

## Teaching Catholic Social Thought Online in the Philippines: From a Challenge to an Opportunity

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**T**HE ATENEO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY (AdMU) was established in 1859 by the Society of Jesus. It provides education from the elementary to the professional level.<sup>1</sup> AdMU consistently remains one of the top universities in the Philippines and the world.<sup>2</sup> Its distinguished alumni include Jose Rizal (Class of 1877), the national hero of the Philippines; Benigno Aquino III (Class of 1981), President of the Philippine Republic from 2010 to 2016; Maria Lourdes Sereno (Class of 1980), *de facto* Chief Justice of the Philippine Supreme Court from 2012 to 2018; and Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle (Class of 1977), the Prefect for the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples who, right before his Vatican appointment, taught homiletics part-time in AdMU's federated institution, the Loyola School of Theology.<sup>3</sup> As a young Filipino lay moral theologian, I was accepted as a first-time teacher of Catholic Social Thought (CST) in AdMU. Problematically, I was accepted during a global pandemic. Not only did I have to teach for the first time under stressful circumstances, but I had to do so in an online setting and, compounding the situation, had to design my course with limited assistance.<sup>4</sup>

In this essay, I share my experiences as well as five pedagogical suggestions for teaching CST, which were the fruits of my reflection while teaching. These are that: CST pedagogy must [1] be animated by *magis* and *cura personalis*, [2] reflect the “mystery” of CST, [3] be social and egalitarian, [4] foster a spirit of encounter, and [5] be learner-centered. These five suggestions have relevance for both online and face-to-face pedagogy. Equally, I suggest, they have the potential to effectively respond to the needs of learners in poverty—a practice of CST via its pedagogy.

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<sup>1</sup> AdMU is composed of an elementary, high school, college, law school, medical, and public health school, business school, and government school.

<sup>2</sup> AdMU was the top private university in the Philippines in the 2023 QS World University Rankings, see:

[www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2023](http://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2023).

<sup>3</sup> Cardinal Tagle took AB pre-divinity for his undergraduate course.

<sup>4</sup> I did, however, have much professional encouragement from my colleagues.

**AdMU'S EXPERIENCE IN TRANSITIONING TO ONLINE TEACHING**

Due to the increase in Covid-19 cases, face-to-face classes in all levels throughout Metropolitan Manila were suspended beginning March 9, 2020, for what many thought would be a week or two at most. In retrospect, most face-to-face classes would not resume for nearly two years. On March 17, the main island of Luzon was placed on total lockdown. The Philippines reputedly had one of the world's longest lockdowns and one of the most stringent at times. Its regulations varied over the months according to the pandemic's development. The months of March and April 2020 fell under Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ), the strictest level.<sup>5</sup> Like all schools, AdMU was compelled to shift to online teaching when the ECQ was implemented. In this unfortunate state of affairs, some professors with years of teaching experience needed assistance in dealing with the digital world beyond email and basic software. Students were divided by their varying levels of internet connection, a considerable thing in a country beset by slow internet. Through the problems, online classes confusingly proceeded.

In a compassionate gesture, AdMU implemented a pass-all scheme for its eligible students at the beginning of April 2020. It was one of the first schools in the country to do so. According to the Vice-President of the Loyola Schools, Maria Luz C. Vilches:

Giving a P [Pass] mark is the most humane way of dealing with student grades under the circumstances that we are in, where it is difficult and unfair to make a judgment of failure considering that students have not been given the benefit of a full semester to improve their performance.<sup>6</sup>

It also shortened its semester by a few weeks and even refunded some of its tuition. While all these measures soothed semestral worries, it did not yet address long-term concerns. It became apparent with the increase in infections that the campus would not be safe for face-to-face classes in the foreseeable future. In a difficult decision, AdMU decided to offer the academic year 2020–2021 completely online. In retrospect, Rapanta and colleagues rightly observed that “the rapid closing-off of face-to-face educational work, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, gave teachers a strong sense of the difference between online teaching and their other modes of operation.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> ECQs would be reimposed in Metropolitan Manila in April and August of 2021.

<sup>6</sup> For reference, the full memo is entitled “Remapping Academic Life in the Second Semester, SY 2019–2020.” It can be found in the following link: [drive.google.com/file/d/1C73bNCHdilFxmGVBAr9a2TQBs3or07cF/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1C73bNCHdilFxmGVBAr9a2TQBs3or07cF/view).

