

Esteban praises 'diverse, global' students of SHU

BY WARD MIELE
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SOUTH ORANGE—Asking the university community to join him in continuing to “strengthen our Catholic identity,” A. Gabriel Esteban, Ph.D., formally became the 20th president in the 156-year history of Seton Hall University (SHU) at investiture ceremonies held Oct. 14.

Held during the president’s first year in office, highlights of the ceremony included conferring the authority and symbols of the office. Esteban, the first Filipino-American president of a major U.S. university, was appointed in January after serving on an interim basis during the latter half of 2010 (see *The Catholic Advocate*, Jan. 12).

In recognition of the historic event, the national anthems of both the United States and the Philippines were played at the beginning of the ceremony. Among those in the audience of faculty, clergy and students was Rev. Msgr. Robert Sheeran, S.T.D., who served as SHU president from 1995-2010.

Since 2007, Esteban had been the SHU provost and chief academic officer. He received a doctorate in administration from the Graduate School of Management of the University of California at Irvine and a master of science in Japanese business studies from Chaminade University in Honolulu. He earned a master of business administration and a bachelor of science in mathematics degrees from the University of the Philippines.

In the United States, “maybe more so than anywhere in the world, education has proven to be the great equalizer and allowed upward mobility,” Esteban stressed in his investiture address. Education, he added, has “become a symbol of hope— hope for a brighter future, especially for individuals born with fewer resources than others.”

However, he also warned that today institutions of higher education face unprecedented challenges. In this country, he noted, “population growth has slowed and with it we have fewer traditional age students.” The new president cautioned too that “unemployment and under employment remain stubbornly high as we struggle to recover identity of SHU, he explained, include “finding ways to infuse Catholic values” throughout the curriculum.

He called on the university community again to “commit” with him to “recruit, retain and graduate students who can best benefit from a Seton Hall education.” To that end he cited the recently announced undergraduate public tuition rate incentive “directed toward academically qualified students, wherever they may be.”

Patrick Murray, president of the Board of Trustees, declared “the future of education at Seton Hall University is in good hands.” Provost and executive vice president Larry A. Robinson Ed.D. commented that the investiture represents the “future course of Seton Hall University, a premier Catholic university.” Stressing the new president’s “ambitious strategic plan” for SHU, Hon. Rochelle Hendricks, acting secretary of higher education representing Gov. Chris Christie, a graduate of Seton Hall Law School, declared SHU has an “extraordinary reputation for making a difference in the world.”

Speaking for students, Derel M. Stroud, president of the SHU Student Government Association, declared under the leadership of its new president, the university will not only “continue to achieve new heights of academic excellence but continue to attract highly competent students such as ourselves.”



Advocate photo – Ward Miele
Part of the actual investiture of Dr. A. Gabriel Esteban (left) as the 20th president of Seton Hall University included presentation of the Holy Scriptures by Archbishop John J. Myers. Archbishop Myers welcomed the new president, citing his “profound sense of Catholic identity and integrity.” Esteban is the first Filipino-American president of a major U.S. university.