

## ATENEO PHYSICS NEWS

*Physics News and Features from Ateneo de Manila University*

# Eulogy for Fr. Victor Badillo, SJ by Ateneo Physics Department chair Dr. James Simpas

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<http://quirinosugonjr.blogspot.com/2014/10/photos-funeral-mass-fr-victor-badillo-sj.html>

Dr. James Bernard Simpas giving a eulogy for Fr. Victor Badillo, SJ at the Oratory of St. Ignatius of Loyola, Loyola House of Studies, Ateneo de Manila University (See more pictures at [Manila Observatory's FB page](https://www.facebook.com/manilaobservatory/posts/963385857025064). (<https://www.facebook.com/manilaobservatory/posts/963385857025064>))

Tuesday, 28 October 2014

by Dr. Bernard James Simpas

Head, Instrumentation and Technology Development Program/ Urban Air Quality Program, Manila Observatory  
Chair, Department of Physics, Ateneo de Manila University

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I do not think I am the best person to speak about Fr. Vic for the Manila Observatory—but in the spirit of obedience, I will attempt to do so. I would also like to take this opportunity then to speak on behalf of the Physics Department, as well.

I think it may be appropriate to speak about Fr. Vic from the experiences of the persons he worked in the Observatory. I have Genie Lorenzo (RA of ITD) and Pope Sugon (present head of UAD) to thank for gathering the thoughts of many whom I will try to incorporate in this sharing. As a framework for this, allow me to use a guideline from a contemporary of Fr. Vic, Mr. Onofre Pagsanghan—“a something to do, a someone to love, and a tomorrow”.



(<http://quirinosugonjr.blogspot.com/2014/10/photos-funeral-mass-fr-victor-badillo-sj.html>)

Dr. Celine Vicente, Director Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga, and Atty Gia Ibay

### **A. A something to do**

Fr. Vic related to some of us before that he found his calling as a Jesuit by chance—through his exposure to his Jesuit teachers in the post-second-world-war Ateneo (including the “Ateneo de Guipit”, that Mr. Pagsi also remembers fondly—the Nazareth school that the Hijas de Jesus sisters offered as a temporary venue after the “Ateneo de Padre Faura” was totally ruined). He was especially attracted to the value that the Jesuits put on education—and on educating one’s self as a manner of worshiping God.

Fr. Vic was assigned to the Manila Observatory after ordination (<http://www.astroleaguephils.org/archive/news/051201badillo.html>)—doing Solar Radio Research and eventually Ionosphere Research, as well. This is was his first manifestation to me as a child—when I would visit the Observatory because of Fr. Su and Fr. Heyden (who I got to know early on because of their regular Masses at our parish church, Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, in Project 4). So dedicated was he to his work that even when he was already confined to the Infirmary of the JR, Genie Lorenzo relates, “he remembered where all his things in the Ionosphere Building were and would ask us to get them for him whenever he needed them”. Dina Sayson (property manager of the MO) shares the same: “He would call me and ask me to deliver any book, things or files he need and fully remembers where I will get them in his office.”

Mang Franklin (assistant of Fr. Vic for 20 years for his Solar Radio research) shared that on the morning of Fr. Vic’s passing (4 AM) he dreamt of being in the Radio building. He was operating one of the

instruments that was logging data on tape and the tape run out. He then noticed the double doors of the building were swinging open. Then he realized it was Fr. Badillo, so he asked him if he had any more tape for the instrument. Fr. Badillo replied to say that he didn't have any more left. A few hours after Fr. Badillo breathed his last in the hospital.

He also took upon himself the valuable task of being the Archivist of the Observatory—and his assiduous work has allowed us to appreciate the persons and work of the Observatory that has not yet been published in the scientific and popular literature. Interestingly, as Nen Roberto relates, somehow he never wanted to come up with his own CV, hence MO does not have this. Being the MO archivist he wrote and compiled information about other Jesuit scientists, but he never did that for himself or even allowed others to do that for him.

### 1. *Teaching at the Ateneo de Manila Physics Department*

Fr. Vic was part of the first faculty of the Physics Department when it transitioned from being a service program into a full-blown department offering BS Physics and in MS Physics.

He was my professor in Quantum Mechanics and I still remember his exclamations of “wonderful!” whenever we would successfully (or semi-successfully) solve a problem on the board. I don't think I have ever had a Physics professor who approached his subject with as much joy as Fr. Vic did his.

Also by chance was his avocation—he considered himself “an amateur astronomer”—as he was thrust into the Presidency of the Philippine Astronomical Society (PAS) after the founding president, Philip Wyman (who, incidentally, invited Fr. Vic to join the PAS), left for the US in 1973. He would hold this leadership position in the oldest astronomical organization in the country for the next 20 years. This was his third manifestation to me—during my college and young faculty years—I first got to see Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn using his prized reflecting telescope. Many of those present here tonight probably had their first practical astronomy under Fr. Vic.

