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## Editor's Preface

Joseph L. Roche, S.J.

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## Editor's Preface

This issue is in great part the work of Fr. Pedro S. de Achútegui, S.J., a member of our editorial advisory board, whose herculean labors have recently been dedicated to serving as secretary of the Executive Committee for the Quadricentennial of the Archdiocese of Manila. As he has expressed it himself, 400 years of continuous existence is an historical event worthy of celebration by any standard. This is especially true regarding the establishment and growth here in the Philippines of the Christian Faith in its local, ecclesial structure, for few would contest the extraordinary impact of the Church on the whole of Philippine history and culture over the past four centuries. This issue, then, is largely devoted to bringing to light some of the more important aspects and implications of this significant Philippine landmark.

The lead article of Fr. John Schumacher supplies the historical dimensions and depth absolutely essential for an adequate understanding of the synodal issues today. Despite its necessarily lengthy proportions, it is eminently "readable," bringing to bear its unassuming scholarship, depth and balance, on the Philippine Church's most pressing current problem: its social involvement. A surer, more accurate and critically balanced view of our past is certainly a most effective instrument in our on-going search for authentic personal and ecclesial Christian witness in Philippine life today.

In "A Synod within a Quadricentennial," Fr. Achútegui not only clarifies many of the common confusions regarding synods in general, and the actual operational preparation for the present Manila Synod, but in the process gives an overview of how the Church's present structural organization throughout the whole country grew from the original single diocese of Manila. His concluding section, "Thinking Aloud," invites the reader to an active participative questioning and searching that is indicative

of Vatican II's image of the Church, but which unfortunately has not "caught on" as yet among perhaps the majority of Filipino Catholics. A deepening of this basic ecclesial attitude and faith-vision of the local Church is provided by the following article, "The Diocesan Synod in Theological Perspective," by the Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, Bruno Torpigliani, D.D. We are fortunate to be able to publish this address to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, since it brings out in clear and authoritative manner this new appreciation of the Church and the role of the laity in relation to the Manila Synod.

The final article by Mary Hollnsteiner is the result of a happy coincidence. Originally intended for our special issue in memory of Frank Lynch, S.J., [PS 27,2 (1979)], and unavoidably delayed by the author's participation in UNICEF international congress, it supplies in this issue an effective balance against the danger of an introspective ecclesiastical solipsism. The Church, like the sabbath, is *for* man; as structured and administered *by men*, it must constantly be reminded of that basic fact. "Mobilizing the Rural Poor" does this in terms of the very two dimensions mentioned above: the social problem today, and the people's active role in working out their own salvation. Perhaps the essay will inspire some comment from our Filipino liberationist theologians regarding the "simply-demand-it" tactics of C-O, and its unavoidable ideological implications. For if the Christian "Good News" is to touch every dimension of human life, it surely must be able to shed some light on this basic thrust of helping the poor help themselves.

Under our Notes & Comments Fr. Achútegui painstakingly resolves the long disputed chronological problem concerning the founding of the Manila diocese, and in so doing establishes concrete norms for more accurate dating of many secular events, caught in the same ambiguity created by the change to the Gregorian calendar. The accompanying diagram will be of considerable help to those of us who have to visualize such confusing complications. Finally, Vince Rafael provides an extended review, with some judicious, critical remarks on nationalist educational theory, of the pictorial work, *Turn of the Century*, which, from all accounts, is an outstanding addition to present Filipiniana.

*Joseph L. Roche, S.J.*