

# philippine studies

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## Editor's Preface

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The month of May in the Philippines as elsewhere is traditionally a time of Marian devotions and pilgrimages – thus the timeliness of Fr. William J. Malley's lead article on Mary, together with the pictorial note of Doreen Fernandez on the Salubong in Angono, Rizal. These two essays represent, moreover, two basic responses to a rather vague fear that popular Filipino devotion to Mary is waning in certain areas, or perhaps worse, is endangered by the secularizing process of losing its original religious motivation and becoming a mere social phenomenon, fostering the tourist trade. Fr. Malley, whose recently published scholarly patristics study received international acclaim [see *PS* 27 (1979): 442-44], admirably relates the Catholic stance before Mary to the central core of our Christian Faith: Jesus Christ. He does this while situating Mary in the whole of biblical salvation history, relating her to the key Old Testament feminine symbols, as well as to contemporary studies of the feminine by social scientists. This theological deepening of Marian piety is complemented by Doreen Fernandez' delightful piece describing one concrete example of the specifically Filipino dimension of Marian devotion. How do Filipinos actually grasp and express the unique dignity and role of Mary, the Mother of God? Here is one way: they imaginatively conceive and produce an emotion-filled encounter of the triumphant Risen Christ with His sorrowful Mother, whose black mantle of grief is lifted by an angel when she meets her glorious Redeemer Son.

A second group of articles in this issue deals with Philippine history. In "Filipino Class Structure in the Sixteenth Century," Dr. William H. Scott offers a companion piece to his article of last year on the pre-hispanized Philippines. Indicative of the same

high level of scholarship of his former contributions, this essay is particularly helpful in showing us in the historical concrete, the ever-present tension between change and stability in a people's social structure – a lesson that may be especially urgent today in our era of radical upheavals.

One of the most unfortunate results of our time's changes is the appalling refugee problem, pictured most poignantly perhaps in the image of the "boat people." Such seems to be our dreadful present-day analogue to the revolting slave trade of the last century. Elliott C. Arensmeyer, in a well researched article on the Asian equivalent, the Chinese coolie trade, is happily able to conclude that "the Philippines was never involved in the contract coolie labor trade at any serious level." A third contribution to Philippine history is Fr. José S. Arcilla's detailed review article of Richard Welch's *Response to Imperialism*. Here we find the complex and often highly questionable motivation of the American involvement in the Philippines at the turn of the century. Efforts to oppose annexation had no real chance of success – a lesson repeated so often today in so many different areas (besides the obvious political arena) where conspicuous consultative and democratic procedures become so much window dressing for old fashioned behind-the-scenes power plays.

A third area touched upon in this issue is that of ethics, both social and medical. Georgina A. Reyes analyzes *Like the Molave* of R. Zulueta da Costa in terms of its social consciousness, certainly a prime topic in the Philippines today. There is a distinct advantage in approaching such a debated theme through a literary work that is at once Filipino, but of a different era: its very deficiencies highlight just how far we have come, both in a literary way as well as in social consciousness. In medical ethics, Fr. Gerald Healy uses two recent cases in Manila hospitals to clarify the principle of double effect, – so long a key principle in Catholic moral theology, – as well as to introduce the latest ethical thinking regarding pre-moral and moral evil. The chances of *PS* readers' misunderstanding this admittedly complex and difficult teaching would seem rather high. But perhaps that is the occupational hazard authors and editors must face – possibly with a cautious plea for critical reading!

Joseph L. Roche, S.J.