### 2. *Infirmary blog – Pedro Calungsod*

The last phase of Fr. Vic's life was spent at the infirmary of the JR. But that did not stop him from finding something to do despite his physical disability.

John Ong shares: I got included in Fr. Badillo's “blogger's list” where he would send emails of hope and inspiration. But it wasn't only that his emails were stories about hope, love, justice, encouragement, and inspiration, he himself was an inspiration. He was bedridden at the JR infirmary but used every opportunity (in this case, the internet) and strength he had to reach out to others and proclaim the gospel of love.

## **B. A someone to love**

In all the great (and small) tasks he took upon during his lifetime, what people remember is how he manifested his love for Christ—through his love and respect, *cura personalis* if you will, for those who he would encounter.

Let me just relay some quotes verbatim:

Nen Roberto remembers:



(<http://quirinosugonjr.blogspot.com/2014/10/photos-funeral-mass-fr-victor-badillo-sj.html>)

Ms. Thelma Selga and Ms. Nen Roberto

“Fr. Badillo’s caring kindness, and his compassion for the poor, his discipline, a Jesuit with a listening ear that accepts whatever you presented him.”

Dina Sayson remembers:

“When Fr. Francis Heyden, S.J. died in 1991, Fr. Badillo became our immediate supervisor in the Solar Optics Bldg. The computers has just been introduced to us, so from manual measuring of the sunspots, and solar activities like flares and prominences, Fr. Badillo together with Fr. Marasigan, studied on how these measurements can be computerized. Fr. Badillo has been very diligent and patient in teaching us how to cope with the computerization process.”

From Zeny Vinoya:

Sa east avenue medical center nawalan ng hininga ang tatay ko, sa tamang pagkakataon naimbitahan ko po si fr vic ng araw na iyon para sana makapag kumpisal si tatay. Bagama’t huli na ng siya ay dumating, dinasalan at binasbasan pa din niya ng holy water. Laking gulat namin ng biglang gumalaw ang kamay ng tatay ko at nabuhay pa po siya ng apat na buwan.

Sabi pa niya ... Kung lahat ng tao ay magmamahal lamang sa iba katulad ng pagmamahal nila sa kanilang sarili...ang mundo ay mapupuno ng pag ibig.

Genie Lorenzo:

Several times in the last 2 years or so, I have gone to him unannounced, and cried my heart out. And he just sat there in silence, with a comforting look. His prayers must be strong as I always felt relieved after each visit with him.

Almost three years ago today (24 October 2011), Pope Sugon shared his interview with Fr. Vic on the vocation stories of different Jesuits. Fr. Vic had this to say about himself: “I entered the novitiate to do my part about the shortage of priests in the Philippines. I thought I was doing the church a favor, to do a job that needed doing, that I was doing something noble. I did not know Jesus was seducing me to loving him.”

### C. A tomorrow

Many of us will never get to be immortalized (literally) in the stars like Fr. Vic—with a Main Belt asteroid



(<http://quirinosugonjr.blogspot.com/2014/10/photos-funeral-mass-fr-victor-badillo-sj.html>)

Mr. Broderick Sapnu and Ms. Carina Sarmaniego

4866 Badillo (1988 VB3, discovered on November 10, 1988 by T. Kojima at Chiyoda).

But maybe more importantly, Fr. Vic is immortalized in the hearts of many whose careers have spun off from working with him (and not only in astronomy and the Observatory staff).

Carina Samaniego, now Director of the AdMU Archives, took over the task of MO archivist from Fr. Vic. She says:

“Even after I left MO, he would send materials to the Ateneo Archives and email me his inquiries and requests. I can always feel his delight from the replies that I send him, even if it only through email. His messages and replies made me feel how valuable this work that I choose to practice.

For us working in the Observatory, we will miss you as we celebrate our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year. Nevertheless, we hope that as we remember you you’re your service to MO, we will always remember the kind flavor of your loving commitment to your work—and try to emulate your example.

Fr. Vic has been part of the tomorrows of all of us present here today to pay him our respect. And his goodness lives on in the goodness that (I hope) we will do with our lives that have been touched by his.

Thank you Fr. Vic and as we commit you to the loving arms of Our Mother, Stella Maris, we know that you now are gifted with knowledge of the mysteries of our universe that you pondered and observed throughout your life. Thank you for taking us along for this wonderful ride and till we meet again!

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Picture of Fr. Victor Badillo at the Manila Observatory Lobby

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