micronutrient supplements, including multivitamin drops to address common deficiencies and to strengthen immunity.

For this program, all 75 children underwent weight and length/height measurements for profiling and data gathering. The results were explained to parents as part of anticipatory guidance, helping them understand growth patterns to address concerns early.

A nutritious meal of rice porridge was served to all children and families. As part of the nutritional counselling, a sample one-week menu (based on WHO/UNICEF/FNRI 2023 guidelines)

were distributed, ensuring a practical tool for households to meet the minimum dietary diversity of four food groups per meal or per day.



The Project First 1,000 Days team stationed at Gazekubo alongside the Pediatrics and Nutrition units.



Ms. Visitacion "Bess" Asiddao of the Advocacy Committee for the Project First 1,000 Days (second from right, standing), assists pediatric patients and their companions at the Pediatric Station in Gazekubo

- Visitacion V. Asiddao, HS 1974

UST High School Alumni Alliance Visits UST Junior High School Officials



From L-R: USTHSAA Chairman Ronnie Gomez; USTJHS School Secretary Walner Saturno; USTJHS Principal Marishirl Tropicales; USTHSAA Vice President Avic Balagtas-Bartilad; Former Chairman Lito Malabanan; President Alvin Justiniani; and USTJHS Assistant Principal Anthony Castro.

On Tuesday, 30 September 2025, the UST High School Alumni Alliance (USTHSAA) made an official courtesy visit to the administration of the UST Junior High School (USTJHS) at the University of Santo Tomas campus in Manila.

Representing the USTHSAA were President Arch. Alvin Justiniani, Vice President Avic Balagtas-Bartilad, Chairman Ronnie Gomez and Ex Officio Lito Malabanan. They were warmly

welcomed by USTJHS Principal Assoc. Professor Marishirl Tropicales, Assistant Principal Anthony Castro and School Secretary Mr. Walner Saturno.

The meeting served as both a formal introduction of the newly elected USTHSAA officers and an opportunity to strengthen collaboration between the alumni association and the school administration.

Among the key highlights of the discussion were the preparations for the 2028 Centennial Anniversary of UST High School; the annual UST High School Foundation Day and Jubilee celebrations, aimed at fostering alumni engagement and school spirit; and the General Alumni Homecoming held every February, one of the most anticipated gatherings for UST High School alumni across generations.

The courtesy visit reaffirmed the

shared commitment of both institutions to honor the rich legacy of UST High School and to continue nurturing the values of Veritas in Caritate (Truth in Charity) among past and present Thomasians.

As preparations for the Centennial Anniversary gain momentum, the USTHSAA invites all alumni to stay connected and participate in the upcoming events that celebrate a century of Thomasian pride and excellence.



- Rogelio Tapang, USTHS 1987

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OAR and USTAAI: Courtesy Visits to the Deans



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From attendance to advocacy: USTAAI supports alumni initiatives.



USTAAI at the heart of alumni activities



USTAAI at the opening of the 88th Season of the UAAP. Go USTe!





Caleruega's Healing Mission: A Journey of Resilience, Renewal and Service

.....from page 2

birthday and the canonization of St. Carlo Acutis and St. Pier Giorgio Frassati OP, whose intercessions were sought for favorable weather.

The mission began at 8:00 a.m. with a well-organized pre-registration led by Barangay Health Workers. A total of 432 beneficiaries received services across 13 medical specialties, namely:

- **Internal Medicine: 38**
- **Family Medicine: 34**
- **Endocrinology: 3**
- **Surgical Circumcision: 8**
- **Minor Surgery: 14**
- **Dermatology: 30**
- **ENT: 20**
- **OB-Gynecology: 18**
- **OB-Gyne Ultrasound Census: 19**
- **Pediatrics: 72**
- **Ophthalmology: 61**
- **Dental Extraction: 98**
- **Dental Fluoride Treatment: 17**

This year's mission also launched the First 1,000 Days Advocacy Program of the USTAAI, headed by Visitacion Asiddao. The program focuses on supporting mothers and infants during the critical early stages of development

to prevent stunting and promote holistic growth. Dietitians, pediatricians, OB-GYN specialists, and volunteers provided essential care and guidance to families.

The joy seen on the faces of those

served made the mission deeply rewarding. Caleruega's 30th Foundation Anniversary and Jubilee of Hope was celebrated not just with festivities, but with meaningful service to the community.

Special thanks are extended to the

1. UST Alumni Association Inc. and its member alumni associations, which supported this year's medical mission, specifically the UST Medical Alumni Association, College of Nursing AA, Faculty of Pharmacy Scholarship Alumni Foundation, Inc., College of Education Alumni Foundation Inc., Golden Cross and Saber Alumni Association, Inc., APO PI Alumni Association, Thomasian Alumni Leaders Association, Atelier Alumni Association, and all the alumni associations that gave monetary contributions.
2. Local Government Unit headed by Mayor Antonio Jose Barcelon of Nasugbu, Dr. Sarah Marquez of the Municipal Health Office, PLtCol. Roel G. Gabito and his office, Mr. Alexander James Pimentel, Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Officer of Nasugbu, Barangay Captain Rico Fenol and the Barangay Health Workers of Kaylaway, and the many doctors, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, organizers, and volunteers that made this mission possible.
3. Dr. Teresita San Juan is thanked for organizing the Dental services for tooth extractions, and Ms. Maureen Pickering for sponsoring the delicious and nutritious "lugaw" for the patients.