<sup>7</sup> Chrysi Rapanta, Luca Botturi, Peter Goodyear, Lourdes Guàrdia, and Marguerite Koole, “Online University Teaching during and after the Covid-19 Crisis: Refocusing

The first order of business was to unify the online platform to be used for classes. AdMU launched the AteneoBlueCloud Canvas, adapted from the Canvas learning management system. In a university-wide memo issued on May 7, the then-president of AdMU, Fr. Jose Villarin, SJ, stated that:

This coming school year [2020–2021], we are implementing innovative educational initiatives that are uniquely Jesuit and Atenean. We are delighted to announce AteneoBlueCloud (ABC), the vision behind all our new initiatives in online education, capturing Ateneo’s distinctive approach called Adaptive Design for Learning to this innovative way of educating. AteneoBlueCloud will brand not only our virtual campus, but also the vibrant online community of learners and educators that we hope to build. It will be distinguished by the essential markers of Jesuit education, which is designed to transform the whole person into someone imbued with the spirit of *magis* and *cura personalis*. This means continuing to educate a person who can think critically, collaboratively, and creatively and, at the same time, serve and lead with competence and character.<sup>8</sup>

A close reading of the excerpt shows that AdMU’s pedagogical intervention is animated by Ignatian spirituality. Explanations of two terms found in the excerpt are necessary to understand this, particularly for those unfamiliar with Ignatian spirituality. *Magis* is the Latin word for “more.” In the context of Ignatian spirituality, it pertains to the conscious decision to achieve greater service for God, which is expressed in the motto of the Society of Jesus, *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam* (for the greater glory of God). It does not mean being the best all the time, but rather seeking and offering the best out of every situation to God. Online learning presents many challenges to the students, but it can help them develop a sense of *magis* if properly guided by the teacher. In this regard, *cura personalis* are the Latin words for “care for the whole person.” In the context of Ignatian spirituality, it pertains to the holistic formation of the person. It seeks to develop a person not just mentally, but physically and spiritually as well. Online learning presents many challenges for teachers in this regard. Teachers must not only teach students but also help them cope with the debilitating effects of prolonged online learning. Similarly, teachers must compensate for the absence of personal encounters by extending help often to the students. *Cura personalis* challenges teachers to carefully consider the unique circumstances of each student instead of just responding generically.

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Teacher Presence and Learning Activity,” *Postdigital Science and Education* 2, no. 9 (2020): 923–45, link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s42438-020-00155-y.

<sup>8</sup> For reference, the full memo can be found in the following link: [drive.google.com/file/d/11tUrUUMxrd30UfnYlKWEqlp\\_NrTr82a-/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/11tUrUUMxrd30UfnYlKWEqlp_NrTr82a-/view).

Brooding over these Latin phrases, my first suggestion is that *magis* and *cura personalis* must characterize a CST pedagogy. Precisely because CST begins with the idea that human society needs Gospel values does *magis* make sense for a CST pedagogy: it animates the notion that authentic *metanoia*, both individual and social, begins within, and extraordinary social injustices demand extraordinary social action. At the same time, CST may expose social injustices in ways unfamiliar to students. Importantly, these same social injustices may condition the environment from which some students come thereby striking a sensitive chord. More privileged students may feel ashamed at the disparity between themselves and marginalized sectors. *Cura personalis* in this way helps the student be empowered by CST rather than be disheartened by it. Bergman, however, proposes that “one of the primary tasks of Catholic social learning, as for Catholic education generally, is the fostering of healthy shame—or, as we are more likely to say, the formation of conscience.”<sup>9</sup> It is important that educators of CST handle Bergman’s proposal responsibly. Just as the implementation of CST requires principles properly adapted to the circumstances of the locale, so too, CST pedagogy must be properly adapted to the circumstances of students.

A stark change in the 2020–2021 academic year was the shift from a semestral system to a quarter one. Normally, there would be three semesters, an intersession (June–July), the first semester (August–December), and the second semester (January–May). Students would take an average of six classes or eighteen units per regular semester. But in the quarter system, the first and second semesters would each be divided into two parts for a total of four quarters. Each quarter would be eight weeks long. Students would now take an average of three classes or nine units per quarter. The premise behind this change was that it would be better for students to focus on a few classes over a contracted period than many classes over a long one. While this may be reasonable under the circumstances, there are pedagogical concerns about whether the contracted learning time compounded by online teaching is optimal for learning. This was a problem for CST courses offered by AdMU’s theology department, where I was a new faculty member.<sup>10</sup>

### MY EXPERIENCE DESIGNING A CST COURSE

AdMU initially chose not to accept any more employees for the academic year 2020–2021 as a cost-cutting measure; it soon became clear that the influx of new students was greater than expected. As

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<sup>9</sup> Roger Bergman, *Catholic Social Learning: Educating the Faith that Does Justice* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 144.

