

# philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University · Loyola Heights, Quezon City · 1108 Philippines

---

## **Keeping Secrets: Confidential Information and Social Service by Thomas A. Mitchell, S.J.**

Review Author: G. Healy

*Philippine Studies* vol. 3, no. 1 (1955): 102–103

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

---

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at [philstudies@admu.edu.ph](mailto:philstudies@admu.edu.ph).

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>

end. We quickly turned the pages to see if some texts in the native language, together with their translations, would dispel our suspicion. At the end of the book we found a few tales in the Kankanay, Nabaloy and Apayao (i.e. Isneg) dialects. But we were baffled. From beginning to end, the texts are full of errors. And the translation? It is called a free translation, yet it is no translation at all; the most we can say is that, here and there, something of the trend of the story happens to be more or less approximately rendered.

So we turned the pages back to the chapter we had been reading when our suspicions were aroused. There we found a tale entitled "Native Wood Carving" (pp. 136-8) of which it is said in the book that it was "told by a native and freely translated." Imagine our surprise! It was the story we ourselves had written some months after Liberation in order to please a foreign dealer in Ifugao carvings who wanted some kind of a story that would interest his buyers and help him to sell his carvings. It was not told by any native Ifugao; we had simply invented it, imitating the style and the wording of the many genuine tales — ritual, magical and others — which we had collected and partly published. We never thought that, one day, it would be regarded as a scientific contribution and quoted as an authentic free translation. We leave it to the reader to draw his own conclusions concerning the scientific reliability of the folklore printed in this book.

We cannot, therefore, recommend the second half of "The Skyland of the Philippines" to those who are interested in ethnology, folklore and linguistics. Let the second half, as well as the first, be a guide, a Baedeker, for tourists. The tourists can thank Mr. Wilson for a summary of his research work. For them it matters little whether or not the things they read are scientifically correct, accurate and reliable; all they wish is an interesting description, with some plausibility, of the people who dwell in those mountains so beautifully and attractively called the "The Skyland of the Philippines."

FRANCIS LAMBRECHT

## KEEPING SECRETS

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION AND SOCIAL SERVICE. By Thomas A. Mitchell, S.J. Monograph 700E. Philippine Association of Social Workers, Manila. 1954. Pp. 18.

In this monograph the author has applied the moral principles concerning professional secrecy to the modern social worker and

the social agency. A set of rules for the worker and the agency are proposed and explained, stressing the advantages and necessity and the means of observing secrecy with regard to confidential matters. A list of questions for self-evaluation of the worker and the agency add to the usefulness of the work. The style is clear; the format is very pleasing to the eye. The whole is easy to read and singularly free from typographical errors.

It is written on the purely ethical plane with no reference or appeal to the supernatural. There is no mention of the Eighth Commandment, nor of sin and its theological species. The actual Civil Law practice with regard to confidential communications made to the social worker is not made clear. There is only a very general explanation of just what matters fall under professional secrecy. The great experience of the author in this field of social service makes one suspect that these omissions were perhaps deliberate, with a view to further writings on social service work, a field with unlimited possibilities in the Philippines today.

G. HEALY

## IMPRESSIVE RUIN

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN WORLD AFFAIRS. Edited by Waldemar Gurian and M. A. Fitzsimons. University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana. 1954. Pp. 420. \$4.25.

*The Catholic Church in World Affairs* is a collection of sixteen essays. The first eight discuss general problems; the rest treat of the Church in various countries.

In an introductory essay Waldemar Gurian quotes the Protestant theologian and sociologist Ernst Troeltsch, who in the last century described the Church as an impressive ruin surviving from the middle ages. When this statement was made, belief in reason, science, humanity was the accepted religion, destined to bring man to Utopia while the Church disappeared.

Today except in a few intellectual backwaters, belief in progress and science as saviours of mankind has disappeared. The secularist world is on the defensive. The medieval ruin has somehow refused to crumble into dust; on the contrary it has suddenly become a bulwark.

Father John Courtney Murray, S.J. begins the series with a profound essay "On the Structure of the Church-State Problem." He observes that the problem has always been essentially the same. The Church has maintained that there are two societies,