

Superior General Br. Armin Luistro, FSC (2022 – 2028)

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ABSTRACT

The shift in power and influence from the West to the East has been predicted by Ian Morris in terms of 1. Energy capture, 2. War making capability, 3. Organization, and 4. Information technology. Kishmore Mahbubani affirms that the New Asian Hemisphere is participating in global power. In the context of a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) global situation, Mahbubani and Sng assert that the Association of South East Asian countries (ASEAN) is becoming a catalyst for peace. The election of Br. Armin Luistro, FSC as the 25th Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools symbolizes the rise into power of an Asian, managing a global organization of Western origin. The Philippines as a colony of Spain and America has become a country on its own. The De La Salle Brothers of 1911 were Americans and Europeans; later on De La Salle Philippines is managed by Filipino Brothers. Br. Benildo Feliciano, FSC, Br. Victor Franco, FSC, Br. Ray Suplido, FSC, and Br. Ricardo Laguda, FSC became general councilors; they are the precursors of Filipino participation in global governance of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Br. Armin Luistro, FSC as Superior General manifests the new Filipino Asian leadership in a Western religious educational organization founded by St. John Baptist de la Salle.

Keywords: Superior General, De La Salle Philippines, Brothers of the Christian Schools, Leadership, VUCA world, Great Period of Change

I. INTRODUCTION

The Galactic Phenomenon was described by cosmologists Christin Page, Gregg Braden, and Erwin Laszlo as the Great Period of Change. According to Christine Page (2008), we live in “an extraordinary time in the planet’s history. In 2012, for the first time in almost 26,000 years, our sun will be most closely aligned to the Galactic Center. This Galactic Alignment, which began with the Harmonic convergence in 1987 and will conclude in 2023, presents a 36-year window of opportunity for humanity to participate in the creation of a new era of expanded consciousness.” (Page, 2008, back cover). The term of Br. Armin Luistro FSC begins in the year 2022 and ends in 2028. Within this period the Great Period of Change would have ended in 2023 because our galaxy would have passed through the Black Hole and would have emerged into a spiritual civilization of peace and harmony.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This paper is a qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 2011); it is anchored on significant events that provide an understanding of the Great Period of Change (1987-2023). It is heuristic (Moustakas, 1990) because it provides the researchers and the webinar audience to discover and learn something for themselves in understanding the current world situation described as a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) world. It takes into account the past events of the 50 years of Philippine history (1972 Martial Law to 2022 Presidential Election) and it makes sense of its impact to our present situation and hints at the possibilities in the future (Smith, 2015; Sela-Smith, 2002; Hudtohan, 2005; Gonzalez, Luz, & Tirol, 1984). The methodology is multi-valuate (Richardson, 2015) because it deals with various disciplines related to public governance, politics, economics, education, technology and ecology. This is an exploratory discourse (Stebbins, 2011) intended to study, examine, analyze and investigate the need to understand current events in order to have some indicators that conflict and chaos will end by 2023.

III. DISCUSSION

3.1 Global Leadership

3.1.1 From West to East

In *Why the West rules – for now*, Ian Morris (2011) compares how well the human race has done in the East and the West during the last 15,000 years. He argues that it is physical geography, rather than culture, religion, politics, genetics or great men, that explains Western domination of the globe – for now. He concludes that the West dominates the world because of 1. Energy capture, 2. War making capability, 3. Organization, and 4. Information technology.

Kishore Mahbubani (2008) in *The New Asian Hemisphere*. Says that the West, must gracefully share power with Asia by giving up its automatic domination of global institutions from the IMF to the World Bank, from the G7 to the UN Security Council. For centuries, the Asians (Chinese, Indians, Muslims, and Filipinos) have been bystanders in world history. Now they are ready to become co-drivers. Asians have finally understood, absorbed, and implemented Western best practices in many areas: from free-market economics to modern science and technology, from meritocracy to rule of law. They have also become innovative in their own way, creating new patterns of cooperation not seen in the West.

Will the West resist the rise of Asia? The good news is that Asia wants to replicate, not dominate, the West. For a happy outcome to emerge, the West must gracefully give up its domination of global institutions, from the IMF to the World Bank, from the G7 to the UN Security Council. The religious order of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, a religious order founded by a Frenchman John Baptist de la Salle has recently elected the first Filipino Superior General Brother Armin Luistro, FSC. The reality of an Asian leading a global Western organization is a manifestation of the West accepting an Eastern leadership.

Mahbubani and Sng (2017) in their book, *The ASEAN miracle* aver that "In an era of growing economic pessimism, where many young people believe that their lives will get worse in the coming decades, Southeast Asia bubbles with optimism. In an era where many thinkers predict rising geopolitical competition and tension, ASEAN regularly brings together all the world's great powers. Stories of peace are told less frequently than stories of conflict and war. ASEAN's imperfections make better headlines than its achievements." (Book jacket). The election of Br. Armin Luistro FSC is a beacon of hope for the youth in Asia and all over the world that their future will be bright through Lasallian education.

