Filipino educators, who are seriously devoted to instilling in their students an appreciation of social awareness and responsibility, are more fortunate today than in the past since they have the EDSA revolution of February 1986 as a potent pedagogical aid. The singular events of this revolution did more than usher in a new era in the corporate life of the Philippines; they symbolize Filipino social consciousness and social commitment at their best.

The hundreds of thousands of participants in the February revolution at EDSA have bequeathed both the future generations of Filipinos and to the world at large an unforgettable lesson in the liberating power of social solidarity. This lesson commenced in earnest the moment large throngs of Filipinos on February 22nd spontaneously answered Cardinal Sin’s plea to support and even protect the military who had repudiated Ferdinand Marcos’ presidential authority. The participants would continue to teach the lesson of the EDSA revolution for seventy-seven hours until Mr. Marcos was forced into exile on February 25th.

The principal lesson that can be learned from the EDSA revolution is the mysterious power and splendor of the Filipino people’s spirit or life force. During the EDSA revolution the participants felt a new self-esteem and a deeper belongingness as Filipinos.

Another important lesson taught during this revolution was the method and efficacy of active non-violence. For throughout the whole struggle, the hundreds of thousands of Filipinos had nothing to defend themselves against tanks and teargas except
human barricades and their plea of common Filipino solidarity to the soldiers about to attack them. This courageous display of active non-violence demonstrates in the proper circumstances it can generate reconciliation and even effect radical political change.

While the EDSA revolution does symbolize Filipino social consciousness and commitment, it also teaches that this commitment is composed of countless acts of individual heroism. One Assumption nun humbly testifies to this inescapable truth:

For a while, I was stunned by the six big tanks before me.... Then, I got scared. Scared to die, and what a way to die! I began to have cold feet, I was actually trembling, but I tried to appear calm.... The moment was serious; I thought, it would be my end, the end of all of us. I was tempted to run away and escape.... I was awakened by the building up of people's cheers, people who trusted and depended on us. When I looked back, the facial expressions of people behind us made me misty eyed.... I realized that people who were there left their homes to be one with the others here, risking their lives for the cause of liberation. And what about me, a religious, a consecrated woman who vowed to follow Jesus — am I to abandon Him like Peter? The seriousness and the reality of my Vows confronted me.¹

FILIPINO SOCIAL COMMITMENT

The heroic manifestation of people power in the EDSA revolution became a vast living symbol of the dynamic process of Filipino inculturation and liberation. This dynamic process can be discerned to have four distinct phases. In the first phase the Filipinos, especially in the capital region, would have been awakened to the awareness of participating as Filipinos in a grave national crisis.

The second phase of this process was their generous and wholehearted response to this crisis. This response involved placing the value of their Filipino belonging before their responsibility to their families and personal safety. This response also entailed the practice of active non-violence toward the military about to attack them. The participants in the revolution, moreover, considered the military to be brother Filipinos.

The third phase was the transforming love and reconciliation that was experienced among the hundreds of thousands of Filipinos as they struggled together for their liberation and as they warmly welcomed the military who joined this remarkable expression of Filipino brotherhood. The fourth and final phase was the exhilarating sense of personal and corporate liberation when the participants realized they had actually triumphed and regained their freedom and could therefore begin to rebuild their Filipino participatory democracy.

If the Filipino nation is ever to develop a society in which all citizens will eventually exercise their birthright to live in dignity and decency, the pattern of Filipino social consciousness and commitment revealed at the EDSA revolution should not be allowed to be lost. In this period of national reconstruction, the dynamic process of Filipino inculturation and liberation of the Filipino life force should be fostered and find new expressions in new circumstances.

The EDSA revolution was not just a Filipino affair. Through the wonder of mass media, the whole world assisted with fascination, concern and admiration at this significant historical event. The drama of the Filipino people bringing about their own liberation through human solidarity and active non-violence generated great respect and a fund of good will from other nations.

