

For More Meaningful Fellowship *By Rafael S. Francia '55*



During the almost 50 years that I have been involved in countless Upsilon fellowships and reunions in the Philippines and the USA, I don't remember having been to one in which I did not enjoy myself. Renewing old fraternal ties and making new ones; reminiscing our neophyte days; campus politics and rumbles; campus romances and crushes; scholastic achievements and failures; adventures and misadventures; cavalcades and summer stocks; and so on and on, combined with good food and libation, jokes, dancing and singing - simply having a good time with brothers and sisters. Truly it's hard to imagine how we can improve on such a proven form of socializing in the Upsilon tradition.

Yet, in my gut I hear the question, "Hanggang dito nalang ba?"

I don't know about you, but with me the reason why this question nags me is because I believe the Upsilon Credo demands more from us than just enjoying ourselves at fellowships and reunions. What about our obligations and responsibilities toward our other brothers, our Alma Mater, our country, and the world?

Since we are so good at having fellowships and reunions, maybe we can use these activities as the vehicle to address our other obligations and responsibilities and, thus, fulfill ourselves as "tried and true Upsilonians".

YES, let us have more fellowships and reunions, as many as we can organize them anywhere - anytime. BUT let us have them not only for our own enjoyment (which is a good thing), but PRIMARILY and ALWAYS to benefit others. But HOW?

What if we set aside a percentage of the total cost of the fellowship or reunion for projects designed to benefit our other brothers, our Alma Mater, our country, and the world? Call it a "tong", "tithing", VAT or whatever, but first set aside something according to our generosity and/or social conscience for a noble purpose other than our own enjoyment. We can practice charity from our substance, rather than from our excess. Then we can go ahead and enjoy ourselves at the fellowship or reunion. Now, we have reason to celebrate and be merry because we have addressed our Credo's weightier demands. We will also have something more meaningful to discuss instead of retelling or rehashing our old stories.

What's the downside? Maybe less food and drink (it's healthier anyway) and

maybe a more modest venue (who needs conspicuous consumption?).

Example #1 Four brods contribute \$50 each to entertain a visiting brod. They allocate \$50 for a Special Account to help pay the medical bills of a needy brod and spend \$150 for dinner and drinks for fellowship.

Example #2 Batch '55 Fellows budget P900,000 for their Golden Anniversary "Cordillera Experience" in Baguio. They allocate P200,000 for Gawad Kalinga and spent P700,000 for their celebration.

Example #3 A group of brods and their wives held a simple potluck Christmas dinner in 1982 and donated to Mother Teresa's house in the Bronx what they would have spent on dining at a restaurant.

We can go big or small while persistently pushing on. This can be a new beginning.