3.1.2 Philippine Christianity 500 Years

The 500 Years of Christianity in the Philippines celebrations is part of the larger 2021 Quincentennial Commemorations in the Philippines (2021 QCP) event organized by the Philippine government. The Philippine national government aims to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Filipinos' first contact with the Spanish in 1521 from a Filipino-centric point of view in 2021. The National Quincentennial Committee (NQC) was formed for this purpose in May 2018, when President Rodrigo Duterte issued Executive Order (EO) No. 55. President Duterte issued EO 103 on January 28, 2019 formalizing the intent for the commemorations to be "Filipino-centric" and expanded the membership and scope of the NQC.

The Philippines had 500 years (1521-2021) of Spanish colonial influence. The presence of Spain in our Motherland has left an indelible imprint in our Catholic educational system which continues to this day. The 350 years Hispanic of colonial presence may have altered the psyche of the Filipino but indigenous *kalooban* continues to operate in pre-Spanish modalities. The Moral Recovery Program of the Department of Education and Culture after EDSA I and the Basic Education Curriculum of DepEd in 2002 were designed to revisit the cultural roots of the Filipino and to serve as backbone of a patriotic citizenry in public schools. Br. Armin Luistro FSC as Secretary of the Department of Education pioneered in reengineering the basic education through an expanded high school curriculum of K-12.

Hispanic Curriculum. Under the Patronato Real, Spain colonized and evangelized the Philippine islands at the same time (Constantino, 1975). The work of the missionaries in proclaiming the Gospel was at the same time linked with the work of the soldiers to conquer and colonize. In a sense, education became an instrument of conquest.

Thus, education during the colonial period under Spain was religion-oriented aimed primarily to Christianize and conquer the Filipinos. The parochial or convent schools ran by the friars taught the 3 R's of reading, writing and religion. The main reading materials consisted of the cartilla, the caton, and the catechism (Andres, 1989; Alzona, 1932). Christian doctrine was part of the curriculum in primary education. Education was for the children of the elite (*illustado*) who had the means to send their children to the parish school for elementary instruction (*primera enseñanza*) with Latin grammar, classics, arithmetic and Christian doctrine. Secondary education (*segunda enseñanza*) led to a degree in Bachelor of Arts and others would pursue higher education abroad (Santiago, 2001). Christian doctrine was taught side-by-side with the humanities during the Spanish period, as there was no legal separation of the Church and the Spanish government.

The Educational Decree of 1863 promulgated by the King of Spain called for the establishment of elementary, secondary, and collegiate education in the Philippine archipelago. It envisioned two elementary schools in each town, one primary school for boys and one primary school for girls (Tulio, 1999). Manila, Cebu, Vigan, Jaro and Nueva Caceres were designated to provide secondary education. The University of Sto. Tomas, considered at that time as the apex of Christian learning, offered education at the collegiate level. The entire school system was under the supervision and control of the Junta de Gobierno and the Junta de Administrativo del Material de Escuelas. The *alcalde mayor* inspected the elementary schools at the provincial level and the parish priest at the local level (Calderon, 2002).

3.1.3 American Democratic Heritage 100 Years

The conquest by America after 1898 left an imprint in our democratic form of government, legal system and educational system. Today, the freedom of worship and practice of religion for all of the Philippine citizenry is protected by the provision under Separation of Church and State in Article III, Sec. 5 of the Philippine Constitution. While the State does not favor any religion, it essentially allows its citizen to enjoy freedom of worship and profession of religion. (Sison, 2001).

Because of the principle of separation of Church and State, a public school teacher is not allowed to discuss religious matters in the classroom. For Catholics studying in public schools, this means they receive no lessons at all regarding their faith. The criticism against the public school is that children are growing up without any knowledge of the creed, the sacraments, and the commandments. The alternative is to send the children to a parish school or a Sunday school.

The advent of Philippine Independence fueled by the nationalist spirit, which included anti-friar, and to a certain extent anti-Catholic sentiment saw the Roman Catholic Church in crisis. With the defeat of Spain by American forces, Gen. Aguinaldo's Republic under a revolutionary government closed the schools maintained for more than 300 years by the Spaniards. The Malolos Congress placed all universities, colleges, secondary and elementary schools under State control and the administration and supervision of elementary schools were removed from the priests and transferred to local authorities (Calderon, 1998). Gov. William Taft appealed to the Holy See to remove the friars in order to gain control of the elite. It was noted that there was significant departures from the Philippines and the friars were removed from parishes and retired in Manila. (Schumacher, 1990).

It was President McKinley who instructed the Philippine Commission in 1900 to give priority to "the extension of a system of primary instruction which shall be free for all and which shall tend to fit the people for duties of citizenship and for the ordinary avocation of a civilized community." (Encarnacion, 1959).

The Schuman Commission under the American regime established a secularized and free public school system. The Taft Commission enforced free primary instruction, which had an emphasis on the duties of citizenship and avocation. Through the Educational Act No. 74 of 1901, the Philippine Commission installed a highly centralized public school system. Under its provisions, the department of public instruction, headed by the general superintendent, took control of all schools and forbade the teaching of religion in public schools (Alzona, 1932).

