BOOK REVIEWS

THE FUTURE OF THE ASIAN CHURCHES:
THE ASIAN SYNOD AND ECCLESIA IN ASIA
Edited by James H. Kroeger, M.M., and Peter C. Phan
Quezon City, Philippines: Claretian Publications
Reviewed by Francis X. Clark

This is a very valuable book. Beginning from the Asian Synod, held in Rome from 19 April to 14 May 1998, and the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Asia, promulgated by Pope John Paul II on 6 November 1999 in New Delhi, India, it compiles and reprints various articles and documents by eminent theologians and religious writers on both the Synod and Apostolic Exhortation.

Part One focuses on the Synod itself (1-50); Part Two treats the Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Asia (51-122). Part Three provides the full text of Ecclesia in Asia (123-196). To all this documentation James Kroeger adds as Part Four an original work, an Analytical Index of Ecclesia in Asia (197-206), which is a very friendly tool for research and study of the many points discussed in the Apostolic Exhortation.
The author-editors, James H. Kroeger and Peter C. Phan, are to be congratulated for conceiving the plan of gathering within the pages of one book the various articles, scattered originally in very diverse worldwide periodicals. These articles contain excellent commentaries, opinions and discussions about these two events concerning the Churches of Asia. All this is especially true because of the merited admiration for the well-known authors of the articles. Some of these are Peter Phan, Jacques Dupuis, Joseph Neuner, Luis Tagle, Arij Roest Crollius, James Kroeger, Michael Amaladoss, Sebastian D’Ambra, Gerald O’Connell, and Georg Evers. Each of them contributes worthwhile insights into the total portrait of the Church in Asia.

The wealth of the printed material can hardly be touched in this brief review. Some few of its outstanding points can be chosen. For example, there are the various occasions when the authors protest that Jesus is an Asian and Christianity is originally an Asian religion (30, 38, 72, 76, 83, 88, 92, 93, 95). For another example, there is a list of what the Church can learn from non-Christian religions (14). Again, people in Asia need to see the clergy not just as charity workers and institutional administrators, but men whose minds and hearts are set on the deep things of the Spirit (76).

Many similar nuggets are found throughout the book, making it a must for anyone interested in the Churches of Asia. Nowhere else can one discover so many truths and reasons for encouragement. Because it has studied the past and the present of Asia with such depth, this book is an illuminating guide for the future of the Churches of Asia.