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PH 500 Years of Christianity Conference at the University of Navarre

“The Church in the Philippines is today a powerful missionary force in many Western countries.”

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Archbishop Bernardito Cleopas Auza, the Nuncio to Spain of His Holiness Pope Francis, was the main guest at

the Academic Conference commemorating the 500 Years of the Evangelization of the Philippines, organized by the Faculty of Theology of the University of Navarre (Spain) on January 20, 2022.

"Missionaries are great heroes of the human rights of indigenous peoples." This was Msgr. Auza's key message.

He discussed the contribution that the Spanish missionaries made in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries for the evangelization and civilization of indigenous peoples. This evangelizing work was accompanied by a firm defense of the human rights of the new peoples.

Archbishop Auza said that Magellan experienced a conversion when he met the religiosity of the natives of the islands. From then on he understood that the purpose of their expedition was more to evangelize than to look for spices.

Gregorio Guitián, the dean of the Faculty of Theology, said that the event served to see in perspective the value of the evangelization of the Philippines. “It is a joyful reality that the Church in the Philippines is giving back to many countries now what it used to receive, and is today a powerful missionary force in many Western countries,” Guitián said.

Other speakers in the Conference were Professor Inmaculada Alva and Professor J. Jose Alviar, both from the University of Navarre.

The event concluded with a Eucharistic Concelebration. Archbishop Auza was joined by Francisco Perez, the Archbishop of Pamplona, priests from the Faculty of Theology, and Filipino priests studying at the University of Navarre. Archbishop Auza is a native of Bohol (Philippines).

Through the years, more than 300 Filipinos have studied in the Ecclesiastical Faculties of the University of Navarre in Pamplona (Spain).

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