However, it must be noted that the 1900 Annual Report of the Department of Interior allowed religious instruction in public schools. It stated that:

It shall be lawful for the priest or minister of any church established in the pueblo where a public school is situated, either in person or by a designated teacher of religion, to teach religion for one-half an hour three times a week in the school building to those public school pupils whose parents or guardians desire it and express their desire therefore in writing filed with the principal teacher of the school to be forwarded to the division superintendent, who shall fix the hours and rooms for such teaching (Department of Interior, 1900).

The Schuurman Commission also authorized 600 teachers (Thomasites) from the United States to work in the Philippines under the Bureau of Public Instruction. As English was the language of instruction, practically all the textbooks for arithmetic, geography, history, readers, grammar and supplementary readings prescribed for the primary schools were in English. (Atkinson, 1902).

At the elementary level, the Barrio Boy's Creed and Barrio Girl's Creed encouraged the young to remain in the barrio. The boys were prepared for vocational (farming) work, while the girls were trained in the science of homemaking. The creed made incidental reference to "God's blue sky and God's green earth" as part of the children's inheritance. (Lardizabal, 1959). The Thomasites, as public servants, were prohibited to teach religion because "the terms of their contract with the American government forbade them from proselytizing." (Racelis & Ick, 2001).

The Commonwealth Act No. 586 known as Education Act of 1940 provided a legal basis for the present six-year elementary course, the double-single session, and compulsory attendance in the primary grades. Two parallel educational systems emerged -- the public school and the private school. Catholic schools emerged from a Spanish evangelical model based on "integrist traditionalism" that aimed to preserve the Christian faith but distanced the Church from the path on which Filipino society was moving. (Schumacher, 1990). The public schools emerged from a model that focused on good citizenship in a democratic form of government aimed at creating a civil society. While the Act No. 2706 placed the private schools under the regulation and supervision of the Secretary of Education, Culture and Sports, the Catholic schools remain autonomous. The two educational systems were running on parallel grounds, apparently serving socially distinct and separate clientele.

The catechetical program of De La Salle is a model of educational partnership between the two systems of education. This partnership also brings to unity and harmonious cooperation among the catechists from a Catholic school, the parish priest, the public-school administrators and teachers, and parents of the elementary school children.

Today, we can look back with pride at the legacy of Br. Armin Luistro FSC as Secretary of Education. Elfren Cruz (2022) reported that: "In 2010, when President Benigno Aquino III took office, Br. Armin accepted the position of secretary of education. When he accepted the position, his immediate problem was a lack of 130,000 teachers, 72,000 classrooms, 7 million desks, 141,000 comfort rooms and 97 million textbooks. While he was able to address these staggering problems substantially, his greatest achievement as education secretary was the implementation of the

K-12 basic education program. An idea that has been studied for decades by previous education secretaries but never came close to implementation.”

He continues to say, “The program added two years of senior high school to the basic ten-year program. At that time, the Philippines was only one of two or three countries in the world that had only 10 years of basic education, with almost all the other countries having 12 years. Although initially this K-12 program was met with many objections, Luistro was able to successfully initiate this revolutionary change which is now the current curriculum in Philippine schools.” (Cruz, 2022)

3.1.4 Lassallian Institutional Shift

In 1901, three years after Spain ceded control of the Philippines to the United States, the Americans established a new public education system using English as the medium of instruction. The Catholic educational institutions in the country at that time, however, continued using Spanish as their medium, and this practice raised concerns that the Catholic children would lose out in the quest for leadership roles under the American administration. The Brothers had by then established their presence in 35 countries, including the United States. Thus, the American Archbishop of Manila, Jeremiah Harty, turned to the Brothers to pave the way for the introduction of English-based quality Catholic education in the country. After some hesitation because the endeavor demanded teaching the sons of the economic elite rather than the poor, the Brothers eventually relented, conceding that “upper-class children also needed good moral and spiritual training.” On June 16, 1911, nine brothers from Europe and the United States opened in the district of Paco, just outside the walls of the old city of Manila, the first La Salle school in the Philippines. (<https://www.dlsu.edu.ph/inside/history-and-traditions/>)

De La Salle University was established in 1911 by the Catholic teaching congregation Brothers of the Christian Schools (FSC comes from the Latin: *Fratres Scholarum Christianarum*). The congregation was founded in 1680 as a community of consecrated laymen by St. Jean-Baptiste de La Salle to conduct, “together and by association,” schools that he established first in the northern French city of Rheims, to touch the hearts particularly of poor children, and to inspire them with the Christian spirit. De La Salle’s vision of teachers who “teach minds, touch hearts, and transform lives” led him to document the best practices that would guide the Brothers in their conduct of schools, to introduce pedagogy that could be characterized as distinctly modern, and in 1685, to put up the first ever normal school. De La Salle was canonized on May 24, 1900, and in recognition of the educational innovations he pioneered that are carried on by the congregation he had founded, he was declared as the Patron Saint of Teachers by Pope Pius XII on May 15, 1950. (<https://www.dlsu.edu.ph/inside/history-and-traditions/>)

Maison du De La Salle (House of De La Salle) was established by the Christian Brothers at General Luna (Noblezada) St., Paco in 1911. Incorporated in 1912, it was publicly known as De La Salle College, a Catholic school run and operated by the Christian Brothers. It was in fact a *residencia* (residence of the Brothers’ Community and home of student boarders) y *escuela* (school) for middle class Filipino boys.