The new self-esteem of Filipinos for themselves and the sovereignty of their nation and this respect and good will from other nations has created the opportunity for a better basis for Philippine international relations. With the proper political will of the people and an astute and dedicated leadership in government, the Philippines can receive the needed assistance from abroad to develop and make its own unique contribution to the family of nations.

After the experience of the EDSA revolution, the Philippines and its government, therefore, have the opportunity of improving their dynamic process of Filipino inculturation and liberation. With a greater sense of pride in being a Filipino, the Filipino people are in a much better position to discern 1) what influences in foreign cultures should be avoided because they are alienating and 2) what influences from other cultures should be welcomed and assimilated because they are enriching to Philippine culture.
On the level of the government, the EDSA revolution should also have a more constructive and progressive method of conducting foreign affairs. This method should also be inspired by the four phases of a dynamic process of Filipino inculturation and liberation.\(^2\)

THE PROCESS OF INCULTURATION AND LIBERATION

Those devout Christians who actively participated in the EDSA revolution perceived through their faith that the new communion and liberation achieved there was not just due to the indomitable Filipino spirit or life force. Their experience could only be explained by a divine Spirit or life force that transformed the Filipino spirit into something magnificent and miraculous.

This divine life force enlightened them to contemplate the powerful presence of Mary and Jesus in their midst and to experience a new and intense type of solidarity and fellowship among themselves. This creative and liberating power of the Holy Spirit reveals, therefore, for Christian believers a dynamic process during the EDSA revolution. This process can be considered a dynamic process of inculturation and liberation which consisted of four phases.

The first phase of this process would be the initial awakening to the awareness of belonging to the Blessed Mother and the risen Jesus on the part of the Filipino Catholics at the outset of the revolution. This awakening would include a realization in the desperate situation that without divine help all would be lost. In a word, the Filipino Catholics were conscious that they were not going to do great things for God but God could do great things for and through them. The second aspect of this initial awareness was that the Blessed Mother and the risen Jesus demanded that the Filipino people practice active non-violence. In a word, they were to love those whom Mary and Jesus loved in the way they loved

them.

The second phase of the process was the generous and whole-hearted surrender to this awareness by the hundreds of thousands during the revolution. This surrender opened up the third phase of transforming love which brought about greater communion among the participants of the revolution and a more interiorized love of the Blessed Mother, the risen Jesus and the heavenly Father.

When this transforming love was accompanied by the gift of true liberation from the Blessed Mother, the risen Jesus and the heavenly Father, the dynamic process of inculturation and liberation entered its fourth and final phase. In response to this divine blessing, the Filipino Catholics expressed their gratitude, joy and peace by a new creative commitment to the Blessed Mother, the risen Jesus and the heavenly Father and to one another. This is the type of commitment that unleashes new Christian creativity and characterizes the freedom of the sons and daughters of God.

A CELEBRATION OF FILIPINO SPIRITUALITY

Those Christian Filipinos who participated in the EDSA revolution did not attribute its success to human people power alone. When they were in the midst of their greatest danger, they transformed the EDSA revolution into a monumental Filipino religious celebration. Since the vast majority of the assembled throng were Catholic believers, they requested divine deliverance through the intercession of the Blessed Mother in Marian devotion and through the risen Jesus in the frequent celebrations of the Eucharist.

Sr. Clare Joseph Palto-Ub, R.A. has articulated this magnificent experience of the Filipino spirituality at EDSA:

February 23, 1986 was indeed a memorable day. It was a day of fear and courage; a day of hope and uncertainty; a day of communion, healing, and reconciliation; a day of the Lord’s mighty hand protecting His people; it was a day of Mary, Mother of the Filipino people. And for me personally, it was a day of the crucible of my faith. From then on, EDSA is never the same again. That empty lot along Ortigas corner EDSA is never an ordinary empty lot since that day, for it was there that God’s overpowering mercy and protection for His people was made manifest.  