May the Lord, who sees your kindness to the least, reward you and your families with heavenly blessings. This commitment to community service is a true manifestation of God's unending grace.

- Fr. Christopher Jeffrey Aytona, OP, MA & Licentiate in Social/Pastoral Communication 2024



Essential medicines, supplements, and vitamins prepared for distribution at the Pharmacy Station—the final stop for patients after completing their check-ups and procedures.



UST Nursing Alumni Association volunteer nurses took patient's vital signs at the Triage area outside of the Veritas Hall.



Volunteer dentists from the Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary provided the much-needed access to basic dental care and services to patients.



PILGRIMAGE OF HOPE:

UST Alumni Journey Through Manila's Jubilee Churches

Last 21 August 2025, UST alumni embarked on a meaningful Pilgrimage of Hope to seven Jubilee Churches in the Archdiocese of Manila. The spiritual journey was organized by the UST Pax Romana Alumni Association, Inc. (PRAAI), marking the fifth Jubilee Pilgrimage of the year, as recommended by the Association's Ecclesiastical Adviser, Rev. Fr. Roberto Luanzon, Jr., O.P.

The pilgrimage began at the Santísimo Rosario Parish with a send-off blessing from Rev. Fr. Efren Rivera, O.P. What followed was a day filled with grace and abundance—warm welcomes from parish representatives who shared historical and spiritual insights, safe and traffic-free travel aboard three vans, a hearty fellowship lunch, pilgrimage T-shirts, pilgrim's passports and even a certificate of pilgrimage completion handed by one parish priest.

The seven Jubilee Churches visited were the Archdiocesan Shrine of St. Joseph, San Jose de Trozo, Sta. Cruz; Archdiocesan Shrine of Nuestra Señora de Guia, Ermita; San Fernando de Dilao, Paco; National Shrine of Our Lady of the Abandoned, Sta. Ana; Our Lady of Sorrows, F.B. Harrison; Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception (Manila Cathedral), Intramuros; and Our Lady of Loreto, Sampaloc.

Participants shared that the pilgrimage deepened their faith, heightened their appreciation of 16th-century churches and architecture, and gave them the joy of reconnecting with fellow Thomasians in prayer and fellowship.

This Jubilee Year, observed every 25 years and proclaimed by the late Pope Francis, will conclude on 6 January 2026. It calls all Catholics to spiritual renewal and to rekindle hope in a world facing crises such as war and climate change. Pilgrims are especially encouraged to live out acts of mercy and become true beacons of hope in their own communities.



- Mary Jean Guno, BS General 1978; MD 1982



At a Glance



The Diamond Ladies of USTHS Class '63

1st row: Myrna Plata-Munda, Letty Jacinto-Lopez, Susana M. Calalay (Partly hidden), Elvie Gonzalez (Honoree), Alma de Jesus (Honoree), 2nd row: Lillian Yambao-Reyes, Paulette Gacad-Angco, Cecile Bejasa-Saavedra, Lisa Natividad-Santos, Evelyn Paz-Cu, Meldy dela Cruz, Myrna Agawin-Militante, Perla Evangelista-Roy, Yola Arce-Pilar.

The Diamond Ladies of USTHS Class '63 hosted a luncheon at the Secret Recipe in Ayala One on 16 September 2025 in honor of their September-born classmates: Alma de Jesus and Elvie Gonzalez.

The hosts for this event were Cecile Bejasa-Saavedra, Lillian Yambao-Reyes, Letty Jacinto-Lopez, Susana M. Calalay, Lisa Natividad-Santos, Evelyn Paz-Cu, Meldy dela Cruz, Myrna Agawin-Militante, Perla Evangelista-Roy, Yola Arce-Pilar, Paulette Gacad-Angco, and this writer.

There were the usual frolic and banter, as the classmates recalled how they celebrated their birthdays before, how they were surprised by their family, how they gave a treat to their friends then, and a lot of other memories that they will never forget.

Trivia: Elvie Gonzalez and this writer were also classmates in their

grade school at the Cecilio Apostol Elementary School.

Events like this may not really be grand, but for those who are already Seventy Something, this is a Treasure to keep in their hearts and minds forever.

Now, sharing the thoughts of my classmate, Bro. Lito Tayag, about being 70 during these trying times. It is from the Holy Bible that we learned that 70 is a blessed year to reach. Thus, let us offer a toast for those who have reached this far!

Lito says that every time he sees an old couple walking hand in hand, he does not see just love. He sees a lifetime of choices, sacrifices and unwavering commitment to each other.

This couple may have differences in opinion, judgment, evaluation, but at the end of the day, they kiss and hold hands as if there were no differences at all.



Seated: Elvie Gonzalez (Honoree), Evelyn Paz-Cu. Standing: Meldy dela Cruz, Myrna Agawin-Militante, Alma de Jesus (Honoree), Myrna Plata-Munda.