Since 1911, the De La Salle University System has always had the Brothers’ Community living within its campus. In those years, and until a Brother Provincial was appointed in the Philippines, the director of the Brothers Community at De La Salle University was primarily responsible for both the religious life of the Brothers in the community and the Christian life of students and faculty.

In the beginning, the charter of De La Salle College was to educate grade school students, primary Grades I-III and intermediate Grades IV-VII in Paco, Manila. Classes started in the new Lasallian school with 125 pupils at the primary and secondary levels. On February 12, 1912, the school was incorporated as De La Salle College (DLSC) and was granted permission to confer commercial high school diplomas in the same year. Then, in 1915 it began to confer commercial high school diploma, in 1920 it offered a two-year commercial course and in 1925 it offered courses for an Associate in Art, Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts. In 1930, the college was authorized to confer the degrees of Bachelor of Science in Education and Master of Science in Education. (Hudtohan, 2005).

The first group of DLSC graduates—three students—received their diplomas in 1915. The college started offering a two-year Associate in Arts program in Commerce in 1920. With its population rising to 425 students, the college transferred to its present location in 1921. The college had by then established its reputation as an excellent business school. In a study made by the Board of Educational Survey in 1924, DLSC was acknowledged as the best private school in the Philippines. In 1931, after adding a year to its commerce program, DLSC would offer its first Bachelor’s Degree program.

The 1960’s saw the emergence of the Women’s Liberation Movement in the West and the spark of student activism (Jimenez, 2014) in the country (1968-1972). De La Salle College held its first Student Council elections in 1969 and opened its doors to female students in 1973. In the same year, De La Salle Lipa followed suit and became co-educational under Director-Principal Br. Emiliano T. Hudtohan.

De La Salle College was granted university status on February 19, 1975. It has since then become De La Salle University (DLSU). The Brothers opened a new school in 1978—the De La Salle Santiago Zobel School in Muntinlupa to phase out and transfer the primary and secondary schools from the University. The College of Career Development was established in 1980 as a night school for working students. It eventually evolved into the College of Saint Benilde (CSB) in 1988. CSB became autonomous in 1994 and is now known as De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde. (<https://www.dlsu.edu.ph/inside/history-and-traditions/>)

After one hundred eleven years, De La Salle University continues to be inspired by the charism of its founder, aspires to be a leading learner-centered research university, and commits itself to bridging faith and scholarship in the service of society, especially the poor. During the presidency of Br. Andrew Gonzalez FSC, he was trying to establish

a Multiversity with De La Salle University as the central hub. But De La Salle Philippines replaced the De La Salle University System (Multiversity) which was established under the presidency of Br. Andrew Gonzalez FSC in 1987 as a response to the rapid expansion of the university. Salle Dasmariñas of Lasallian educational institutions nationwide. Br. Andrew's concept of multiversity envisioned De La Salle University as the mother university with De La Salle Zobel, De La Salle College of St. Benilde, De La Salle University Laguna Campus and De La Salle Dasmariñas as satellite members. It was Br. Armin Luistro FSC who unified all the De La Salle schools under De La Salle Philippines (DLSU) which was incorporated as De La Salle Philippines, Inc and was established in 2006, is a network of Lasallian educational institutions within the Lasallian East Asia District established to facilitate collaboration in the Lasallian Mission and the promotion of the spirit of faith, zeal for service and communion in mission. There are currently sixteen Lasallian Educational Institutions in the Philippines. De La Salle Philippines is a member of a network of over 1,100 Lasallian educational institutions in 80 countries.

Bearing in mind that the Brothers were requested by Manila Archbishop Harty (1903-1916) before 1911 to primarily educate the children of the elite in the Philippines, The Lasallian brand of education in the Philippines has been marked by "the elitist characteristic of its educational system" and "is distinguished more by its contribution to business and industry" (Quejada, 2002). It was Br. Armin Luistro, FSC, President of DLSU, who initiated a scholarship with a ratio of one scholar for every 10 students paying tuition. This was in keeping with the spirit of inclusive education in the spirit of St. La Salle's original intention to educate the poor. Today, De La Salle University has the following scholarships:

1. St. Mutien Marie Scholarship Grant (Graduate)

The St. Mutien Marie Scholarship Grant supports the University's goal in making quality education accessible to those who are engaged in the profession of human formation and development.

