This popular book reveals the heart, hope, happiness—and surely the humor—of John XXIII. Readers come to know the secret why the pope says “I sleep very well” (xiii), his thoughts on dieting and exercise (41), his confidence in the coming “new Pentecost” (106), the renewal of priestly ministry (61), prayer and meditation (19-20).

John XXIII’s personal secretary, Loris Capovilla, cooperated in the preparation of this book; he knew intimately the mind and heart of the pope, serving as his personal secretary since John was Patriarch of Venice and extending up to his death on 3 June 1963. Capovilla, still alive in Sotto il Monte to pen the Foreword of this book (dated 22 April 2000), writes: “It is a great honor and even a triumph for me to put my name in this book, as it presents the spirituality given to the world by Pope John XXIII. I still remain enchanted by the charisma of simplicity shining on the face of this Pope who came from our Italian countryside” (vi).

INCULTURATION OF FILIPINO-CHINESE CULTURE MENTALITY

By Jose Vidamor B. Yu, L.R.M.S.

Reviewed by Aristotle C. Dy

Inculturation of Filipino-Chinese Culture Mentality is a doctoral dissertation published by the Pontifical Gregorian University's Research Centre on Cultures and Religions as part of its “Interreligious and Intercultural Investigations.” The book is divided into four chapters.

The first chapter is devoted to explaining the concept of “culture mentality,” a term coined by the Russian founder of Harvard University's Sociology Department, Pitirim Sorokin. Yu elaborates on the different levels of culture and the place of worldviews, religious traditions and rituals in the identification of a culture mental-
ity. Drawing heavily from the work of Louis Luzbetak, Yu applies the concept to the experience of Israel and identifies it as the raw material for inculturation.

Chapter Two describes the Filipino-Chinese culture mentality through an exposition of the community's worldview and religious influences. Chapter Three, the most original part of the work, is a contribution to the task of inculturation among the Chinese Filipinos. Christian faith and practice is brought to bear on Chinese customs, traditions and values. The final chapter is devoted to the "Filipino-Chinese Missionary Identity." Yu envisions a future where this special community lives out its priestly, prophetic, and kingly roles as dynamic dimensions of Christian life.

Much has been written about the concept of inculturation and its importance in the work of evangelization. In many cultures, however, what is needed is an application of inculturation. It is a process that must be carried out and documented so that the data may be shared with others. More and deeper insights will emerge, and the process will be enriched and advanced. This is a process of ongoing dialogue, and Yu can be considered one of the pioneers in doing scholarly inculturation in the Filipino-Chinese setting.

Despite the grammatical lapses and the debatable validity of some statements, Yu paints a vivid and colorful picture of the Chinese in the Philippines. The reality is that this unique community is not monolithic. The Chinese in the Philippines are very different from the Chinese in other parts of the world. Within the Philippines, there are significant differences among Chinese based on citizenship, place and date of birth, duration of stay in the country, language, religion, etc. It is very tempting to think of the Chinese as a homogeneous group, and Yu sometimes gives this impression, but careful study of the data points to a very diverse community.

When Yu describes the cognitive dimension of the Filipino-Chinese worldview, for example, he draws from traditional Chinese culture and discusses cultural elements like geomancy, ancestor veneration, concepts of time, space, and nature. One can easily be led to
believe that such a worldview is held by all Filipino-Chinese, but that would not be the case. The younger generation, as Yu notes elsewhere, is very far removed from such a worldview.

The most valuable part of Yu's work is Chapter Three, where he begins the process of drawing connections between the Christian faith and Chinese culture. He relates the Chinese concept of qi, for example, to the power of the Holy Spirit, or the famous Chinese sense of shame to the idea of sin. These are very potent and promising parallels that are not yet fully developed in Yu's work. It is the Chinese "quest for communion" that is most fully developed here, and Yu does an excellent job of explaining ancestor veneration in the context of the communion of saints.

In the Philippines today, the ethnic Chinese can be roughly divided into the "older" and the "younger" generation. The growing number of mainland Chinese presently arriving and settling down in the country comprises another distinct group. Evangelization and inculturation call for different approaches to these three groups. Yu has given us the theological basis for the work, but understandably has not told us how it can be done. The "how" of inculturation must now be worked out by Chinese Christians themselves and those who minister to them. This mission takes its consolation from the long and colorful history of all our ancestors in faith who have labored to make Christ known to the Chinese.