

phrase "the best of the series" can appropriately be applied to Dupuis' work — which is particularly important and welcomed with congratulations and sincere gratitude.

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A LAUER READER: THE ATENEO COLLECTION. Edited by Rainier R. A. Ibana. Quezon City: Office of Research and Publications, Ateneo de Manila University, 1991. Pp. 128.

Rainier Ibana, a faculty member of the Ateneo de Manila philosophy department, has prepared and edited a very useful collection of the writings of Quentin Lauer, S.J. The latter is professor emeritus of philosophy at Fordham University and was the mentor of Dr. Ibana's work there a few years ago.

The book contains the editor's introduction, ten writings of Fr. Lauer, a list of all the latter's publications and a short biography of the author. The editor's introduction is a helpful guide to the contents of the book.

All the writings in this collection are of value for students and teachers of philosophy and for the general searcher for wisdom. In the first one "What is Philosophy?" Fr. Lauer wants not to define philosophy but to show that it includes a variety of flexible methods, such as learning from the experience of geniuses of the past. These men and women experienced life and the world with an alluring *excellence* of rationality and vision in a way that can enlighten later students. Their excellence is "a sort of witness to the capacity of human experience at its best" (p. 4).

Philosophy is a way of life rather than a body of knowledge, an attitude of questioning and searching for the truth about that reality which the human person is, about our surroundings and about "what else must be" if these are to make sense. That truth will be derived from experiences "pondered profoundly" that the greats of the past share with ourselves (p. 12). And if thinkers and teachers of our time try to do what the greats of the past have done, we may even contribute to the further growth of philosophy (p. 13).

"Humanism and Human Dignity" is appearing for the first time. The article stresses the excellence of the human, and makes it clear that human authenticity is something that we must *reach* by what we do. Furthermore, an education is less authentically humanistic by ignoring

or downplaying the religious dimension of the human. In a similar way it is disrespectful of human intelligence to insist, as some do, that we can know some of the things that *are*, but we cannot say what *should* or *should not be* (p. 22). What makes us human is a *gift* and the true humanist is one who appreciates the grandeur of that gift and makes every reasonable effort to enhance that grandeur by a careful use of freedom. And so, humanism is "the task of becoming all that it is to be truly human, of realizing in our lives what each of us is, the *imago Dei*, which makes sense only as the creative and self-creative image of the Creator God" (p. 23).

What should and should not be can be known. Sometimes our knowledge of morality is incomplete, and even changing. But the point that must be stressed is that we *can* learn what we must value. The demands that reality actually makes on the free human subject are not beyond the intelligent reach of that subject. And our understanding of the "ontology of the human" will be a necessary ingredient in our judgments about what is right and what is wrong for us humans to choose.

The last essay in the book may surprise some readers. However those who already know that Fr. Lauer published *G. K. Chesterton: Philosopher Without Portfolio* in 1988 will not be surprised. As a lad in seventh grade Quentin Lauer discovered the great G. K. C. The latter's free-flowing prose showed his "consistent grasp of the fundamental principles in the light of which issues of any time can be confronted intelligently" (p. 116). G. K. C., Lauer says, was not a philosopher like Hegel, but more like Shakespeare, in that both Englishmen understood so well what being human is. G. K. C. was a journalist to the extent that he wrote for ordinary people in a way that could get the truth across persuasively. And he was a philosopher in that the truth he offered was the important truth mainly about moral issues presented carefully and reasonably. The theme of human authenticity emerges effortlessly again in this essay and Lauer once more makes it known that God is the giver of the universe in which unique human persons freely grow and grow in freedom.

Ibana has shown his own philosophical astuteness in choosing to present these writings of Lauer to a wide readership in the Philippines. And in doing so Ibana has let Lauer show the truth about most important philosophical themes in a style that is friendly, even chatty, and persuasive in its reasoning. This review has commented on only three of the ten selections.