2. Vaugirard Scholarship

This program was established to provide new scholarships every year exclusively for students who graduated from Philippine Public and Science High Schools and is a Filipino Citizen. A student should be among the top examinees of the DLSU College Admissions Test (DCAT). The University invites the candidates for a screening. A University committee reviews their qualifications and makes the final selection. Scholars under the program will receive a full waiver on tuition, miscellaneous, and laboratory fees throughout their stay in the University plus cash incentive for those graduating with Latin honors, advance enrollment privileges, and a monthly stipend to cover modest accommodation, meals, allowance, and other expenses.

3. Br. Andrew Gonzalez Academic Scholarship

High school students who ranked Top 1 (with highest honors) for each strand (STEM, ABM, HUMMS) of La Salle district schools and have passed the entrance exam will be awarded a full academic scholarship (tuition and fees) starting in their freshman year.

4. Gokongwei Grants

This program will award scholarships to students who wish to pursue any engineering degree program as offered by the College of Engineering. The scholarship privileges include full tuition and fees waiver plus a monthly stipend to cover modest accommodations, meals, allowance, and other expenses.

5. Archer Achiever

The Archer Achievers Scholarship Program aims to provide scholarship to students who top the DLSU College Admission Test. Qualified students will be automatically awarded full tuition and fee waiver. This is available for students who graduated from Philippine Private/Public and Science High Schools.

6. Brother President Scholarship Program

This is awarded to the legitimate or legally-adopted children of married, permanent and full-time faculty, and administrative service personnel who joined DLSU in May 1987 or after and have served the University for at least three years and are in active University service while availing of the grant. These students should have passed the entrance requirements of La Salle Green Hills, De La Salle-Santiago Zobel School, De La Salle-Araneta University, De La Salle University-Dasmariñas, De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde, or De La Salle University.

7. Centennial Scholarship Program

The CSP serves as a supplement to the Brother President Scholarship Program (BPSP). The CSP for De La Salle University was formulated to provide scholarships to qualified children of full-time permanent faculty (teaching and academic service faculty) and administrative service personnel (ASP) of the University. Children of permanent and full-time faculty and ASP must have passed the DLSU entrance requirements in order to qualify for the scholarship that is only offered at DLSU.

8. St. La Salle Financial Assistance Grant

Full or partial tuition and fee scholarships are given to deserving incoming freshman students who applied for financial assistance during the scholarship application period and had been screened and selected by the University Scholarship Council based on a specific criteria. Students may also receive other forms of assistance such as stipends and allowance from outside donors.

Grantees are required to meet certain academic standards and to abide by the policies prescribed by the Office of Admissions and Scholarships. The grants and scholarships are means of making De La Salle University an inclusive, not exclusive Catholic university. But more importantly it approximates the original intention of the Founder St. John Baptist de La Salle that the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is to educate the children of the poor and the artisans (working class).

3.1.5 De La Salle Brothers Leadership

Br. Benildo Feliciano, FSC was the first Provincial and the first councilor in the annals of the Christian Brothers in the Philippines. Br. Benildo Feliciano stands out as a towering figure - the first Filipino Brother, the first Filipino Brother Visitor, the first Filipino General Councilor in Rome. He is inevitably referred to as the Master Builder of the Institute in the Philippines. He appointed Br. Emiliano T. Hudtohan, FSC as director/principal of De La Salle Lipa and sent him to Sangre de Christo Christian Brothers Center for a second novitiate. He is also endearingly referred to as The Commander. (<https://lasalle-lead.org/lead-stories/lead-story-307/br-benildo-feliciano-fsc-01-april-1937-08-july-2019>).

Br. Victor Franco, FSC. He has devoted his academic, professional and personal life to carrying out the Lasallian mission of creating positive change in the world. Br. Vic started out as an English, Spanish and Religion teacher in La Salle College Bacolod in 1967, and he has come a long way since then. Having finished his Master's degree in Educational Administration and Pastoral Ministry, Br. Vic is passionate about shaping the minds of future leaders and empowering them. Over the decades, he has served in various positions and capacities to further the overall vision of St. John Baptist De La Salle. Not only has Br. Vic worked in different regions in the Philippines, but also around the world. He served as a Religious Superior (Delegate) at the De La Salle Brothers Delegation of Thailand from 1987-1993. In 2007, Br. Vic was the General Councilor at the Delegation of Japan. Aside from that, Br. Vic has also acted as a member and officer in the Board of Trustees for many Lasallian institutions such as De La Salle University, De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde, De La Salle University-Dasmariñas and many others. He currently serves as President for La Salle Green Hills and La Salle College Antipolo. He is a total Lasallian: DLSU GS 1957, DLSU HS 1961, DLSU AB-BSE 1967, DLSU M.A. Educational Administration 1981, De La Salle University Philadelphia M.A. Pastoral Ministry 1987. He was recognized in 2019 DLSAA Distinguished Lasallian Awardee (<https://www.dlsaa.com/honors-and-awards/awardees/br-victor-franco-fsc>).