3. Nudas, God With Us, 73.
Fr. Catalino Arevalo, S.J. also concurs that the success of EDSA was a blessing conferred on the Filipino people through the intercession of Our Lady:

For myself I believe, with Cardinal Sin, that (the peace of EDSA) was Our Lady's gift above all, "fruit" of the Marian Year . . . that the miracle at EDSA was due above all to Our Lady's prayer and intercession for our people. Not the kind of thing one can "prove", of course. But I personally believe that the "miracle of Cory's victory" is part of a much larger pattern that finally comes as Our Lady's gift to our people.4

The presence and gift of Mary can never be separated from her Son in Filipino spirituality. In synthesizing the whole experience of the EDSA revolution, Fr. Alfeo Nudas, S.J. comments:

I am saying of course, forcing my opinion on no one, that the 1986 Philippine Revolution finds its fullness of meaning, if it finds it at all, in the conflict, conquest, and covenant of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Any relentlessly active nonviolent revolution or resistance to evil seen in its place in the "one action" of Jesus Christ (the "one action" we remember together and celebrate at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass) is a "thing of beauty and a joy forever" — it lives forever.5

The presence of the Blessed Mother and the risen Jesus should lead to an experience of liberating joy but also to a deep interior peace that is the gift of the Father. Fr. Arevalo also described that peace during the experience of the EDSA revolution.

I thought, seeing the sleeping people, how God's heart must be moved by all this. How much courage it called for, the courage of a hundred little hearts, to form these human barricades. How much kindness and love, too, had to be "generated" by hundreds of people, to "generate" the peace that was being created, made, by these people. The nuns and seminarians, and the young people . . . the entire families who were literally fighting to create peace. I thought of God looking down from up there on this scene of sleeping guards . . . and I thought of the tenderness in the heart of God and how this too was Church, and communion, more real than one could think about, from books, and how the God of salvation was here, "God moving amongst his people." God hath visited his people.6

4. Ibid. 90-91.
5. Ibid. 12.
6. Ibid. 90.
THE INTRINSIC UNITY OF THE FILIPINO SPIRIT AND FILIPINO SPIRITUALITY

The EDSA revolution is not simply an extraordinary lesson in the liberating power of the Filipino spirit and Filipino spirituality. This singular turning point in Philippine history is also an eloquent illustration of the way the Filipino’s human and Christian life-forces interact in a dialectic of mutual vitality.

During the revolution the participants affirmed themselves both freely and completely as Filipinos and Christians. This magnificent affirmation, therefore, manifests that no conflict exists between the Filipinos’ legitimate aspirations for national independence and democracy and their Christian faith. On the contrary, their Christian faith and national aspiration mutually reinforced each other at the EDSA revolution so that the Christian participants were expressing their love of the Philippines and the Church in one event of total Christian consciousness and commitment.

The analysis above of the EDSA revolution revealed that this unity of the Filipino spirit and Christian spirituality also generated the two dynamic processes of liberating enculturation and acculturation and of liberating inculturation. Consequently, the revolution is capable of teaching how these two dynamic processes are also unified in a dialectic of mutual vitality.

This dialectic first signifies that when the corporate personality of the Philippines and its culture become more unified and more free to become themselves through greater social consciousness and commitment, the triune God is better able to communicate to this corporate personality and its members through its culture and in the midst of historical events. This dialectic secondly means that when the corporate personality of the Philippines and its members do respond to the communication of the triune God through their culture and in the midst of their history, they also become more aware of themselves as Filipinos and are better able to affirm themselves as Filipinos through social consciousness and commitment.

The marvel of the EDSA revolution, however, does not stop with its revealing the structure of the Filipino spirit and Filipino spirituality and their dynamic unity. The mystery of this turning point in Philippine history is that the life-giving force of the orig-
inal event is able to continue to be vital in history. The Filipino people are able to draw life from the memory of the EDSA revolution especially during its annual commemoration.

