
This book is not meant to be a definitive scholarly biography, but to provide “resources” for such. This it does in a way which informs, inspires, and entertains. It will be of value not only to those interested in Bishop Regan, but in the Mindanao church, in Maryknoll, and in mission in general. The author/editor had his pastoral experience as a seminarian under Bishop Regan, and was later ordained deacon by him, so his knowledge is extensive.

Leaving the US for China after his ordination in 1929, Regan spent 22 years there, until his imprisonment and expulsion by the Communists in 1951 (relatively little is said on these tumultuous years, since Regan was always reticent about them, though he returned with enthusiasm to the site of his former apostolate in Kweilin when the opportunity came in 1983). After some months of recuperation, he led a group of Maryknollers to a new mission in the Philippines. After six years of working in Laguna, the Maryknollers left for Mindanao to take over two provinces from the PME Fathers of Quebec, Davao del Norte and Davao Oriental, whose joint territory comprised a larger area than any diocese in the Philippines. Here the Holy See established the prelature nullius of Tagum and Regan was ordained its bishop a few years later.

When Maryknoll took over this vast territory, there were no roads, no bridges, no hospital, not a single high school. In addition to the 120,000 non-Christian mountain peoples, many more thousands of settlers kept pouring in, seeking land and fleeing from the Huk insurrection in Luzon. There was no seminary and not a single Filipino priest. At his compulsory retirement in 1980, Regan turned over to Bishop Pedro Dean, the new bishop, not only a network of Catholic high schools and a Catholic hospital, but a seminary which would have produced 100 Filipino diocesan priests by the time of his death in

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Though other Maryknollers by then went elsewhere in Mindanao, Regan remained behind as chaplain of the hospital he had founded until his death, thus adding 44 years as a Philippine missionary to the 22 in China. He continued saying Masses in different towns for the high school students, whom he encouraged to bring a kilo of rice or an egg to support the seminarians. What else could a bishop do who was known to his people, even the guerillas of the New People’s Army, as Lolo (Grandpa) and to his priests as Super-Lolo, as he went around in his old jeep, or on the back of a logging truck when the jeep could not ford the river?

The brief sketch of his life is followed by two substantial interviews, a well-chosen pictorial, anecdotes from eulogies, and archival documents. The perceptive historian will learn much about the can-do spirit of Maryknoll, and about the Mindanao church, especially during the Marcos dictatorship. Perhaps most important, we have here, at least in outline, a model for mission — the planting of a local church with its own clergy by a dedicated group of missionaries under a charismatic leader. An enjoyable and useful book.

Reviewed by John N. Schumacher, S.J.


Two leading American ecclesiologists Avery Dulles, S.J. (Fordham University) and Patrick Granfield, O.S.B. (The Catholic University of America) have joined their expertise to produce a comprehensive bibliography of significant ecclesiological writing, both past and present. Every aspect of theology has an ecclesiological dimension; thus, the editors have judiciously restricted their focus to the theological discipline of ecclesiology which specifically treats the nature, mission, and