Br. Raymundo Suplido, FSC, PhD. He has come full circle at De La Salle University, the place that honed him as a young leader and a Christian Brother, the place that has called him back to be its own head. "Similar to my previous positions, the post of DLSU President is an expression and a continuation of the mission of the Brothers and our Lasallian Partners to provide quality education to young Filipinos. However, it is also different because the University is the leading edge of Lasallian education in the country. The nature of the University is such that after over a hundred years of continuing progress, it still passionately pursues a lot of daring initiatives that, for me, is both exciting and challenging" he shares. He started his journey towards becoming a Christian Brother as a third year high school student at DLSU, which was known then as De La Salle College Manila. On October 10, 1963, fresh from high school, he received the FSC religious habit. A year later, he took his first vows as a Brother. It was in the University that he also deepened his love for education and the sciences, taking the double-degree track Bachelor of Arts-Bachelor of Science in Education (AB-BSE), major in General Science and minor in Mathematics. He graduated magna cum laude in 1969. He has served as Councilor General of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. (<https://www.dlsu.edu.ph/offices/president/about-the-president-brother-ray/>).

Br. Ricardo Laguda, FSC. He succeeded Br. Benildo Feliciano, FSC as General Counselor. He was elected Councilor General the 45th General Chapter in Rome. Part of his portfolio is to manage the De La Salle Brothers of Pacific Asia Regional Conference (PARC). Previous to this, he was appointed the 4th University Chancellor in 2010 and officially installed as the 22nd President of De La Salle University in 2012. In 2006, he was assigned to De La Salle Canlubang to serve as Interim President. In 2007, he concurrently served as the President of the Jaime Hilario Integrated School-La Salle in Bagac, Bataan and De La Salle Araneta University in Malabon. (Hudtohan, September 29, 2014).

As a young novice Brother, his guru was Br. Armin Luistro, FSC. Later, he became a novice master himself. Br. Ricky has a Master's degree in religious education and a PhD in educational leadership and management. He studied at Harvard University to prepare him for his executive position at various De La Salle universities and his leadership as President of De La Salle Philippines.

According to the 2401 Newsletter, Br. Ricky's presidency was marked by rapid growth and he left a legacy of Lasallian excellence and service: 23 percent of DLSU students on scholarship as of Term AY 2013-2014, 12 undergraduate programs with Level 4 accreditation, 9 CHED centers of excellence as of 2014, 5 major infrastructure projects launched in 2014, 2 UAAP general championship titles and 1 PAASCU institutional accreditation.

Br. Andrew Gonzalez, FSC. first Filipino DLSU president. Andrew Benjamin Gonzalez, F.S.C. (29 February 1940 – 29 January 2006) was a Filipino linguist, writer, educator, and a De La Salle Brother. He served as president of De La Salle University from 1979 to 1991 and from 1994 to 1998. From 1998 to 2001 he served as Secretary of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports under the presidency of Joseph Estrada. After his term ended, he returned to De La Salle University as vice president for Academics and Research from 2001 to 2003 and as Presidential Adviser for Academics and Research from 2003 to 2005.

As president of De La Salle University Manila, he conceptualized the De La Salle University System and helped expand the range of Lasallian education in the Philippines. Brother Andrew established the College of Career Development of De La Salle University-Manila which became the De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde and took over a college and a medical school in Dasmariñas, Cavite which respectively became De La Salle University-Dasmariñas and the De La Salle Medical and Health Sciences Institute. He prioritized graduate education by creating new masteral and doctoral degree programs. He also wrote many books in linguistics and education. Under his term, De La Salle University-Manila underwent significant developments as an institution of higher learning, particularly in the areas of research and faculty and program development. He also promoted Alumni activities, and boosted scholarly activities

on campus. For example, he made his private collection of books available to members of the public, especially ones interested in learning about applied linguistics.

He initiated the revision of the Basic Education Curriculum and placed a corruption-free procurement system which significantly reduced the costs of textbooks and supplies purchased by the Department of Education, Culture and Sports. He initiated the changing of language of instruction to the lingua franca for the first three grades. Brother Andrew Benjamin Gonzalez, F.S.C. was a Filipino linguist, writer, educator, and a De La Salle Brother. He served as president of De La Salle University from 1979 to 1991 and from 1994 to 1998.

Brother Armin Luistro, FSC: First Filipino Superior General. On 18 May 2022, during the 46th General Chapter of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, the Assembly of 70 Chapter Brothers, meeting in the Aula Magna of the Generalate in Rome, elected Brother Armin Luistro 28th Superior General of the Institute. The election comes eight years (seven years according to the Institute's Rule, but one more because of the pandemic) after the previous government was appointed in 2014, also in Rome.