For the young couples in our generation now, they must learn that in marriage, they must not give up so easily, like throwing the towel inside the boxing ring right away. They must learn to understand, to forgive, to be kind, to hold their horses while there is still time.

Love is patient and kind. Love does not dig up trash. Love is faithful and true and is not vindictive. What matters most is the care that you give to each other ALL the time.

- Myrna Plata Munda, USTHS 1963

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SEATED IN SENTIMENT

A Rocking Chair Exhibition
Celebrates Grandparents and Filipino Art

The “Seated in Sentiment: A Rocking Chair Art Exhibition” successfully united art and advocacy across Metro Manila and Tagaytay, celebrating Grandparents’ Day with a meaningful display. This project was a collaboration among Megaworld Lifestyle Malls, S.I.L.Y.A. (Sa Iyo Lola at Lolo, Yantok Aming Alay), and the UST Atelier Alumni Association Inc.

Key Project Highlights:

The Art: 14 rocking chairs were transformed into unique masterpieces by featured Tomasino Artists (alumni of the University of Santo Tomas Atelier).

The Advocacy: The exhibition championed S.I.L.Y.A.’s mission to ensure seniors have comfortable, dignified seating in public spaces. The chairs were available for purchase, with proceeds supporting S.I.L.Y.A.’s programs for the elderly.

Widespread Reach: The collection was distributed across seven Megaworld Lifestyle Malls to maximize public awareness of both the artists and the cause. These venues included: Eastwood City, Uptown Bonifacio, McKinley Hill, Lucky Chinatown, San Lorenzo Place Mall, Southwoods Mall, Twin Lakes (Tagaytay)

The exhibition served as a powerful reminder to cherish the elderly, turning a symbol of rest—the rocking chair—into a beautiful centerpiece for community engagement and artistic promotion.

Written by Patrick Naval CAFA ‘88
Poster Design by Elmer Dumla CAFA ’81
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FEATURED THOMASIAN

CELERINO S. PAREDES

Going for Gold

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Construction & Development Corporation and Lee Gardens Properties & Development Corporation.

Truly, the Tria Haec lives inside each Thomasian as our faith allows us to acknowledge our limitations, entrusting ourselves completely to the hands of God. Hope, on the other hand, helps us get through the darkest of times, giving us the power to overcome challenges. And love raises us above feelings, challenges and differences. It is when we have imbibed these values and put them into practice that we have struck gold.

For Celerino, the Tria Haec has given him back his bearings. He says that this is the golden moment we must strive for, because coupled with God's grace, we can indeed achieve anything when we are journeying in faith, hope and love.



Events Watch Out for in Our Next Issue



University of Santo Tomas
Alumni Association, Inc.

THE 10th DISTINGUISHED



**THOMASIAN
ALUMNI
AWARDS NIGHT**

22 NOVEMBER 2025

DR. ROBERT C. SY GRAND BALLROOM,
THOMASIAN ALUMNI CENTER
BUENAVENTURA GARCIA PAREDES, O.P., BLDG.,
UST MANILA CAMPUS

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FEATURED THOMASIAN

CELERINO S. PAREDES

Going for Gold

Achieving the best possible outcome in our lives or careers, or going for gold as they say, is everybody's dream. And this dream is not only for ourselves but also for our loved ones and those close to us. That is why it is natural for parents to invest primarily in the education of their children, choosing not only the best school but also the best course or program that suits them. Indeed, education gives us the needed head start that prepares us for when we become adults and begin building our own life and career.

And so the journey begins from the time we start going to school and continues as we go to college and graduate on to what we call the real world of work. For us, Thomasians, it is therefore no accident that we enter the Arch of the Centuries when we are welcomed to the University. In fact, going through the Arch is in keeping with that dream of us going for gold—a dream that not only belongs to our parents and loved ones, but becomes our own as we strive to give our best for our future. When we finally step out of the University, we discover that even as we have already traveled far, our journey has really just begun. And that truly going



for gold is an unending quest.

This is the lesson shared to us by our featured Thomasian, Celerino S. Paredes, a BS General graduate from UST in 1971. Serving on the Board of Directors of several large corporations keeps him busy on a day to day basis, and he is thankful that he has finally learned to balance his time between work and family. While he now attests that this is what truly makes him happy, it took a while for him to realize this, especially in the midst of what he calls “a long period dedicated to going for the gold.”

Right after graduation, Celerino lost no time in immediately building his career and in helping build businesses in trading, real estate, construction and waste management. In the process,

he spent endless days and nights pursuing success in his endeavors. He admits that this process led to sacrificing much of his personal and family time, until it took a toll on his health. That made him question his life's choices. It was a good thing that when he looked inward, he remembered the lessons taught on the history of UST as a history that has been impelled by faith, propelled by hope and compelled by love. These are the Tria Haec, symbolized by the three statues on top of the UST Main Building.

These sacrifices and realizations bore fruit that resulted in stability. Currently, Celerino forms part of the senior management team of IPM Realty & Development Corporation, IPM Trading & Development Corporation, IPM

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