

## SSC HS '87 HOMECOMING CHAIR SPEECH

Mo. Mary John Mananzan, OSB, Sr. Mary Thomas Prado, OSB, Mrs. Melba Santos-Aro and the directors of SSAFI, religious and lay administrators, teachers, fellow Scholasticans, friends and family, good evening.

Allow me to start speaking from a personal experience. In mid-1995, I flew the propeller-driven Fokker 50 for the first time with the first Filipina Commercial Pilot, Capt. Aimee Carandang. She sits with us tonight with the High School Pearl Jubilarians. It was the first ever flight with an all-female crew from the cockpit to the cabin. Deeply focused in my co-pilot duties, it never abandoned my thoughts that we were both Scholasticans. And I had hoped that like me, she thought that we both never would have been in that pioneering occasion had it not been for our God, our family, and our Scholastican education.

Years after, it was my turn to be another first in flying and instructing. But all our so-called excellence is only less than half of what needs to be told.

Allow me to take you to another story.

A pilot colleague of mine – his name is Capt. Ben - tells of a story where he was flying an airforce jet with another captain. In the midst of the flight, they lost both engines and agreed, as per SOP, to eject just before the minimum altitude for ejection. Just as they confirmed, Ben pushed his eject button and saw himself being shot up in the air. As he deployed his chute, he realized that his companion remained in the cockpit of the crashing jet. And this, because the plane was headed towards a crowded city and to remain in the plane meant being able to veer the controls to save the lives of many. It became too low for an eject... and this other pilot crashed and burned with the aircraft. In turn, hundreds of lives were saved.

The pilot's name was Capt. Grace Baluyo. She was a hero. And you know what? She, too, was a Scholastican. A Scholastican from Bacolod.

This is the greater truth of the Scholastican education. It might be called excellence with a heart. Or excellence with a passion. I might as well term it as an excellence with a soul. The exact result of the practice of ora et labora.

What then is the significance of this excellence with a soul?

Today, we celebrate the theme “Walang Kupas” – remembering friendships, values – everything that we have learned and built in ourselves within the walls of this school. But is it not that all these could not have been possible without the Scholastican education that we received?

I say this because I pose a challenge to each and every Scholastican in this Hall. As proud as we are with how our characters were built in the academe, enough to celebrate, how do we know that our children and the present Scholasticans will come home to this school and celebrate the same way that we do today?

What can we offer to this institution so that 25, 30, 50 or even a hundred years from this day, present Scholastican students can be just as proud as we are of what they will have become because of the academic, spiritual and extra-curricular education that they received?

It is our excellence with a soul; the lessons of ora et labora, that enables us to give, to be women for others, to be socially aware and active. Thus, we have to continue to help, first and foremost, in the maintenance and growth of the Scholastican education. Charity does begin at home, is that not correct? And even as we minister to others in all the many projects, let us not forget to guard and help grow, the Scholastican education that has made all of us what we are now.

Meantime, we, the Silver Jubilarians, High School Batch '87, will offer a feast that will help us remember that we take pride and joy to be Scholasticans.

And so, ladies and gentlemen... let's rock and roll!