EDITOR'S PREFACE

Devotion to the Mother of God is strong in the Philippines, the "land of Mary." And, as this issue of Landas takes shape, the country is in the midst of a Marian year celebration. During the July 2003 Plenary Assembly of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines, the local bishops decreed the holding of a Marian Year, scheduled to last from August 15, 2004 to December 8, 2005. The previous National Marian Year extended from December 8, 1984-1985; it was designed to mark the bimillenia of the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The current commemoration recalls the 150th anniversary of the papal definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception (1854), the Principal Patroness of the Philippines.

However, on the Feast of Corpus Christi in 2004, Pope John Paul II announced an International Year of the Eucharist from October 2004 to October 2005. The Philippine bishops’ response was to celebrate a Eucharistic and Marian Year, combining two pillars of the faith. They determined that the "National Eucharistic Marian Year" would have as its theme: “Celebrating the Eucharist with Mary.” Appropriate prayers were prepared; catechetical materials were readied; a special pastoral guide-book was published. The celebration continues to unfold nation-wide.

This year the Loyola School of Theology (LST) in Manila, home of Landas, celebrates its fortieth year of existence (1965-2005). As a theological center located in the "land of Mary," it promotes a deepening of the Church’s teaching on Mary in both Philippine
and Asian contexts. In March of 2001 the school established the “Jaime Cardinal Sin Professorial Chair for Philippine Marian Studies.” Graduate courses, scholarly lectures, symposia and publications on Mary in Catholic and Christian life and history have now become regular features of LST.

The volume you are holding is the fruit of diverse Marian initiatives at LST. Some items were first given as public lectures; others were presented at the student-sponsored theological hours; still others emerged from the creative pen of LST faculty members. All pieces have a direct LST linkage; *Landas* is most pleased to publish them, knowing similar Marian items will be completed in the coming months and years.

The first presentation by Columban Missionary Kathleen Coyle, herself a Marian author (*Mary in the Christian Tradition*), centers on a Lukan scriptural foundation for Marian theology—in fidelity to Pope Paul VI’s challenge in *Marialis Cultus*. Another missionary, a *Maryknoller*, James Kroeger, presents Mary as a model for mission, understood within the contemporary framework of an integral approach to evangelization.

Three historical presentations follow. Kathleen Coyle outlines a chronological development in Marian thought from Gospel and Patristic times up to the Second Vatican Council. Jesuit Antonio de Castro provides an extensive, engaging overview of a unique Marian shrine in southern Philippines; this sacred place becomes a *locus* for interreligious dialogue between Muslims and Christians. Dominican Rolando de la Rosa provides a detailed history of the rosary, concluding with the new initiative of Pope John Paul II to add the *Mysteries of Light*.

Three specialized studies complete this Marian issue of *Landas*. Jesuit René Javellana traces the gradual “divinization” of Mary through a creative analysis of the iconography of the Virgin Mary. Diocesan priest and mariologist Sabino Vengco brings readers to three continents and demonstrates how Mary in each place and
time identifies with the local people in their unique situation and religiosity. Finally, James Kroeger explores one of multiple themes found in the mariology of Pope John Paul II; using a wide range of literature, Kroeger reflects, focusing on specific events, upon the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of Mary.

This issue of Landas is humbly dedicated to our recent Holy Father, Pope John Paul II; his suggestive coat-of-arms is included on the front cover. Without doubt, he can truly be called a “Marian Pope”; his life abounds with devotion to his Mother Mary. His own mother died when he was only a boy; however, he found true solace and support in his deep devotion to the Mother of God. Perhaps, it is the pope’s own transforming relationship to his mother Mary that propels him to invite all Christians to cultivate a similar devotion to our Blessed Mother.

As you peruse and then read in depth these eight Marian pieces, may your love for Mary grow and become deeply personal. In recent years, Filipinos have taken to calling Mary, “Mama Mary.” The expression may sound strange to your ears, but it reflects, in the Philippine context, a deep love and devotion to God’s own Mother, a love that must characterize every disciple of Jesus.

Finally, I wish to thank Miguel Lambino, S.J., Landas editor, for the invitation to serve as guest editor for this special Marian issue.

James H. Kroeger, M.M.
Landas Guest Editor
Special Marian Issue