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## **Theological Centrum helps local clergy to seek holiness**

Established in 1985, Theological Centrum is an initiative of some priests of the Prelature of Opus Dei, along with a number of professionals, to assist in the on-going formation of priests and seminarians for the local churches.

03/14/2008

The Theological Centrum of the Opus Dei in the Philippines has been

helping priests strive for holiness in their priestly ministry, says Fr. Mickey Cardenas, director.

The Vatican Council II reminded that all are called to holiness. In this regard, priests have greater role to help laity to achieve holiness. “But what about priests themselves who need to be helped in the same direction?”

Theological Centrum is an answer to that,” Cardenas told CBCP News. Based in Mandaluyong City, Theological Centrum (TC) is an initiative for the "on-going formation of priests and seminarians for the local churches,” he said.

TC was established in 1985 by some priests of the Prelature of Opus Dei and the Archdiocese of Manila, along with a number of professionals, who were eager to assist bishops in their response to the call of the Vatican II.

To allow TC carry out this task more effectively in a new juridical framework and to initiate other activities, the Studium Theologiae Foundation Inc. (STF) was established.

Founded by Msgr. Josemaria Escriva, Opus Dei is a personal prelature of the Catholic Church that helps clergy and lay people seek holiness.

TC coordinates several activities for priests and seminarians all over the country, such as Holy Hours, publications of newsletters and books for spiritual reading and the ecclesiastical sciences, retreats and recollections, spiritual direction, conferences on Philosophy and Theology, yearly seminar for priests and seminarians, and live-in seminars at a regional or national level, said Cardenas.

Since 1986, TC, with the help of generous benefactors, initiated a

major project that aims to offer a much-needed support to the Church in the Philippines, a project called Formation for Seminary Formators of the Local Church. For the last 20 years, through this project, Bishops have been sending priests and seminarians to the University of Navarre in Pamplona, Spain, and to the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome, for studies in the different ecclesiastical fields.

These two universities include research and study in the ecclesiastical sciences—schools of theology, canon law, philosophy, institutional social communications, and an institute for higher religious studies. The Schools grant the Bachelor's, Licentiate, and Doctoral degrees established by the Holy See.

TC carries out the selection process on the bases of the candidates' responsibilities to their bishops, and

especially on their potentials in handling important tasks of formation in the seminaries.

TC shares the reflections of late Pope John Paul II that considers the importance of prayer in working together with the whole Catholic community to foster vocations to the priesthood, to give particular attention to seminary training and sound continuing education for the clergy, particularly trainers of future priests, Cardenas said.

TC's library, holding around 3,000 basic books on Philosophy, Theology and Canon Law, is open to all the clergy. TC also publishes reading materials like the Documentation Service to enhance the doctrinal and pastoral materials of the clergy.

One effective instrument TC tries to establish in the training of diocesan priests and seminarians is to ensure

their competence and formation in their ecclesiastical studies.

Through its various programs, TC helps priests of the country to grow in priestly ministry and holiness, Cardenas added.

Santosh Digal // CBCP News -  
March 11, 2008

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(03/12/2026)