<sup>10</sup> AdMU reverted to the semestral system for the academic year 2021–2022 after consultation with the university body.

such, AdMU began accepting new employees, and so I was accepted as lecturer at the theology department. Because of my specialization in moral theology, I was assigned to teach “TH 141: Theology of the Catholic Social Vision” to senior students during the fourth quarter (April–June), for the last time. AdMU underwent curriculum overhaul in 2017 where the course was rebranded as Theo 12 for sophomore students. By the academic year 2021–2022, the new curriculum took over entirely.

I had taken TH 141 in 2016, so I was familiar with the basic expectations of the course. In the spirit of academic freedom, I wanted to creatively craft my own take on it. Helpfully, AdMU’s theology department had an online repository of materials to draw upon. Some were sample courses designed by other teachers free to be copied and changed as desired. In the sample courses I found online, one module was dedicated to Catholic social teaching and principles (Cst/Csp). For my part, I envisioned an online CST course that would focus on Cst/Csp. I would soon learn that designing an online CST course is a difficult but creative exercise. Citing Carr-Chellman and Duchastel, Rapata and colleagues state that “the essence of an online course is the organization of learning activities that enable the student to reach certain learning outcomes.”<sup>11</sup> In their words, Rapata and colleagues add that:

While there is no unique recipe, these activities or tasks should be based on a mix of design approaches (synchronous, asynchronous, online, offline), be described and communicated in an accurate and clear manner, have an adequate level of difficulty for students’ capabilities and expectations, be related to authentic contexts to increase students’ engagement and be accessible to everyone—taking into consideration the various practicalities that lie behind, for example, having a stable Internet connection, printing facilities or access to resources.<sup>12</sup>

The underlying learning outcome of my course was to enable my students to know how to use CST to assess different issues in the Philippines. I divided my course into six modules. Module 1 presented the historical development of Cst/Csp. Modules 2 to 5 were structured on the four basic Catholic social principles of human dignity, solidarity, subsidiarity, and the common good. Within each of them were topics I judged to be a good manifestation of the principle. For example, human rights were under human dignity, preferential option for the poor and the vulnerable under solidarity, the family under subsidiarity, and

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<sup>11</sup> Rapanta, Botturi, Goodyear, Guàrdia, and Koole, “Online University Teaching during and after the Covid-19 Crisis,” 937.

<sup>12</sup> Rapanta, Botturi, Goodyear, Guàrdia, and Koole, “Online University Teaching during and after the Covid-19 Crisis,” 937.

Integral Ecology under the common good.<sup>13</sup> Catholic social teachings and Scripture contextualized the modules.

As I designed my course, I kept in mind that CST is distinct from secular social theories in that it comprises an element of “mystery.” Far from being a vehicle for proselytism, CST can be an avenue for recognizing “the mystery within human existence,”<sup>14</sup> as Whittle describes Karl Rahner’s attitude towards Catholic education.<sup>15</sup> Because CST contains an element of “mystery,” my second suggestion is that CST pedagogy must reflect this. This may be done by recognizing the transcendental character of the Church’s social teachings and principles throughout the course. Whittle suggests that educational presuppositions which deem rational development as the only consideration need to be reconsidered in light of Rahner’s theology of mystery. Whittle states that “[Rahner’s] theological insistence about the significance of certain kinds of mystery draws attention to an aspect of workings of reason that is typically overlooked in theories of education.”<sup>16</sup> Hence, the common good, for example, is valued not just for its temporal benefits but also for its salvific orientation.

