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Readings in Philippine Church History

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READINGS IN PHILIPPINE CHURCH HISTORY. By John N. Schumacher, S.J. Quezon City: Loyola School of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University, 1979. iv + 451 pages.

For those who would like to know more about the history of the Catholic Church in the Philippines, Fr. John N. Schumacher's latest book is invaluable. Patterned after the late Fr. Horacio de la Costa's *Readings in Philippine History*, this book has quoted from numerous sources here and abroad to show the course taken by the Catholic Church during the more than four centuries of its existence in the archipelago.

Schumacher, like his fellow Jesuit de la Costa, spent years researching in the archives of Seville, the Vatican, London, and Washington, D.C., and is therefore fully qualified to write on the history of his church in this country. Schumacher was born in Buffalo, New York, fifty-two years ago. He became a Jesuit novice at the age of seventeen and was ordained at thirty. He took his graduate studies at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., and obtained his Ph.D. in 1965. He has written several books, including one on Father Jose Burgos and on *The Propaganda Movement*. With de la Costa he co-authored the books on *Church and State* and *The Filipino Clergy*. To allay suspicion that he writes from a biased foreigner's point of view, and therefore critical of Filipino attitudes, we might add that he has become a Filipino citizen of his own choice.

The book opens with the observation that it was Magellan, and not Fr. Pedro Valderrama, the secular priest who accompanied the expedition, who preached to Humabon and the Cebuanos the tenets of Christianity. A few days later, 500 of the rajah's men were baptized. Why the Cebuanos accepted Christianity so readily has not been explained in this book, but obviously the mass baptism of so many pagans was irregular according to canon law which demands that baptism be given only to those who have been properly instructed in the Faith.

The conflict between church and state, starting with Governor Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera versus Archbishop Hernando Guerrero in 1635, was caused by the governor's meddling in the purely internal affairs of the Dominicans under the guise of religious reform, while the archbishop defended the right of the *Patronato Real* by which the Spanish kings claimed control over any communications between the popes and the churches in the Indies. The dispute raged over their respective rights with regard to the presentation and appointment to other ecclesiastical posts, as well as between the Archbishop and the Jesuits.

These differences between church and state culminated in the assassination of Governor Fernando Bustamante in 1719. Schumacher points out that it was the community that sided with the religious against Bustamante, whose zeal in collecting taxes and stamping out abuses, as well as his arbitrariness

and greed in lining his pocket and that of his favorites, gave rise to the mob violence which led to his death. Schumacher quotes a French member of his order, Pere Gilles Wibault, as one not involved with either side, to give an unbiased report of that tragedy.

"In spite of the admirable development of Filipino Christianity by the eighteenth century," says Schumacher, "the Spanish missionary enterprise had one major defect, which was to stunt, and even undo, a good deal of the development that had been achieved. This was its disastrous failure to develop an adequate native clergy. . . . In any culture, this building up of Christian values in the community is not accomplished simply by baptism, but requires a generation or two of Christian life. The failure to realize this had brought disaster to the native clergy of Mexico, a disaster which was to have its influence on the Philippine church as well."

The Councils of Mexico and Peru began to legislate against the ordination of Indians; some absolutely, others at least discouraging it, as did the Third Council of Mexico, which met in 1588. This was of particular importance for the Philippines, since its legislation was theoretically applicable to the Philippine church as well. Not only was great care exercised in the selection of native candidates for the priesthood in the Philippines, but none were selected at all!

When Archbishop Sancho tangled with the friars on his right of visitation, he ordered the ordination of large numbers of Filipinos with only a minimum of training to fill the vacancies in the parishes. The complaint against such native parish priests mounted. Slowly, the native priests were dispossessed of their parishes until in the 1870s, led by the creole Fr. Pedro Pelaez, Jose Burgos and Mariano Gomez, they fought back and were falsely accused of being implicated in the Cavite Mutiny in order to stifle the growing nationalism of the native clergy.

The Spanish administrators in the Philippines came to realize that the friars were the pillar of colonial loyalty to Spain. The Filipinos, on the other hand, blamed the friars for the evils in the country. This was the reason why the Revolution of 1896 was anti-friar in character. Schumacher reprints the manifesto authored by twenty Filipino priests in Paniqui, Tarlac, in October 1899, under the leadership of Gregorio Aglipay. He delineates Aglipay's break with the Catholic Church during the Fil-American war and his indecision over the question whether to join or not to join Isabelo de los Reyes in founding a new sect, the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) in 1902. Schumacher says that "Aglipay began a retreat under the Jesuits" – and nothing more. Yet, IFI sources (which Schumacher failed to quote) claim that the Jesuits tried to "brainwash" Aglipay by urging him to retract his anti-Catholic views.

From 1903 to 1910, the Church underwent a reorganization. It was during this period that the American administrators allowed Spanish friars to remain in the Philippines, on a smaller scale of course. Meanwhile, Protestantism

gained a foothold. By 1925, the church had adapted to the new order of things, and the first national congress of Catholic Action was proof of this. There was a "new realization of the responsibility of the laity in the church, and the necessity of real Catholicism showing itself in social action for the poor and the oppressed of society," notes Schumacher.

The book ends with the role played by the religious during the Japanese occupation. In reply to the query of Cardinal Montini, papal secretary of state who would later occupy the Vatican throne, Apostolic Delegate Piani cabled that eighty-five prelates had been killed during the war and about thirty-eight slain by snipers or died in fires started by Japanese soldiers. Schumacher concludes, "it would be many years after the war before so many priests, brothers and sisters would be replaced."

As a source book, *Readings in Philippine Church History* is invaluable.

Carlos Quirino

✓ **OPENING TO GOD.** By Thomas H. Green, S.J. Manila: St. Paul Publications, 1977. 110 pages.

WHEN THE WELL RUNS DRY. By Thomas H. Green, S.J. Manila: St. Paul Publications, 1979. 125 pages.

Opening to God, as the subtitle suggests, is a guide to prayer, explaining prayer to beginners. It has two main parts: the first is the *what* and the *why* of prayer, and the second is the *how* of it. The title of the book comes from the author's definition of prayer as an "opening of the mind and heart to God." This is a good definition. Understood as "opening," prayer is seen as receptiveness and sensitivity rather than talking. The emphasis is healthy because while it avoids the quietism condemned by the Church, it does not see the pray-er as running the enterprise himself but as depending on God. All he can do is open himself, and leave the rest up to God. The second and third elements of the definition, that it is an opening of "the mind and heart," emphasize that prayer is an activity of the whole man, not just the intellect or the emotions but both. It is not intellectualism and it is not emotionalism. There is a cognitive aspect to prayer, and there is the feeling aspect. The fourth element, that it is an opening "to God," emphasizes that God is not a creature among other creatures, but one who is other and beyond. On this rests the whole thesis of the book that precisely because the other pole of prayer is totally other, we cannot control God but must wait for Him, and for His gift. He runs the business and we have to open ourselves. The rest is up to Him.

Fr. Green has an especially interesting chapter entitled "The Irrelevance of Prayer." It is an intriguing title. The point that he makes is that if one means by relevant, how "useful" prayer is, then prayer is supremely irrelevant.