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Editor's Preface

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Editor's Preface

The popularity of our present, most-traveled Pope, John Paul II, has not diminished the international press' interest in the "Hans K ng affair," which has become something of a *cause c l bre*. This exercise of Roman ecclesiastical authority, stripping K ng of his post as professor of Catholic theology in a German university, has once again raised the thorny question of authority in the Church. The issue is currently being debated in the most unlikely quarters, and surely it is only a question of time until the specter of the Spanish Inquisition is called forth from its historical obscurity to warn the innocent, post-Vatican II basic Christian communities against such ancient horrors! In such a situation, our first article by F. Delor Angeles on "The Philippine Inquisition" is both timely and informative. Grounded on extensive and painstaking research, this scholarly essay surprises the reader with its wealth of anecdotal detail; in the process something of the fearsome aspect of the Inquisition begins to recede, and one is left with the slightly uncomfortable feeling of having occasionally harbored similar ideas (wishes?) regarding peace and good order in today's chaotic world.

But lest we get lost in the contrived intricacies of the ecclesiastical world, whether contemporary or of ages past, Soledad Reyes invites us into the world of literary criticism, offering us insights into Filipino "Values of Love and Marriage" by an analysis of popular Tagalog novels. Just the contrast between the more traditional nineteenth century Filipino cultural mores and the daily news items and ads in the Manila papers today, is enough to start anyone thinking. The oft-asserted but rarely analyzed primordial Filipino value of the family is studied here in detail: family structure, mother-daughter relationship, and parental authority and spirit of sacrifice; extramarital love in typical Filipino features

also comes under review. Throughout these analyses we are made aware of the complex interplay between "society's norms" and the personal views of the individual novelist.

A third major area of investigation into the human, the socio-economic, is represented by Fr. Antonio Ledesma's "Land Reform in East and SE Asia." Here we are presented with a detailed survey of the results of various Asian land reform programs since World War II. The article, whose second part will appear in our fourth quarter issue, is valuable not only for the sheer amount of data it organizes, but especially for focusing our attention on this basic economic fact — land ownership and its attendant aspects — affecting the great mass of Asian peoples. One is less tempted to remain in ideological debates in which simplistic notions of "Communist," "socialist," and "democratic," are tossed about wildly, after having read and reflected on this calm, objective description of the best available data on the success/failure of Asian governments' land reform programs over the past thirty odd years.

Fr. David Power's note on "Liturgy in Search of Religion" discusses the contemporary question of "official Church liturgy" compared to "folk liturgy" of the people. An acknowledged, internationally recognized liturgist, Fr. Power was nonetheless able to draw on his experience in the Philippines to make concrete applications to the Filipino devotional practices and sacramental outlook. In stressing how any authentic liturgy today must address itself to the present "powerlessness of the people," the essay brings out another ever present danger/temptation in the social, institutional practice of religious faith — different from the inquisitorial problem of Angeles' study — namely, how can the prayer life of the community be authentic prayer, uplifting, and truly communal, yet at the same time respond to the unique demands of the specific groups in their particular time and place. The essay may also add a complementary dimension to Fr. Ledesma's economic study in that it gives evidence of equally real aspects of the living Asian masses which may not appear in today's typical "structural analyses."

Finally, Fr. Badillo brings together a wealth of detail in Filipino time-keeping customs to present us with an extremely interesting piece of local culture. Would that more Filipino scientists could take similar pains to help us understand our own tradition!

Joseph L. Roche, S.J.