As a secular anniversary celebration, the appropriate commemoration of the EDSA revolution can be a rich source of admiration and renewal. Those Filipinos who participate in this annual celebration should be inspired by the grandeur and heroism of the past event to dedicate themselves more selflessly to the common good since the commemoration of the EDSA revolution should remind them that the Philippines and Filipinos are worth living and dying for.

When the annual Christian celebration of the EDSA revolution is expressed in the context of the Eucharist and Marian devotion like the original event itself, this commemoration should be a time for spiritual conversion and growth for Christian Filipinos. For such a celebration is more than a grateful remembrance of divine intervention in the past history of the Philippines.

During the actual commemoration, Filipino Christians experience the divine presence through the risen Jesus and his Mother in the midst of the sacred liturgy. This experience of the divine presence, moreover, challenges the Filipino participants to devote themselves to the will of the risen Jesus for the betterment of the Philippines and the world. The Christian commemoration of the EDSA revolution should, therefore, enhance in the lives of Filipino Christians their dynamic process of Christian discipleship and apostleship.

While the EDSA revolution and its commemoration do symbolize in a privileged way the values of Filipino Christian humanism, Filipino Christian educators have an even more effective method of communicating these values to their students. When these educators unify in their own lives the Filipino spirit with Filipino Christian spirituality, their students would encounter living symbols of Filipino and Christian wisdom who affirm themselves through Christian social consciousness and commitment.

Consequently, in the midst of their interpersonal relationship with their teachers as living symbols, of Filipino and Christian wisdom the students should be helped to meet the challenge of becoming Christian men and women for others.
THE SYMBOLISM OF EDSA AND FILIPINO CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS

Filipino Christian educators reach a new stage in their Christian adulthood when they finally have achieved mastery in their professional career and have acquired rich experience in their vocation. During this period, they would become within the structure of a Catholic college, respected liberal humanists and professional pedagogues who are experts in sharing with their students the truths and values of the very process by which a corrupt dictator was ousted and the Philippines regained her lost democratic freedom.

Catholic Filipinos therefore, realize that their newly found freedom was not due to human people power alone but they received it in response to their faith and prayer. At EDSA, the risen Jesus and his Mother were present and revealed themselves as dynamic equivalences of the Father’s divine love in an event of extraordinary inculturation and liberation.

The long and rich tradition of the Filipino Catholic Church and the Catholic experience of EDSA would seem to challenge Filipino educators to continue this process of inculturating Filipino spirituality in their own lives of prayer. This process would involve their fostering a devotion to Mary and an encounter with her Son in the Eucharist in the contemporary Philippine context.

Since the Blessed Mother and the risen Jesus are always intimately united with each other, Filipino Catholic educators should also interrelate Marian devotion and the celebration of the Eucharist in their prayer life. With this unifying of Marian and eucharistic contemplation, Filipino Catholic educators should experience the Blessed Mother and her Son as dynamic equivalences of the Father’s love. For in the midst of this integrated prayer, Filipino educators should feel more intensely the presence of Mary and the risen Jesus and should better appreciate the intimacy that exists between the Blessed Mother and her Son.

This Marian and eucharistic prayer is also transforming because in their contemplating Mary and the risen Jesus, Filipino Catholic educators should assimilate their attitudes and values. Insofar as they succeed in integrating these Christian attitudes and values in their lives, Filipino Catholic educators themselves become in their encounters with their students dynamic equivalences of the Bles-
sed Mother and her Son. In these teachers, therefore, Filipino students should have living symbols of the beauty of Filipino spirituality and living examples of how to make it a vital force in a Filipino’s life.

Finally, when Filipino Catholic educators do unify both Marian devotion and the celebration of the Eucharist in their spirituality, they receive a concrete revelation of their specific self-identity. For in their experience of the risen Jesus and his Mother, they touch the spiritual inner dynamism 1) that integrates their career as professional educators with their Christian ministry of teaching and 2) allows them to meet the challenge of becoming either Christian men or women for others.