A module was to be released each Sunday. I chose not to release them all at the same time out of concern that students would go through them all in just a few days and would spend the rest of the semester without bothering to check the course again. My course content blended a variety of media composed of articles, images, and videos. For my requirements, I deviated from my colleagues’ practice of assigning mostly typewritten papers. Instead, I wrote seven sets of reflective questions which the students were assigned to answer with at least 120 words each, substantiated by credible sources. I thought this set-up to be advantageous because the students did not have to upload a file and their answers were public to their peers for comment or critique. My questions were grounded in Philippine realities. Pope Paul VI’s words are relevant here. He said that:

It is up to Christian communities to analyze with objectivity the situation which is proper to their own country, to shed on it the light of the Gospel’s unalterable words and to draw principles of reflection,

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<sup>13</sup> To give a full outline, I placed human rights and dignity of work under human dignity; Christological dimensions, preferential option for the poor and the vulnerable, poverty and economic justice, liberation theology, social justice and evangelization, and mental health under solidarity; family and federalism under subsidiarity; integral ecology, business ethics, and participation under the common good.

<sup>14</sup> Sean Whittle, “Towards a Contemporary Philosophy of Catholic Education: Moving the Debate Forward,” *International Studies in Catholic Education* 6, no. 1 (2014): 46–59, [www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19422539.2013.869953](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19422539.2013.869953).

<sup>15</sup> What is referred to here is not necessarily education of Catholic doctrine, but education guided by Catholic values. Since teaching CST falls under both, Rahner’s attitude applies fittingly.

<sup>16</sup> Whittle, “Towards a Contemporary Philosophy of Catholic Education,” 55.

norms of judgement and directives for action from the social teaching of the Church. (*Octogesima Adveniens*, no. 4)

The use of reflective questions rather than clear-cut answers is supported by what Whitmore describes as the Aristotelian–Thomistic tradition of practical reason. By grounding the students’ appreciation for CST, especially as described in the social documents, in Philippine realities, their answers manifest the *phronesis* of the Church’s social teachings. As Whitmore states:

Within this *exitus et reditus* context [i.e., humanity’s destiny to return to God], the social teaching has all of the earmarks of practical reason: (1) its aim is to direct human activity or *praxis*, (2) regarding areas of life that are subject to change, (3) with less precision than theoretical reason, (4) and with the particular focus on which social arrangements facilitate and which hinder the practice of virtue.<sup>17</sup>

The public nature of their answers also fostered social and egalitarian learning. Whereas face-to-face teaching normally requires direct submission of requirements to the teacher with only him or her knowing the answer, online assignments provided a communal sense of learning. Students were encouraged to learn not only from the materials and me, but from each other. Thus, my third suggestion is that good CST pedagogy must be social and egalitarian just as the material promotes social and egalitarian concepts. While this can also be true for other humanities and social sciences courses, CST remains distinct because it is inherently oriented towards societal transformation according to the Gospel. In such a paradigm, social and egalitarian collaboration among students is not only optimal for the acquisition of data but also for mutual formation.

As a final requirement and further manifestation of *phronesis*, I asked my students to submit a two-page typewritten paper that reflected on a sectoral issue through any four topics found in the modules. Before the pandemic, TH 141 was paired with an immersion experience in which students would spend several days in a community. The community could be farming, fishing, indigenous, etc. The purpose of the immersion experience was to give students an encounter with people less privileged than themselves. During the pandemic, the immersion experience was transformed into an online talk and group-sharing. Out of concern that students would forget their virtual immersion experience by the end of the quarter, I ensured that their final requirement re-engaged with it. The paper was an exercise on the pas-

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<sup>17</sup> Todd D. Whitmore, “Practicing the Common Good: The Pedagogical Implications of Catholic Social Teaching,” *Teaching Theology and Religion* 3, no. 1 (2000): 4.

toral cycle of immersion experience, social analysis, theological reflection, and pastoral action, which constituted Module 6 of my course. In this way, the prophetic voices of the bishops who authored *Iustitia in Mundo* reverberate today, even if they did not anticipate the virtuality of the encounter. They wrote that education for justice is “a practical education: it comes through action, participation, and vital contact with the reality of injustice” (no. 53). In light of this, CST pedagogy must foster a spirit of encounter. Citing Rachel Jones, Hanchin reminds us that relations are the “constitutive and always embodied site of education understood as an ongoing and open-ended process.”<sup>18</sup> With this in mind, Hanchin refers to Nel Noddings’s identification of “encounter as integral to care animating relational pedagogy.”<sup>19</sup>

