



The journey is a recurrent motif in art and literature. It should be of little wonder, because the journey is a basic human experience. Thousands of years ago our ancestors wandered the land in search of food sources and shelter. Filipinos today are still wandering the globe in search of the same things. In 2016 alone, there were over 2 million overseas Filipino workers, some of whom may be your parents or relatives.

Moses, Odysseus, Dante, Quixote—the figures that should animate the imagination of any educated person, present-day Ateneans not in the least—were each on a journey. One was shepherding a people out of slavery and into a land overflowing with milk and honey. Another was determined to return to his family after ten years of fighting a war overseas (and another ten years being shipwrecked). Yet another was on an interior journey, endeavoring to purge whatever is hellish in him and embrace what paradise the grace of God may yet bless him with. The last, “a man of rueful countenance,” was on an impractical quest to restore the Golden Age, when there was neither “mine” nor “thine” but all had enough.

Your years at the Ateneo de Manila have constituted, I hope, a journey of discoveries, one that should keep you in good stead when you embark on yet other journeys and more discoveries. Remember what these great wanderers have told you about journeys: that the best ones are those (1) that are informed by a deep awareness of who one is and (2) that have an end that exceeds oneself.

Congratulations are your due, as are many, many more bon voyages

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