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**Ang Bagong Tipan ng Ating Mananakop  
at Panginoong Jesu-Cristo**  
**Translated by Juan T. Trinidad, S.J.**

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ANG BAGONG TIPAN NG ATING MANANAKOP AT PANGINOONG JESU-CRISTO. Isinalin sa Wikang Pambansa mula sa *Vulgata Latina*. Ni Juan T. Trinidad, S.J., Manila, 1952, pp. xvi-4-835, Glossary, 4 appendices, 4 maps. P6.00

About a year ago, a work of more than ordinary significance—for the Tagalog speaking world, at least—was brought to a happy termination. This was the publication of *Ang Bagong Tipan*, a new Tagalog translation of the New Testament, done by the late Rev. Juan T. Trinidad, S.J., Professor of Sacred Scripture at San Jose Seminary. It is to be regretted that Fr. Trinidad was no longer in this world to witness the happy issue of his labors; he had been taken away by an early death from typhoid in 1948 before he could prepare his work for publication. We owe a debt of gratitude to the devoted group of three priests and one lay-man, Rev. Juan M. H. Ledesma, S.J., Rev. Leopoldo A. Arcaira, Rev. Gabriel Hocson and Dr. Rufino Alejandro, who lovingly and painstakingly went over Fr. Trinidad's manuscripts and finally got them into shape for the press.

One need have no hesitation in accepting with confidence this new translation of Fr. Trinidad, who happily combined in his literary equipment the requirements of an ideal translator: knowledge of the Scriptures, skill in the languages involved, and love for the inspired Word of God. Fr. Trinidad received his Doctorate in Scripture Studies from the well known Biblical Institute in Rome where he came into close contact with the works and minds of the most eminent contemporary Scripture scholars. A doctorate such as his presupposes a proficiency in Hebrew and allied Semitic tongues as well as in Greek, and therefore thorough familiarity with the languages in which the books of the New Testament were originally written. All this knowledge, however, would have been of little value to him as a translator if he had lacked an intimate understanding of his own native tongue. Fortunately, his many years of studies for the priesthood, done in various foreign languages, had not extinguished his skill in and love of the beautiful Bulacan Tagalog which he had learned as a boy in Baliwag.

In addition to all this, the task of translating the New Testament was undertaken as a labor of love, sandwiched in between his schedules as a full-time professor of Sacred Scripture at San Jose Seminary in Manila, where he was teaching at the time of his death. One must perforce admire the dogged persistence and courage that must have gone into the slow and careful research and piecemeal translation, in the face of so many difficulties, not the least of which were the shortcomings of the Tagalog language itself. The accuracy and smoothness of Fr. Trinidad's translation are a tribute both to his scholarship and to his reverence for the revealed word of God. We are almost tempted to compare his contribution in the field of sacred letters with a similar work done in English by Monsignor

Knox some years previously. Both men have made the language of the New Testament more intelligible to the modern reader.

It is not easy to know where to start in giving an appraisal of Fr. Trinidad's translation. Its outstanding general excellence, it would seem, is its clarity of style, making for easy and pleasurable reading by the average man, whether this reading be done from the relatively simple narratives of the Gospels, or in the letters of St. Paul, or in the more mysterious passages of the Apocalypse of St. John. One can see throughout that Fr. Trinidad was not striving after an elegant translation merely for the sake of elegance. He was more concerned with bringing out the meaning of every passage and with trying to give in correct, idiomatic Tagalog what the Scriptures have to say. And in this he has succeeded admirably. His translation is not Hebrew or Greek disguised in a *barong tagalog*, but Tagalog to the core, modern yet literary, simple yet not devoid of linguistic charms, familiar, yet bordering at times on the poetic.

The reader will be delighted to discover that his favorite passages of the New Testament, even when couched in the vernacular, lose nothing of their vigorous simplicity, their grandeur, and their timeless power to touch the human heart. The prologue of St. John's Gospel, the history of Christ's Infancy in St. Luke, the parables of Our Lord, the stories of the Samaritan Woman and of the raising of Lazarus, the solemn discourse at the Last Supper, where, more than anywhere else, Our Lord bared the love of His Sacred Heart, the tragic cross-currents of the Passion, the classic passages of St. Paul on Charity, on the glorification of Christ, on His Eternal Priesthood, the pageants of the Vision of St. John—they are all there, untrimmed, unobscured, in language that rings true and sincere, without the taint of affectation or artificiality. The reader is not distracted by strikingly clever expressions or by overloaded and difficult circumlocutions. The translation is as modern as this morning's newspaper, but for all that, it carries a reverent touch of antiquity that one likes to savor in a translation of the New Testament.

Needless to say, no translation, however perfect, can succeed in pleasing all tastes. Many readers will undoubtedly encounter passages which they would wish had been translated in a quite different way. Better ways of translating the passages in question may even occur to them. This is but natural. Fr. Trinidad, were he alive today would be the first to recognize the possibility of this, and would welcome criticisms of his work. Conscious of his own deficiencies, he knew only too well that in a work of such length as the New Testament, even the most careful workman must make many a slip. We must remember too that the Tagalog translator is handicapped by difficulties inherent in the Tagalog language itself. Tagalog is admittedly an adequate medium of expression in the strictly literary field, but its vocabulary is too undeveloped to express the

technically difficult concepts of philosophy and theology, especially those found in the Epistles of St. Paul. Tagalog, furthermore, lacks specific terms for many ideas and objects in everyday use, and, for some shades of meaning, the translator must resort to coined words or to awkward roundabout expressions.

Careful editing and clear modern print combine to make *Ang Bagong Tipan* an attractive and readable volume. Its format is somewhat modeled after the popular Confraternity Edition of the New Testament published in the United States. Headings in bold-face type conveniently break up the text into logical groupings. This arrangement has the advantage of avoiding monotony and of giving the reader a general idea of the section he is reading. There are also abundant footnotes, a glossary to explain unfamiliar terms, and maps to make the reading of the New Testament as helpful as possible.

*Ang Bagong Tipan* could find an honored place in the teaching of the national language. It was the reviewer's good fortune to have been in contact with the translation even before it was published in book form. He used it to good advantage in his Tagalog classes at San Jose Seminary. The students were occasionally made to translate a familiar passage of the Gospel from English into Tagalog, and then their efforts were compared with Fr. Trinidad's translation of the same passage. The class generally agreed that their attempts sounded labored and unwieldy beside the smoothly running, economically phrased, precise sentences of Fr. Trinidad. It would not be an exaggeration to say that non-Tagalog students could learn much of the genius of the Tagalog language by frequent readings from this new translation. But it is primarily in the field of religion that this work of Fr. Trinidad will render signal service. Throughout the ages, seekers after truth have come to know and love and serve God better by reading and meditating on the lessons of the Gospels made known to them through their own native tongues. This modern translation will bring its Tagalog readers to a greater appreciation of and loyalty to the Personality of Christ, and many others who do not yet know the treasures of the divinity hidden in Christ will find in these pages the Light that is Life.

ANTONIO LEETAU

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SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER. By James Brodrick, S.J. Wicklow Press New York; Burns, Oates, London. 1952. pp. 548. P12.00

THE FIRE OF FRANCIS XAVIER. By Arthur McGratty, S.J. Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee. 1952. pp. 295. P9.50

The year 1952, marking the fourth centenary of the death of