WITH NEW EYES: THE WORLD AS SEEN BY PREACHERS OF THE WORD
Edited by Ari C. Dy
Quezon City, Philippines: Jesuit Communications
Reviewed by James H. Kroeger

In this attractive volume, Jesuit scholastic Ari C. Dy, Coordinator of Print Media at Jesuit Communications in Manila, has selected and professionally edited a collection of forty-one homilies. These pieces emerge from the works of four young Filipino Jesuits: Johnny Go, Daniel Huang, Jose Magadia and Jose Villarin. All these homilies were preached in the decade 1991-2001 (except for one 1984 vocation week homily); they have an enduring message and perennial value, along with a clearly contemporary relevance.

*With New Eyes* is creatively arranged in five sections: Advent-Christmas, Lent-Easter, Commitment Ceremonies, Jesuit Deaths, and Special Occasions. Each section in the table of contents is introduced by a scripture passage on the theme of sight (e.g. "My eyes have seen your salvation." "We have seen the Lord."); harmoniously, this reflects the book's title as well as its purpose to "help readers experience the world with new eyes" (ix). This arrangement builds on the fact that frequently "sight is used as a metaphor for understanding Jesus in the New Testament" (ix).

As one meditatively reads these homilies, a distinct perspective becomes clear: these pieces reinforce—even in the midst of trials, difficulties, and suffering—a genuinely affirming view of life; they lead readers to a faith-filled reflection on God's loving presence and action in today's world. One comes to "stand in wonder before the living mystery of the God who loves us" (Arévalo, *Foreword*, xi). Yes, one begins to experience the Christian feasts and mysteries—in fact, all of life—"with new eyes" and to understand deeply the "poetic word of faith" (Rahner).

Homily is from the Greek word *homelia* which means "the speak-
ing of God to men and women” (Galdon, back cover). How do these selections achieve this faith-life, God-human nexus? The homilists narrate many of their own revelatory life experiences and vocation journeys; they link the Word of God with current events (e.g. the Estrada impeachment trial); inculturated insights into the Gospel message are plentiful; piercing questions about the authenticity of one’s faith are stated forcefully; creative parallels are proposed (e.g. the Easter Vigil and *The Wizard of Oz*).

Again, how are faith and life linked in these pages? The homilists creatively set the contemporary scene where faith must be integrated; they employ narrative and humor; they make copious associations with great authors and saints (John Henry Newman, C.S. Lewis, Teresa of Avila, Yves Congar, Mitch Finley, R. Garrigou-Lagrange, etc.). In brief, readers are led into “the world as seen by preachers of the Word” (subtitle of book).

Homilies are primarily designed to be preached and heard; they are a “live medium.” Thus, one can only extrapolate and imagine the original impact of these written pieces when they were first given—at a Jesuit funeral, graduation mass or marriage ceremony, on Christmas, Good Friday or Easter, on the feast of Ignatius of Loyola. These homilies were a “Word event” when originally delivered; readers must advert to this fact to foster deeper appreciation. In addition, each individual homily is best absorbed through a quiet, reflective reading; this is not a book to be read cover-to-cover in one or two sittings; it is to be savored, absorbed, reflected upon, brought to prayer.

“These homilies... are pearls of great price. They are of lasting value.... [They] will help you listen, and hear; look, and see” (Bishop S. Villegas, back cover). This reviewer joins his evaluation and recommendation to the words of C.G. Arévalo in his *Foreword* (x): “*Tolle, lege.* Take and read. I assure you, you will be much rewarded.” Allow these homilies “to light up the mind or to move your heart, or both.”