In the context of this essay, this can be manifested in five relationships: [1] teacher and student, [2] student and transcendental, [3] student and fellow student, [4] student and world, and [5] student and self. The first relationship has a basis in my first suggestion on *magis* and *cura personalis*, the second in my second suggestion on the “mystery” of CST, and the third in my third suggestion on social and egalitarian learning. While a spirit of encounter should permeate all five relationships, it is especially important to structure the course to support encounters in the fourth relationship. CST should not be taught devoid of the voices of the economically vulnerable and it is less than ideal if their voices are filtered through media or spokespersons. Thus, my fourth suggestion is that CST pedagogy must foster a spirit of encounter by exerting every means to bring students into the world as understood by the economically vulnerable, so that they may speak directly to students. What Pope Francis stated in the context of inter-religious dialogue is also apt for inter-class dialogue:

Each one of us is called to be an artisan of peace, uniting and not dividing, extinguishing hatred and not harboring it, opening the ways of dialogue and not raising new walls! We must dialogue, meet with one another to establish in the world the culture of dialogue, the culture of encounter.<sup>20</sup>

With regard to the fifth relationship, the student and self, my course was primarily asynchronous, but it had three online class meetings. The asynchronous set-up of my course was an attempt at pedagogical

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<sup>18</sup> Timothy Hanchin, “Encounter and/as Pedagogy for Catholic Higher Education in Our Time,” *Religious Education* 114, no. 5 (2019): 565–80, [www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00344087.2019.1631975](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00344087.2019.1631975).

<sup>19</sup> Hanchin, “Encounter and/as Pedagogy for Catholic Higher Education in Our Time,” 573.

<sup>20</sup> Pope Francis, “Address to the Participants International Meeting for Peace by the Sant’Egidio Community,” September 30, 2013, [zenit.org/2013/09/30/pope-francis-address-to-the-participants-international-meeting-for-peace-by-the-sant-egidio/](http://zenit.org/2013/09/30/pope-francis-address-to-the-participants-international-meeting-for-peace-by-the-sant-egidio/).

subsidiarity similar to that suggested by Whitmore.<sup>21</sup> Students were encouraged to acknowledge that they are primarily responsible for their education. As such, my fifth suggestion is that CST pedagogy must be learner-centered. As their lecturer, I provided support in their asynchronous learning enterprise rather than paternalistic instruction. It should be noted that this form of pedagogical subsidiarity does not apply equally well to all subjects. Some of AdMU's faculty and students found that the natural sciences and mathematics require more synchronous sessions than subjects in the humanities. Nevertheless, the pedagogical shift during the pandemic has challenged teachers' sense of purpose. In a post-pandemic era, I argue that teachers should take a more supportive role in the physical classroom instead of a paternalistic one. Students should take more responsibility for their learning in post-pandemic face-to-face classes similar to pandemic online classes.

Go and Atienza expound on this notion of pedagogical subsidiarity by presenting three roles of the student as an inquirer, meaning-maker, and creator. In turn, the teacher has the corresponding roles of designer, facilitator, and coach.<sup>22</sup> Citing Tapscott, Go and Atienza claim that "the way we behave as learners tends to resemble the way we act as members of the audience."<sup>23</sup> The pedagogical shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered demands that "teaching practices should suit an entire breed of students who have constant access to updated information delivered to them in a most interactive and portable way."<sup>24</sup> Simply put, face-to-face classes must appropriate the aspect of internet culture where the individual has more autonomy in learning. Online classes are best framed not in opposition to but in complement to face-to-face classes, and vice-versa.

### MY EXPERIENCE TEACHING THE COURSE

AdMU decided to shorten the fourth quarter from eight to seven weeks to give ample time for teachers and students to rest. While principally good, it was ironically also stressful for many teachers to reconfigure their course schedules. Over the seven weeks, many of my students submitted their answers within six hours of the deadline, eight days after the release of the reflective questions. It was a matter of concern to me that some of their answers had no reference to CST. It seemed that their answers were made apart from the CST lessons and concepts. Nevertheless, the students generally exceeded the 120-word

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<sup>21</sup> Whitmore, "Practicing the Common Good," 15.

<sup>22</sup> Johnny C. Go and Riza J. Atienza, *Learning by Refraction: A Practitioner's Guide to 21st-Century Ignatian Pedagogy* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2019), 31.

<sup>23</sup> Go and Atienza, *Learning by Refraction*, 13.

<sup>24</sup> Go and Atienza, *Learning by Refraction*, 14.

minimum by double the number of words signifying a desire to articulate well.

