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Lakbay Diwa, by Miranda

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LAKBAY DIWA: PAGKAMAKATAO. By Dionisio M. Miranda, S.V.D.
Manila: Divine Word Publications, 1987. 102 pages.

Lakbay Diwa are occasional papers published by Divine Word Publications "to deepen the understanding of, and commitment to, the Christian faith." This issue features Fr. Dionisio M. Miranda's *Pagkamatao*, a collection of essays on moral theology. The English subtitle: "Reflections on the Theological Virtues in the Philippine Context," describes succinctly the content and rationale of the book. This book is a most welcome addition to the growing number of writings towards a Filipino theology "to help" as the Foreword says, "in the inculturation of Christian meanings and values into Filipino culture" (p. vii). *Pagkamakatao* is another pioneer attempt and a seminal contribution to theologizing in a Philippine context during a period of transition in theologizing from English to Pilipino. Here at the outset it must be said that inculturation of the Gospel message is far from mere translation. The long process of indigenization or contextualization of the Christian faith from within Filipino culture means the initial and difficult steps of rerooting in Filipino cultural sources, reconceptualization, and integration of the faith and the culture towards reinterpretation and revitalization of the Gospel message for today's Filipino Christian.

A formidable task that faces the movement towards a Filipino inculturated theology is that of preparing a theological lexicon. Towards such a task Miranda's book is valuable for its methodology. In the Introduction the author opts, out of the four paths (p. xi) for the *linguistic* approach in teaching moral theology "with the purpose of approximating a technical vocabulary from existing native material" (p. x). In Ch. 1 in his semantic exploration in Tagalog of "virtue," with the help of a fourfold delimiting procedure (p. 4) in the use of the Tagalog dictionary, the author concludes that *Pagkamakatao* is the most adequate Filipino concept for "morality" or "virtue" which makes sense because virtue enables one to become authentically and fully human. The SVD series entitled *Lakbay Diwa* best expresses the author's "pioneering or free spirit" in discovering the Filipino roots for the theological virtues of faith (*pakikipagharap sa Diyos sa pananampalataya*) (Ch. 2), hope (*pakikipagharap sa Diyos sa pag-asa*) (Ch. 3) and love (*pakikipagharap sa Diyos sa pagmamahal*) (Ch. 4).

Fr. Miranda's linguistic approach yields a rich vocabulary and understanding of the three theological virtues or of any other moral value or issue. Examples are his findings on the theological virtue of FAITH as *pagkilala*. HOPE as *paghihintay* at *pag-aabang* and LOVE or *pag-ibig* o *pagmamahal* as *pagtatangi* at *paghirang*. The new found Filipino concepts of faith; hope and love are bound by the basic concept of *pakikipagharap*. In the National Catechetical Directory of the Philippines in *Maturing in Christian Faith* (Manila: St. Paul Publications, 1985), the three traditional elements of faith are *paniniwala*, *pagsunod*, at *pagtiwala*. In Fr. Miranda's approach, the stress is Trinitarian: *pagkilala sa Ama, Anak at sa Espiritu Santo*. His method surprisingly uncovers at least ten levels of nuanced Pilipino meanings of HOPE.

The concluding Chapter V presents the 1986 EDSA Revolution as paradigm for Asia. There are four lessons Asian nations can learn from EDSA (pp.

100-01). From the theological reflection of the author, EDSA is (1) a salvific event appropriated in faith; (2) an ecclesial event; (3) the triumph of grace over sin; (4) the edge of the desert. Although EDSA already belongs to a historical past, it is still a token of the possible as well as an unfinished revolution.

The author would be the first to admit that his essays are incomplete, that they are "soundings or explorations," "jumpingboards for further reflection." They constitute a very worthwhile contribution nonetheless.

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THE LABOR TRADE: FILIPINO MIGRANT WORKERS AROUND THE WORLD. Authors not given. London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1987. 137 pages.

The Labor Trade is anecdotal in nature and therefore easy to read. Unfortunately its anecdotal nature undermines the strength of its scholarship and the weight of its conclusions. We should therefore view this book as being primarily aimed at the heart—to inspire us to become more involved in these human tragedies—rather than aimed at the mind—to provide us with a blueprint for solving some of these problems.

No authors are given for the book. But from the acknowledgements it appears that the book was put together by the staff of the Catholic Institute for International Relations in London with the assistance of various individuals associated with the Friends of Filipino Migrant Workers (Kaibigan) in Manila, National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA) in Manila, the Mission for Filipino Migrant Workers in Hong Kong, the Commission for Filipino Migrant Workers in London, Concerned Seamen of the Philippines, Center for Seafarers' Rights, and the Philippine Resource Center in Berkeley.

The authors focus on the human dimension of Filipino emigration, with the emphasis almost always placed on the negative side with its host of human tragedies. This bias is what the economist Gerald Meier calls the "economics of discontent" and many of its tenants are commonly associated with the Philippine "nationalist" school. If read uncritically it may either lull us into an unproductive fatalism or drive us into a destructive rage.

Today Filipinos are scattered throughout 124 different countries. There are approximately 3.25 million Filipinos living outside the Philippines and 60 percent live in the Americas, primarily in the United States and Canada. Of all Filipinos abroad, roughly half a million are short term contract workers for the most part working in the Middle East.

Filipino migration may have first begun on 20 December 1906 when fifteen Ilocanos arrived in Hawaii to work on the Olaa sugar plantation. Ever since, Hawaii has apparently become a favored destination for Ilocanos of all ranks. Unfortunately, with the Stock Market Crash in 1929 and the ensuing Depres-