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From Beaterio to Congregation

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this is shinningly apparent — when God's peoples sing in their native tongue. During a group retreat recently, the participants were being taught by a Bicolano these songs composed by a Visayan. The lyrics were in Tagalog. Then at one faith-sharing session, it was an Ilocano who said, "I have meditated for many years on the *Sume et Suscipe* and have sung *Take and Receive* over and over, yet it was only in singing *Kunin mo, O Dios* that I really understood what I was saying."

Victor L. Badillo

THE PSALMS, THEIR ORIGIN AND MEANING. New enlarged edition. By Leopold Sabourin, S.J. New York: Alba House, 1974. xx, 450 pp. \$5.95 paper.

It is gratifying for a reviewer to see the fulfillment of his hopes for a corrected and paperback version of a highly useful book. The original two-volume edition was reviewed in *PS* 19 (1971): 243–246. The present edition is a handy single volume, made possible by the omission of the psalm texts; the gain in economy and easy access to students well compensates for the loss. The main additions to the text come from the contributions of Fr. Mitchell Dahood in his *Psalms* II and III of the Anchor Bible. The author tells us they are mostly in Pss 22, 55, 63, 74, 83, 84, 86, 89, 102, 106, 109, 114, 119, 132, 139, 142.

The purpose of this new edition is expressly to make the book more available, particularly to students and for study and discussion groups. Anyone interested in seeing the Psalms more widely understood and appreciated can only rejoice and feel confident that Fr. Sabourin's work will enhance the use of these inspired songs in the religious life of God's people.

P. J. Calderone

FROM BEATERIO TO CONGREGATION: A Brief History of the Congregation of the Religious of the Virgin Mary. By Sister Maria Rita C. Ferraris, R.V.M. [Quezon City: R.V.M. Generalate, 1975]. xii, 100 pp.

Many historians, Filipino and foreign, have rightly turned away in recent years from the history of the Spanish and American colonial enterprises in the Philippines to an examination of what Filipinos were doing and thinking during the period of colonial dependency. The task is not easy for the period before the end of the nineteenth century, and some historians have taken the extreme position that there was no history of the Filipinos before 1872, only a history of the Spaniards in the Philippines. Of course there was a history of Filipinos, but since they left few records of their own, it is out of Spanish records that this history must be extracted.

One figure whose life and career can cast much light on late seventeenth

and early eighteenth century Filipino society, is Ignacia del Espiritu Santo, a Chinese mestiza of Binondo, foundress of the institution which came to be called the Beaterio de la Compañía de Jesús, origin of today's Congregation of the Religious of the Virgin Mary. Though relatively little is known in detail of Ignacia's life, and only a little more about the beaterio she founded in 1684, it is of considerable significance for judging the depth and maturity of Filipino Catholicism by the end of the seventeenth century. More than forty years before the first Filipino priest was ordained, a recognizable form of religious life for women under purely Filipino auspices had arisen. That Ignacia was not an isolated figure is clear not only from the success of her beaterio, but from the apparently enthusiastic reception this Filipino form of religious life met among other Filipinos in and near Manila. Moreover the fact that it was followed by several other similar institutes is sufficient indication that the ground of Filipino Christianity had been well prepared for the emergence of native religious life.

In two earlier books — . . . *And a Star is Born* (1969) and *Under the Noonday Sun* (1972) — Sister Maria Rita Ferraris, a trained historian, has told much of the story told here, though in less systematic fashion and principally for the members of her congregation. In the book under review, however, further research has enabled her to clarify and correct the earlier accounts, and especially to order them into a well-integrated, if brief, history of the congregation from its founding as a beaterio (a house for pious women living in common), until its definitive establishment as a large congregation with papal approbation. The story is soberly told, with careful attention to establishing the facts to the extent that surviving documents allow. On the basis not only of the somewhat incomplete archives of the congregation but also of the Archivo General de Indias and various Jesuit sources, the history has been put on a firm foundation and its main lines clearly outlined. Fuller details on certain events and particularly on prominent individuals of the congregation will still have to be sought in the earlier works, but the general historian will find the present volume much more satisfactory.

The book is surely of wider interest than merely to members of the Congregation of the Religious of the Virgin Mary. Documented with care, and written against the wider historical background of the times, it should be known not only by those interested in the religious history of the Filipino people, but also those concerned with the social history of the Spanish period in particular.

John N. Schumacher