I provided individual formative comments for their answers in the encouragement of *magis* and as a sign of *cura personalis*. Every synchronous session began and ended with a prayer to cultivate a sense of “mystery.” Some students also provided their feedback to their classmates’ answers for social and egalitarian learning. They had virtual immersion with five marginalized sectors to foster a spirit of encounter. To gauge their learning, I released a suggestion survey midway through the course for any changes they desired in deference to the learner-centered nature of the course. One illuminating response was that, due to other commitments, a student preferred a more self-paced course rather than the more scheduled course I designed. What interested me was that the student was the only one among my twenty-three students to receive a perfect mark for the course. I assured the student that I would take into consideration the feedback for future course offerings. During the course, I received private messages from three students. They all informed me that a family member was sick which hindered their ability to optimally participate in the course. In the spirit once more of *cura personalis*, I emailed each of them reminding them of their deadlines lest they lag in the course.

Fortunately, my course ended well with all the students passing and their grades submitted on time. I realized afterward that as a possible integrating exercise on the first to fifth suggestions for future course offerings, the students, aided by personal prayer and discernment, could collaborate with the economically vulnerable in crafting CST-based policies for their communities, with the teacher and fellow students helping refine the policies. These policies could be drafted into a set of recommendations to be forwarded to the local government for consideration in implementing existing legislation. Happily, my first-time teaching CST sparked further creativity in me.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

My aspiration in becoming a teacher of CST was to make a visible impact on my students. With the onset of online teaching, it seemed I was going to be disappointed. As I taught CST online over seven weeks, my aspiration was emboldened though modified to consider the conditions of online teaching. In my opinion, teaching CST has become all the more imperative given the injustices in the Philippines worsened by the pandemic. Millions of Filipinos were left jobless, thereby contributing to the already dire economic gaps, and the number of human rights abuses increased. By teaching CST online in a predominantly Catholic country constantly striving for justice, I hope to have inspired university students to graduate with the firm resolution to respond to the “signs of the times.” Teaching CST online has

also led me to constructive ends. While a challenge in terms of designing, I recognized it as an opportunity to develop a CST pedagogy.

As suggested in this essay, CST pedagogy must [1] be animated by *magis* and *cura personalis*, [2] reflect the “mystery” of CST, [3] be social and egalitarian, [4] foster a spirit of encounter, and [5] be learner-centered. These five suggestions underlie the case that students learn CST best by experiencing it pedagogically.<sup>25</sup> Hence, I invite others to consider these five suggestions when teaching CST, both face-to-face and online, and adapt them according to local circumstances. In this regard, Go and Atienza recommend *tantum quantum*, which is Latin for “in as much as” or “insofar as.” According to them, “for St. Ignatius of Loyola, *tantum quantum* is an invitation to discern what is helpful and to make the most of it, while feeling completely free to discard the rest.”<sup>26</sup>


The five suggestions were the fruits of my reflection while teaching during a global health crisis. While the Covid-19 pandemic will eventually end, the pandemic of poverty the Philippines is mired in will persist much longer. Poverty constitutes a great hindrance to learning. As such, the five suggestions proffered in this essay have the potential to effectively respond to the needs of learners in poverty. I encourage their pedagogical adaptation in the poverty context. As an example, social and egalitarian learning of CST may encourage sharing of limited resources among learners in poverty as an actual practice of CST. Finally, since the Philippines extended online learning for the academic year 2021–2022, I invite further research to uncover the long-term pedagogical implications of online learning in the country. The government did allow medical and allied courses to conduct limited face-to-face classes in early 2021 and limited face-to-face undergraduate classes in February 2022. Moving on, I hope to teach for the first time in a physical classroom by August 2022. I am eager to see what new insights I can gain from that experience. For now, I end with another quote by Pope Francis:

Teaching is a *beautiful profession* ... because it allows us to see the people who are entrusted to our care grow day after day. It is a little like being parents, at least spiritually. It is a great responsibility! Teaching is a serious commitment that only a mature and well-balanced person can undertake. Such a commitment can be intimidating but remember that no teacher is ever alone: they always share their

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<sup>25</sup> As a sixth suggestion, I propose that CST pedagogy must be interdisciplinary, in recognition of the valuable aid that the social sciences give towards a fuller moral assessment of social issues, but I will leave this for another essay.

<sup>26</sup> Go and Atienza, *Learning by Refraction*, 150.

work with other colleagues and the entire educational community to which they belong.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Pope Francis, “Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to Members of the Italian Union of Catholic School Teachers, Managers, Educators and Trainers,” March 14, 2015, [www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/march/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150314\\_uciim.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/march/documents/papa-francesco_20150314_uciim.html).