Br. Armin Luistro FSC is the first Asian to be elected as the organization's SG. He is a Filipino Lasallian Brother who was born on Dec. 24, 1961 in Lipa, Batangas where he initially studied at De La Salle Lipa. He received his religious habit of the congregation in 1981 at the La Salle Novitiate in Lipa and made his final vows in May 1988. He was made the provincial or the head of the De La Salle Brothers in the Philippines in 1997. One of his outstanding achievements at that time was being co-founder of the De La Salle University in Manado, Indonesia in 2000. It was in 2004 when he succeeded Br. Andrew Gonzalez FSC as president of De La Salle University. It was during his term when he worked at establishing De La Salle Philippines, which would replace the DLSU system. He then became the first president of De La Salle Philippines which included all the De La Salle institutions in the country. (Cruz, 2022)

In 2010, when President Benigno Aquino III took office, Br. Armin accepted the position of secretary of education. When he accepted the position, his immediate problem was a lack of 130,000 teachers, 72,000 classrooms, 7 million desks, 141,000 comfort rooms and 97 million textbooks. While he was able to address these staggering problems substantially, his greatest achievement as education secretary was the implementation of the K-12 basic education program. An idea that has been studied for decades by previous education secretaries but never came close to implementation. The program added two years of senior high school to the basic ten-year program. At that time, the Philippines was only one of two or three countries in the world that had only 10 years of basic education, with almost all the other countries having 12 years. (Cruz, 2022).

3.2 End of The Great Period of Change

Significant change events were ahead of the cosmic Great Period of Change (1987-2023). The student activities, the Becker case in 1960s -1970s and the entry of girls in 1973 into the De La Salle University was ahead of the period of change. The multiversity of Br. Andrew Gonzalez FSC in 1987 and the creation of De La Salle Philippines is smack within the galactic Great Period of Change (1987-2023). More importantly, the appointment of Br. Armin Luistro, FSC whose term starts in 2022 and end in 2028 is a window of opportunity for him to lead the global Lasallian Family into the New Age of Enlightenment, having surpassed the challenges of chaos and conflict that is expected to end in 2023 based on cosmologists Christine Page, Gregg Braden, and Erwin Laszlo.

3.2.1 Breakthrough Beyond 2023

Spirituality and Religiosity. The challenge for Catholic schools, like De La Salle schools, is to refine Christian education that promotes spirituality and religiosity. My experience with Catholic education is that religiosity is highly underscored and spirituality is downplayed, if not neglected. Figure 1 shows the common grounds and specific differences. The De La Salle University tagline of Love of God and Country puts theological values first and patriotism second. St. Joseph High School in Singapore underscores Love of Country and Love God. The implication of this is important. Concerns for here and now is important as Abraham Maslow (1943) has shown in his Hierarchy of Needs.



Figure 1. Spirituality and Religiosity

<https://thereflectivepen.com/spiritual-not-religious/>

Andre Mayo (2020) says, "In general, spirituality answers the question "How do I stay connected? How do I live?" A spiritual person may look for meaningful connections with something bigger than themselves and often focuses on inner growth. They may or may not use any of the names for the Holy, like 'God' or 'Allah', but when I talk to a person who defines themselves as 'spiritual' I know they are sensitive to something bigger than themselves. Perhaps "Higher Power." I call it "Mystery". On the other hand, religion is based on tradition and uses sacred texts to define what is right and wrong. People seek connection with God/Allah/Elohim through rites and rituals."

3.2.2 Spirituality and Consciousness

According to Mayer (2007), Spirituality requires consciousness because we need to be aware, and to be self-aware, in order to apprehend spirituality of any kind. Some make the extravagant claim that our human consciousness is somehow connected directly to a 'cosmic consciousness'.

He continues to say that spiritual intelligence includes: 1. Capacity for transcendence, 2. Ability to enter into heightened spiritual states of consciousness, 3. Ability to invest everyday activities, events, and relationships with a sense of the sacred., 4. Ability to utilized spiritual resources to solve problems in living, and 5. Capacity to engage in various behavior or to be virtuous (to show forgiveness, to express gratitude, to be humble, to display compassion. Heightened intelligence is heightened consciousness. The idea of spiritual consciousness stems from the possibility of structuring consciousness through meditative contemplation...o that it focuses on oneness, transcendent states, and ultimate concerns. The shift in language of mental ability to one of consciousness and awareness yields a spiritual consciousness.

James Ebner, FSC (1978) in his book *God Present as Mystery* affirms the importance of spirituality. Brian Hall in his book *Values development* further affirms human encounter with mystery as shown in Figure 2.

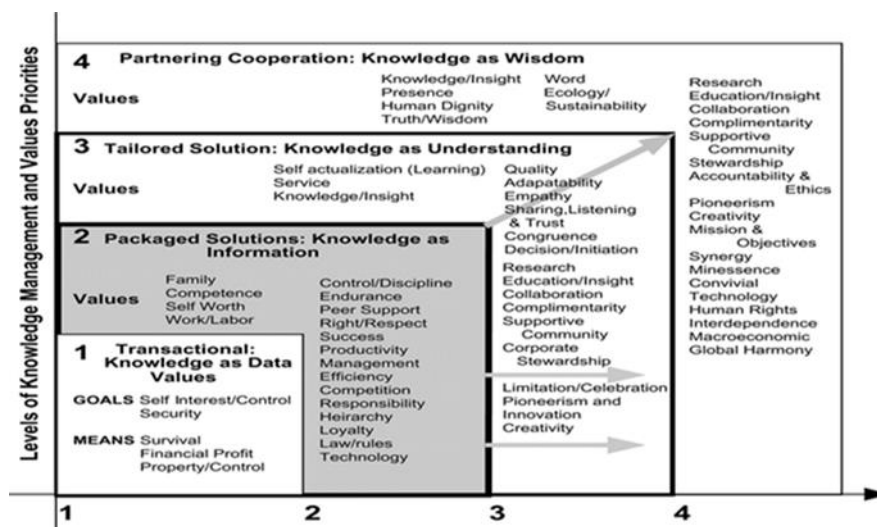


Figure 2. Human values in Four Stages (Hall)



Figure 3. The Four Phases of Human Development (Hall).

