

**De La Salle University**  
**Tragedy Fuels Desire for Peace**  
**Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER**

On the campus of De La Salle University Feb. 10, SGI President Ikeda laid a wreath at a memorial to teachers and citizens killed by Japanese forces on the university site during World War II.

After presenting the flowers, the SGI leader stood before the statue, his hand over his heart, and bowed deeply.

Feb. 12 marked the 53rd anniversary of the massacre. The Japanese army invaded the Philippines soon after the outbreak of the Pacific War. As the war intensified, the school was opened to area citizens as a hospital and place of refuge.

Eventually, the Japanese army seized the school for use as a headquarters, but a number of teachers continued giving instruction in limited facilities. These teachers persevered in their work with the attitude that, the war notwithstanding, it would be unconscionable to allow the youth of the Philippines to grow up uneducated.

By January 1945, as the war drew to a close, they had to close the school; all but 18 teachers and a small number of local residents who had taken refuge remained.

As the tide of the war turned against Japan, fear and panic grew among the Japanese troops. Suspecting there might be spies or anti-Japanese resistance fighters among those living at De La Salle, on Feb. 12, 1945, the soldiers arrested three Philippine laborers on suspicion of being guerrillas.

Drunken Japanese troops massacred the teachers and evacuees at the school — men, women and children. Those who tried to escape were cut down with swords and bayonets. The following day, the soldiers returned to kill any who had survived. Of the 68 persons who had been at the school, 41 had been slaughtered, including 16 of the 18 teachers. The survivors were rescued by American troops on Feb. 16.

In the hearts of the members of the university community, this tragic history, rather than engendering hatred, has instead fueled a solid conviction in the absolute necessity of peace.

De La Salle, which was founded in 1911, is named after the French educator Saint John-Baptiste de La Salle (1651– 1719), a pioneer of modern education who devoted his life to the education of the poor.

Today, the school provides a comprehensive system of education, including elementary and secondary school instruction. It upholds the ideal of education that fosters well-rounded human beings.

With a student body of more than 10,000, De La Salle offers a broad range of courses of study, including one of the best programs for Japanese studies in the Philippines.

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