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USC launches ‘time document’ to celebrate 500 years of life- and art-changing faith



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AHEAD of celebrations of the 500th year since Christianity arrived on our shores, the architecture and design school of the University of San Carlos (USC) has launched a “time document.”

Stories, illustrations, and reflections on how historical and religious events have shaped art and architecture, not just in Cebu but in virtually all of the Philippines, fill the special quinquennial edition of *Lantawan*, a publication (now both printed and digital) of the USC School of Architecture, Fine Arts, and Design (SAFAD).

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“The recording and retelling of our history is also a history in itself that needs to be documented as well as communicated,” said university president Fr. Narciso Cellan Jr., SVD, during the launch held during a Facebook Live event on Thursday afternoon, February 18.

“As the Philippines celebrates the history of 500 years of Christianity, we embark on a unique journey of extending and creating another chapter of Filipino Christian history,” he added.

Before the pandemic, elaborate celebrations had been planned.

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For one, SAFAD and the School of Engineering had been commissioned to design a memorial in Limasawa, where 499 lampposts and a Tower of Light on a mountain peak would have been built. But public health restrictions to curb the spread of Covid-19 shelved most of the plans.

Despite the changes, Cebu Archbishop Jose Palma urged the magazine launch’s participants and the entire community to make 2021 a different year by celebrating “the gift of faith” in this “once-in-a-lifetime celebration of God’s presence journeying with us.”

Lantawan editor-in-chief Brother Bela Lanyi, SVD, thanked the writers, artists, and CAD operators who worked on the stories about how 500 years of Christianity have shaped our landscapes and spaces and about “how architecture and art support our faith.”

A combination of scholarly and reader-friendly stories, about the urban history of Cebu, for example, and about how the story of faith is told on Cebu’s beautiful church ceilings, fill the issue.

“It is wonderful,” said Brother Lanyi, “how so many versions of the same image, the Santo Niño, are found in Cebu.” One of the essays in the magazine, by the artist Jojo Sagayno, reflects on the many representations of the Child Jesus, from priceless collections and historical churches, to humble home altars and jeepney dashboards.

Another contributor, Fr. Brian Brigoli, urged the community to cherish church buildings that have become important cultural properties or national treasures, and explained that it was a papal encyclical in 1971 that directed that “the sacred treasures of the church” be preserved.

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Fr. Brigoli chairs the Cebu Archdiocesan Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church.

All current Carolinians may download an online copy of Lantawan magazine’s special edition through the university’s ISMIS portal. This is due to the generosity of student organizations of USC-SAFAD who contribute to the magazine through an amount in their tuition. SAFAD students, teachers, and staff will also receive the printed copy of this magazine at SAFAD in the first days of March 2021.

Guests outside USC may order printed copies through the e-commerce site of Megatexts Philippines Inc. These will be delivered to any place in the Philippines through Lazada. **(PR)**

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