Theologically speaking, it used to be that humanity peaks in Christianity; but today anthropocentric theology says that Christianity peak in our being fully human. Biblically, Jesus showed us the way. And the Word (Jesus) was made flesh and dwelt amongst us here on earth. Our humanity is spiritual life. Teilhard de Chardin, SJ (1993; 2021) says: We are spiritual beings with human activities. Dispenza (2012; 2016) further avers that we are 99.999 percent energy and only .001 percent matter. The Great Period of Change challenges us to move towards a spiritual civilization.

3.2.3 Quantum Theology

The bible says that we are made to the image and likeness of God. This puts our nature at the level of the spirit because God is not a material being. O'Murchu (2004) in quantum theology says, "Principle 1. Life is sustained by a creative energy, fundamentally benign in nature, with a tendency to manifest and express itself in movement, rhythm, and pattern. Creation is sustained by a superhuman, pulsating restlessness, a type of resonance vibrating throughout time and eternity. a. God and the divine are described as creative energy, which is perceived to include, but also supersede, everything traditional theology attributes to God. b. The divine energy is not stable or unchanging, but works through movement, rhythm, pattern, and restlessness – within the evolving nature of life itself. In Principle 9, he continues to say that Humans are innately spiritual – so are all life forms – and if appropriate human and spiritual maturation takes place, humans feel a need to celebrate, in ritual and sacrament, their relationship with the ultimate mystery."

3.2.4 Metaphysical View

James Ray (2006) says, "Most people define themselves by this finite, but you're not a finite body...you are an energy field. What we know about energy is this. Quantum physicist says: it can never be created or destroyed, it always was, always has been, everything that ever exists always exists, its' moving into form, through form and out of form, theologian says God created the universe. God is always was and always has been, never can be created or destroyed, all that ever was, always will be, always moving into form, through form and out of form. It's the same description, just different terminology. So if you think you're this 'meat suit' ... think again you're a spiritual being. Your energy field, operating in a larger energy field." (p.158-59). This supported by Dr. Dispensa who said that an atom is 99.000 percent energy and only .001 percent matter. We are a composite of atoms and thus we are 99.000 percent energy, affirming O'Murchu and Ray.

3.2.5 Spiritual Consciousness 2025

Global consciousness for the good, truth and beauty of nature and humanity is a manifestation of a Spiritual Civilization. According to Laszlo (2006), "There are many things that differentiate people in the year 2025: religious beliefs, cultural heritage, economic and technological development, climate and environment. But a new consciousness enables them agree on principles that really matters:

1. That it is immoral for anyone to live in a way that distracts from the chances of others to achieve their life basic well-being and dignity.
2. It is better to exercise responsible trusteeship of human and natural sources of wealth on this planet than to exploit them for narrow and short-term benefit.
3. Nature is not a mechanism to be engineered and exploited but a living that brought us into being, and, given our awesome power of exploitation.
4. The way we solve problems and conflicts is not by attacking each other, but by understanding one another and cooperating in ways that serve the shared interest.
5. That the universal rights adopted by foresighted people in the 20th century – the right to freedom of expression, freedom to select our leaders, and freedom from torture and other arbitrary constraint on personal liberty as well as the right to food, shelter, education and employment – apply to everyone in the world, and deserve to be respected above and beyond consideration of personal, ethnic and national self-interest." (Laszlo, 2006, p. 48).

3.2.6 Home: The First University

Home is the first university and the parents are the first teachers. I quote Moore (n.d.), "A man travels the world over in search of what he needs and returns home to find it. Home Is the place to save society." This was the quote in the invitation when Pearl (my spouse) and I got married on September 20, 1978. She stopped teaching at the Assumption College for five years when Julie Anne was born. After nurturing her for nine months in her womb, she continued to nurture and raise her personally for five years. Her physical development like standing up to walk and her first words were way in advanced with normal standard of child development. Today, she is a global HR leader. She is HR Vice President of Unilever in the Philippines and some countries in the ASEAN region

IV. CONCLUSION

1. Cosmologically, Br. Armin Luistro FSC is serving the Lasallian global community at the end of the Period of Change and his term will usher a new enlightened humanity.
2. Geopolitically, he is an Asian whose leadership will encompass the educational communities of the West.
3. Spiritually, he is a culminating product of 500 years of Christianity that was gifted to us by Spain.
4. Democratically, he brings with him his experience in public governance as former Secretary of Education of the Philippines.
5. Culturally, he will be able to share the Filipino values of Kagandahang loob, Bayanihan and the power of being Malakas and Maganda as a global leader.

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