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Spiritual Reading in Pilipino: Maikling Banal na Pagsasanay

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in XVIIth century empiricism. The author reveals fresh insights into the 'denkform' of Locke, Hume, Newton and Boyle.

JOSE A. CRUZ

SPIRITUAL READING IN PILIPINO

MAIKLING BANAL NA PAGSASANAY. Salin at batay sa aklat
A *Week-end Retreat* ni Charles Dominic Plater, S.J. Manila:
Bookmark, 1964. viii, 92 pp.

If one, trying to cope with the complex problems of modern individual life, were to look through a catalogue of available readings in the national language for spiritual guidance and enlightenment, he would easily find quite a list of unpretentious religious works mostly written by missionaries during the late Spanish period and the early part of the American occupation. But even if he should be lucky enough actually to get hold of some of them, he would most probably discover that they are either catechisms or prayerbooks or brochures intended to popularize one form or other of devotional practices.

If we keep in mind that in the first place, the ordinary tagalog-speaking catholic today finds himself in a situation incomparably more complicated than the one to which his parents have been accustomed and that in the second place, he almost invariably believes that he has tried the catholic religion and found it, if not wanting, at least somewhat impracticable except through apparently blind and heroic efforts, we can readily see that his needs for books presenting catholic dogmas, morals and even asceticism call for something as dynamic as life itself while retaining the simplicity and the doctrinal orthodoxy of the good old catechisms. The appearance of the small book *Maikling Banal na Pagsasanay* can truly be considered a happy answer to that need.

Maikling Banal na Pagsasanay, as a retreat book, is not the first of its kind to appear in tagalog. Like every traditional Ignatian book on spiritual exercises, it treats of the most basic facts of existence in the light of the most fundamental principles or truths of supernatural faith. But the particular style the author uses to explain these truths, the subjective and reflective style carried on in the first person, renders the book conveniently adapted to the taste and psychology of the 'free and independent' man of today who, the smaller he suspects he might be, the more resentful and obstinate he becomes regarding anything that is directly told to him as something he has to do.

The fundamental truths mentioned are discussed in the following order: the meaning of life itself, God, one's self, everything one finds

in himself or in the midst of which one finds himself, the use of such things, sin, one's acts, hell, each one's personal apostolic mission and Christ. The treatment reveals an all-out drive on the part of the author to lead the reader in an atmosphere of autosuggestion into a more dynamic contact with the realities of these truths and into a more intelligent appreciation of the beneficent influence the contact with them could exert in one's whole being. The way the treatment is handled also betrays the long and fruitful apostolic experience as a retreat master of the author of the original book, Fr. Charles Dominique Plater S.J., among the working men and discharged soldiers of early 20th century England (1903-1921).

There is something however which this reviewer missed in the book, and that is an equally practical treatment of "equally" one of the most fundamental facts of christian life—the reality of grace. Such a treatment could have helped a long way in bringing out more positively the supernatural reality and delectable fulness of the truly christian individual life which certainly does not essentially consist of negative withdrawals or escapism of any kind. But of course, it is probably better to forego such a formal consideration of grace than to have one poorly or inadequately done.

The translation itself could stand some improvement. In the first place, a translation which aims not only to carry across the ideas of the original but also to deliver them with equal force should in many cases include not only a translation of the sentence but also a "translation" or reconstruction of the very way the ideas are "thought out" according to the way of thinking peculiar to the people for whom the translation is being made. Otherwise while the translation can still very well be true and correct, nevertheless it could also come out very flat and somewhat "queer-sounding". The translation under review suffers more or less in a general way on this score. This reviewer also believes that the translation would not have lost anything if a little more discretion if not discrimination had been employed in the use of colloquial terms like *bale-wala*, *magbida*, *masyado*, etc. Such words running around in the same breath with more archaic words like *baga* or more poetic words like *diyata't* would sound amusing in the mouth of comedians and other persons speaking with mock seriousness.

The defects which this reviewer has taken pains to point out with a confessedly undue strictness should not detain anyone from helping out in making the book in Pilipino available to as many people as possible, much less from reading the Pilipino version himself. The translator, Fr. Eпитacio V. Castro of Malolos, has done a sufficiently good job of enriching the wealth of worthwhile reading materials in Pilipino with the practical and saintly wisdom which Fr. Plater ably used in his book "A Week-end Retreat" in the noble attempt to bring men's minds and hearts closer to God. The efforts indeed which have

been put in the translation of Fr. Plater's work could not have been happier. Fr. Castro and all those who have been behind him deserve our full gratitude and unreserved praises.

BENJAMIN SAN JUAN

TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFICULT CHILD

THE DIFFICULT CHILD. Joseph S. Roucek, ed. New York: Philosophical Library, 1964. viii, 292, pp.

Child specialists are continually trying to sensitize lay persons to the need for a basic understanding of children's problems, its dynamics, symptoms and possible remedies in the light of present day studies.

The Difficult Child represents such an effort. It is a compilation of several papers on children's problems. As the editor, Roucek, puts it, the book is intended, "as a handbook, a survey of existing experiences and serious thinking about the outstanding problems of the difficult child" for "all parents, and those representatives of society, especially the educators and social workers, handling the problems of children." Indeed, the teacher or parent who has neither the time, the temperament, nor the sophistication to use the scientific journals, will find this volume easy but very substantial reading material.

On the whole, however, this book is primarily addressed to the classroom teacher and school administrators, in other words, to those who set up and implement the school curricula, standards and policies. Three factors combine to make it so. First, the choice of problems. Difficulties in mathematics, in music, in reading, in writing, in paying attention and in memory are problems whose relevance to the classroom situation and to the task of the teacher can be immediately seen. These are the problems chosen for discussion in this book. Second, the orientation toward educational research of the specialists who have written the articles. Probably, due to this, what they have most successfully brought out is the role of the classroom teacher and school administration in the treatment of the problems, as well as the relevance of otherwise abstract theoretical formulations and empirical studies to the classroom situation. The teacher will readily find in each article, concrete, practical suggestions that he can immediately try in his own classes. Third, the language is non-technical for the most part. In fact, there is no emphasis on carefully worked-out theories, or detailed presentation of empirical data or strict operational definitions.