

# philippine studies

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## **Teachers at Prayer: As Stars for all Eternity**

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In any case a book for beginners should mention this difference between official and popular spelling.

A kind of fore-foreword entitled "The Tagalog Language" contains gratuitous assertions which may be offensive to non-Tagalog Filipinos. That Tagalog is "the most euphonious" among Philippine languages and Tagalogs "the most energetic" of Philippine racial groups will surely be questioned and, true or false, such statements seem unnecessary and impolitic.

That Tagalog has been "taught in all schools for eighteen years" is simply not true. The pertinent legislation (1940) did not actually become effective in the more remote provinces until several years after the last War. There were no textbooks, and not only were qualified teachers lacking but in many places there were not even Tagalog-speaking personnel. The Bureau of Education inserted National Language periods in the official class schedules, but these periods were used for reviewing matter taken in other classes. This reviewer knows because he was there and had frequent dealings with public school officials. But that is beside the point. This is a good textbook. It serves its purpose well and can be highly recommended.

JOHN A. POLLOCK

## TEACHERS AT PRAYER

**AS STARS FOR ALL ETERNITY:** Meditations for Teachers. By the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1959. 255p.

If teachers fall out of love with their profession it is because they have not sufficiently meditated on its dignity and excellence. While volumes and volumes about the different aspects of education have flooded book stores, few have been written to satisfy the spiritual needs of a teacher. True, books of meditations for priests and nuns abound, but there is a felt need for similar books for teachers who have a similar dignity of calling.

It should therefore be a cause for joy that here at last is such a book. Written by the Brothers of the Christian Schools, the book is divided into fifty-two meditations on the purpose of Christian education, the nature and mentality of the pupils and the virtues necessary in a teacher.

Most teachers realize that their work is a mission, an apostolate. But do they realize that their ideal can quite often be blurred by the many difficulties and the deadening routine of daily teaching? The meditations on the purpose and the excellence of the work of Christian education found in this book will always bring back to them the

realization that they are "...a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation;... that they may proclaim the perfections of Him Who has called them out of darkness into His marvellous light."

The book has a deep and genuine insight into the heart and mind of a child — his potentialities, his weaknesses, the dangers that he faces — and his soul-to-soul appeal to the teacher to help him in his needs. Here is how the book presents this pupil-to-teacher approach: "Brother Philippe reminds us that the pupil who enters our school seems to say to us in the simplicity of his heart: 'I hunger for spiritual bread, and I come to you for it; I am an exile, traveling toward my fatherland, but I don't know the way that leads to it, and so I come to you to find out; I am surrounded by powerful enemies, and I come to you begging for the weapons I need to defend myself; I am weak, and I come to you for strength; I want to save myself, and I plead with you to point out the means.'"

The central theme of the book is always the teacher in relation to his work and to his pupils. In all the fifty-two meditations, the authors emphasize the principle and conviction that the teacher must be what he expects his pupils to be; that his own spirit of faith and love of God must overflow into each and every soul under his care if he is to lead that soul to God. "First, be yourself what you wish them to become; you will persuade them better by exemplary conduct than by all you can say to them... it is only Saints who can make Saints."

Teachers, being intellectuals, and exercising authority as they do, would do well to consider what the book has to say on the virtue of humility: "We ought to reflect on how much ignorance there is in us, how much weakness, what unsubdued passions, what numberless sins. How can we at the sight of all this still yield to self-esteem?"

"The truly humble teacher is engaging, loyal, and respectful toward all persons in authority and also to the parents of the pupils.

"The truly humble teacher is never jealous. Instead of grieving over the success of others, he is resigned that they equal or even surpass him. Never does he show unfriendliness toward those who are preferred to him, nor toward those who so prefer them. He never permits himself a word that may belittle other classes or other schools. . .

"In his corrections, he never acts through wounded pride. If perchance he has made a mistake, he does not hesitate to acknowledge it and to retrace his steps; he thus teaches his pupils that it is noble to admit one's failings, while it is base and unjust to disavow them."

Another merit of the book is that it aims to serve any teacher—the classroom teacher whether religious or lay; the teacher in the

home; indeed any person to whom is given the responsibility to instruct and to lead the young. After all, the Holy Ghost meant all teachers when He inspired the evangelist to write: "...they that instruct many unto justice shall shine as stars for all eternity."

TRINIDAD DE GRANO

## ASPECTS OF MALAY SOCIETY

**MALAY KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE IN SINGAPORE.** (London School of Economics, Monographs on Social Anthropology, No. 21.) By Judith Djamour. London: The Athlone Press, 1959. 151p.

Social scientists interested in the Philippines and South East Asia will welcome Judith Djamour's excellent study of *Malay Kinship and Marriage in Singapore*. The book, with a companion volume entitled *Chinese Family and Marriage in Singapore*, authored by her husband, Maurice Freedman, offers the historian, the social anthropologist and the economist a significant new body of data and a variety of new insights into the Malay and Nanyang Chinese communities of South East Asia. The fact that the Malay society studied in the book under review has close ethnocultural links with those in most Philippine lowland areas, and particularly close links with the several Muslim societies in Mindanao and Sulu, also provides a pregnant source of provocative comparisons and contrasts.

The study of Dr. Djamour concentrated on two Malay communities in Singapore, one a small fishing community on the south-west coast, and the other an urbanized group of Malays within the town proper. The people in the fishing village, an isolated social unit of just over two hundred inhabitants, were "local Malays", i.e. most of them were native-born in the fishing community itself and had roots going back several generations. Practically all were fishermen or members of fishermen's households. The Malays in the urban area were a mixture of "local Malays" and immigrant Indonesians, the latter being more numerous.

The population in the village was exclusively Malay, with the exception of one Chinese shopkeeper and four Malabari Muslims. In the urban area on the other hand the Malay population was mixed with both Chinese and Indian families living in quarters built by the Singapore Government. Unlike the Malay village, whose occupational pattern was exclusively fishing, this urban population had a wide range of occupations including labourers, semi-skilled workers, a few skilled workers, office messengers and junior clerks.