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Associate Editor's Preface

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ASSOCIATE EDITOR'S PREFACE

When the Spaniards came to these islands on March 16, 1521, it only took them less than a month before they could have their first converts. On April 14 of the same year, Rajah Humabon and his wife Amihan, with some 800 of his subjects, were baptized in Cebu, on which occasion the Santo Niño was given to his wife as a present. However, it would appear that the roots planted were not so deep. Less than a couple of weeks later, after the Spaniards failed to defeat his rival, Lapu-Lapu, Humabon tried to poison the remainder of the fleet and presumably reverted to his old religion. The next expedition in 1565 would find the image of the Santo Niño tucked away in a wooden box. Thus, while it seemed so easy to make Filipinos Christians, it was not so easy after all to make them Christian.

Today, 500 years after these events, as tragic as they were historic, we celebrate the coming of the Faith to our beloved country. We find that more Filipinos – majority in fact – are now Christians, yet the struggle to become truly Christian as a people and as a nation remains the same. The Santo Niño may have long emerged from that wooden box, but we still hide our faith conveniently whenever it becomes inconvenient. This should come as no surprise since we know that conversion and evangelization – be it personal or in this case, national – is both gradual and lifelong. Nonetheless, it behooves us as a local Church to revisit our history, examine our reality and plan our trajectory as we mark this important milestone. In this special commemorative issue, *Loyola Papers* strives to make its modest contribution to this opportune reflection.

In the first article titled, “The Vision of Integral Evangelization in the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines: Where Have We Reached So Far?,” **Raph L. De La Pieza** leads us in evaluating our progress in implementing PCP II’s vision for the local Church. This year, we are also celebrating the 30th anniversary of this national Council held in 1991, yet most if not all studies on the said Council point out a gap between the beauty of what it says on paper and the reality that is seen in our parishes and communities. While some of its ideas such as “integral evangelization” and being a “community of disciples” and “Church of the Poor” may have found their place in our local religious vocabulary, how far have these come from being mere slogans or taglines to become operative principles that truly shape our way of being Church? Thus, we find here a clear challenge that begins with cascading the Council’s vision to today’s generation.

Meanwhile, **Rosalyn S. Oñate, R.C.**’s article on “Overseas Filipino Workers and Catholic Charismatic Communities: Partners in Evangelization” reflects on the phenomenon of migration, particularly in the case of Overseas Filipino Workers or OFWs, especially in places where traditional church structures like parishes are unable to operate. Here she calls attention to a very promising intersection between the challenges experienced by OFWs and their potential as evangelizers, with the challenges and potentials of Filipino Catholic Charismatic Communities. Thus, her proposal of a “partnership” between the two as a means of revitalizing and even purifying the way these two entities live out their faith.

In the third article, “Filipino Popular Devotions: Legacy of Five Centuries of Catholic Faith,” **Bishop Mylo Hubert C. Vergara, D.D. and Erickson S. Javier** explore the very interesting field of popular devotions, whose great potential remains to be mined by theologians and pastors alike. The

Filipino people being “intrinsicly religious,” they observe, these expressions of piety and religiosity not only serve as visible manifestations of our people’s faith but can also become “potent instruments for the New Evangelization,” especially as Filipinos bring these devotions with them in the global diaspora. At the same time, the authors point out areas for growth where these customs and traditions can still improve to become more “mission-oriented” and “socially conscious” as “an integral part of a holistic and dynamic Christian faith.”

Amado T. Tumbali, Jr., S.J.’s “History of Christianity in Mindanao: Arrival, Challenges, and Development of the Catholic Church in Mindanao During the Spanish Period (1538-1897)” takes us back in time to early attempts to Christianize the island made by Jesuit and Recollect missionaries. In this brief and fast-paced narrative, he gives us a glimpse of the different challenges faced by the missionaries as well as the various ways by which they tried to respond, including not so “religious” strategies such as building forts and diplomacy. Indeed, a timely revisit at the history of Christianity in the Philippines would be sorely incomplete if it were to focus only on landmark events and forget the unsung efforts of the countless ministers of the Gospel who labored tirelessly and creatively on the ground – some even giving up their life - to sow the Faith in these islands.

From another vantage point, **Michael P. delos Reyes’** “The Jesuits and Filipino Marian Devotions” explores yet another way the missionaries propagated the Faith in the Philippines, this time by promoting devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Indeed, as a testament to the success of this aspect of evangelization, the whole country is dotted with Marian shrines as centers of popular piety and our people have even earned the sobriquet, *Pueblo Amante de Maria*, a people in love with Mary. While the missionaries who

belonged to different religious Orders brought their own Marian appellations to their respective mission areas around the country, this article focuses in particular on the history of nine Marian titles whose cult was introduced by the Jesuits. As the author keenly observes, many of these devotions have continued to take root and blossom in the hearts of our people and the communities that they belong to, with seven out of the nine Marian images having been honored with a pontifical or episcopal coronation.

Last but not the least, we have **Joseph Y. Haw Jr., S.J.**'s "Pagbibiyaya ayon sa Pagdedevocion at Pagsisiyam sa Cabanal-Banalang Ina ng Caliuanagan," which is certainly a delight, starting from the fact that it is written entirely in Filipino: the first and hopefully not the last of its kind in our nascent journal. Here he traces the important role of prayer-books and novenas, translated and disseminated in the local language, as a means of nurturing the faith in a way that is rooted in and responsive to a people's context and culture. In particular, he examines the theological notion of grace imparted through the *Pagdedevocion at Pagsisiyam sa Cabanal-Banalang Ina ng Caliuanagan* (Devotion and Novena to the Most Holy Virgin of Light), which is one of the Marian devotions introduced by the Jesuits in the Philippines that were discussed in the previous article. Originally developed to combat an emerging heresy at the time of its writing, the author explores how the novena was able to counter its neo-Pelagian tendencies in a subtle but effective way through its sound anthropology as well as its solid doctrine concerning grace, justification, and redemption centered on developing friendship, *paquiquipagcatoto*, with God. He also expounds on the role of Mary within this whole dynamic of grace as beautifully elaborated in the novena.

On behalf of our President and Editor, Fr. Enrico C. Eusebio, S.J., and the entire editorial staff of *Loyola Papers*, we are one with the Church in the Philippines in marking this important milestone in our history as a local Church. As we celebrate the quincentennial of Christianity in our land, may we continue to work hand-in-hand so that the Faith, sown in these islands five hundred years ago, may come to grow deep roots and strong branches to produce an abundant harvest worthy of the Lord, *de Aparri hasta Jolo!*

Leo-Martin Angelo R. Ocampo