EDITOR'S PREFACE

Two events of more than ordinary significance for the Church in Asia and in the Philippines loom in the horizon as this issue of Landas goes to press. There is, first, the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) to be held in Bandung, Indonesia July 17-27, 1990. Then, there is the projected Second Plenary Council of the Philippines to be held in January, 1991.

In his article "Dialogue, Discernment and Deeds: An Approach to Asian Challenges Today" (a position paper to be read at the FABC meeting), Antonio B. Lambino presents the fruits of his study of the statements and declarations covering two decades of plenary assemblies and other official gatherings of Asian bishops. He concludes that dialogue, discernment and deeds seem to be the Spirit-inspired way to do evangelization in Asia today.

James H. Kroeger proposes an approach to apostolic spirituality as the ever-increasing sensitization of awareness to the marvels that God unfolds and accomplishes in one's life and in history. The foundations of a contemporary mission spirituality are developed, using the experience of St. Paul as frame of reference while taking note also of the Asian context.

Using as principal source the 1989 Catholic Directory of the Philippines which he himself edited, Pedro S. de Achutegui analyzes the rich data (comprising some 600,000 entries) and comes up with important observations regarding the distribution and employment of Church personnel, the increase or decrease of Catholic population in various regions, the comparative numbers of Catholics and non-Catholics, the problems specific to parishes and dioceses, etc. The article should serve as a valuable point of reference.
and reflection for the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines.

Joseph L. Roche presents a constructive critique of the proposed "Catechism for the Universal Church." The critique is structured according to three basic problems: (1) to whom is the catechism addressed and for what purpose; (2) what is its nature; and (3) what is its basic structure and methodology. The recommended revision focuses on one major factor: the need to open up the catechism to the contemporary world, both secular and religious/theological.

Three review articles dealing with topics of contemporary relevance complete the July 1990 issue of Landas. Vicente Marasigan studies the "Hard Realities of Interreligious Dialogue," taking an honest look at those aspects that make it hard for Buddhists, Christians and Muslims to communicate meanings to each other. John N. Schumacher discusses two books of Jeremias U. Montemayor on Catholic social teaching from the perspective of the theological methodology underlying the exposition of this teaching. Finally, Gerald W. Healy offers a very useful review of Amnesty International's report on the nature and function of the death penalty. The article exposes the unjust workings of social status and privilege in the application of this ultimate punishment.

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