

philippine studies

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

Science Serving Charity: Social Work is Catholic Action

Review Author: G. W. Healy

Philippine Studies vol. 8, no. 4 (1960): 905–906

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Fri June 30 13:30:20 2008

MY FATHER'S BUSINESS is a valuable contribution to pastoral theology. Much of what is said, it is true, applies particularly to the urban milieu. For many of our priests who are more concerned with the less sophisticated barrios, the problems the Abbé presents may not be as gigantic, but they will be present in some modified form. But whether the priest be in a metropolitan area or in an unknown municipality, his job is to shape society—that part of it committed to his shepherd's staff — into a unity, to make men one even as the Church is one. This is the priest's privilege as heir to Christ's priesthood. It is also his road to sanctity. It is for this that Christ has chosen him.

RAMON J. T. SALAZAR

SCIENCE SERVING CHARITY

SOCIAL WORK IS CATHOLIC ACTION. By Thomas A. Mitchell, S.J. Manila: The Sodality of Our Lady, 1960. 36p.

This is a valuable pamphlet that might be read with profit by every Catholic, lay or cleric, to see how the Church strives to fulfill the role of the Good Samaritan in the modern world. It is an ABC of social work that pulsates with true Christian charity while it insists on a very systematic approach to this growing problem. The author's own training and years of experience bear rich fruit in this practical and readable little treatise.

Definitions are given, objections raised and answered or forestalled, examples abound. The advantages of the modern scientific approach are forcefully demonstrated with examples of the right kind as compared to the harmful or wasteful or over-lapping kind of help to the poor. Needs must be met by resources and the resources must be known, properly assessed and organized for prompt and reliable service. The parish as the center of activity, as the Church in miniature, is highlighted with all the advantages that accrue to its proper use and the proper organization of its resources. The harmony and cooperation that should exist between ecclesiastical and governmental and/or private agencies is stressed in a practical and convincing manner.

"How to Begin", "Whom to Help", "Sources of Help", are subtitles that reveal the practical approach of the author whose years of experience shine through on every page. "The Personal Qualities of the Social Worker" is a profile of the ideal that has crystallized in the author's mind, doubtless after many years of success mingled with an inevitable share of frustrations and disappointments.

The true notion of Catholic Action — training lay leaders who will in turn guide others in bringing about the reformation and right ordering of society — is clearly brought out as the ideal of the trained social worker is spelled out. The reader will be convinced that such a worker is carrying on in the finest tradition of supernatural charity while availing himself of the best scientific means to make his charity more meaningful, more effective, more lasting.

G. W. HEALY

OLD TESTAMENT HEROES

INTRODUCING THE OLD TESTAMENT. By Frederick L. Moriarty, S.J. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1960. xi, 253p.

Impact Books' initial offering in its promised series of significant achievements in human knowledge is excellent in every way. Fr. Moriarty has written expertly of the Old Testament once before in his FOREWORD TO THE OLD TESTAMENT. But that first essay was a faint harbinger of the labor and pains of the superb scholarship which engendered and brought to fruit the present book, INTRODUCING THE OLD TESTAMENT. Bruce of Milwaukee has done a very competent job of publishing, for the print is delightful and the table of dates and the maps are clear and compact. The bibliography is right up to date and the index is competent.

This introduction to the Old Testament, with which Catholics are becoming more and more familiar in the present century, is different in that its approach is through the great protagonists of Hebrew history. Before our eyes in the great story of God's living encounter with his chosen people there march Abraham, the father of all God's children whether Hebrew or Greek or Roman; Moses, the man close to God whose presence was always close to him; Joshua, the successor of Moses whose work he finished by taking possession of the promised land and by uniting all the tribes into a unity based on the common worship of Yahweh. The line of heroes stretches over the whole of Palestine, in the Northern and Southern Kingdom, from Beer-Sheba to Sidon and Damascus. Wider than the spatial extent is the temporal scope, for we meet the patriarchs (2000-1700 B. C.) and the Maccabees (167 B. C.) who draw their courage and inspiration from Daniel and his companions, heroic men who were compelled to choose between apostasy and martyrdom.

But beyond time and space is a central idea: Yahweh's intervention in human history which is a story of salvation. Fr. Moriarty