

Panganiban, Kendrick Ivan B. *The Role of Shrines in View of the New Evangelization: Pope Francis' Theology on Shrines and Pilgrimages Applied in the Philippine Context*. Quezon City: Claretian Communications Foundation, Inc., 2021. pp. 302. ISBN: 978-621-426-139-0.

Kendrick Ivan B. Panganiban's *The Role of Shrines in View of the New Evangelization: Pope Francis' Theology on Shrines and Pilgrimages Applied in the Philippine Context* was published in 2021 by the Claretian Communications Foundation, Inc. The monograph, which consists of five chapters and the author's introduction, epilogue, bibliography, and appendix intends to introduce Pope Francis' theology on Catholic shrines and the act of pilgrimage as expressed in his apostolic letter *motu proprio Sanctuarium in Ecclesia* (2017) and to present a framework and recommendations for shrines in the Philippines to implement in line with the provisions and exhortations stipulated in the said document as well as other Church documents.

The monograph's first chapter ("Understanding the Catholic Teaching on Shrines and Pilgrimages") introduces the theological and spiritual underpinnings concerning Catholic shrines and the act of pilgrimage, as well as the historical development of the Church's understanding and legislation on the roles, responsibilities, and privileges of shrines and the people who are involved in its administration. The second chapter ("Pope Francis' *Sanctuarium in Ecclesia* in Appreciating Shrines in View of the New Evangelization") provides an overview of the contents of *Sanctuarium in Ecclesia*. The third ("The Aspects of Shrines in View of New Evangelization: Principles and Pastoral Priorities") and fourth ("Proposed Organizational Structures for Shrines in View of the New Evangelization") chapters lay down the pre-requisites and recommendations in order for shrines in the country to align their roles and activities in accordance with *Sanctuarium in Ecclesia*, other papal documents on shrines and the New Evangelization, and current local church regulations. Finally, the fifth chapter ("Marian Shrines in the Diocese of Malolos: Samples for Theologico-Pastoral Assessment") provides a template of ascertaining the adherence of shrines to the pre-requisites as presented in the previous chapters, with the author providing his assessment of selected Marian shrines in the Diocese of Malolos (province of Bulacan) as examples.

Although highly technical, the monograph is a very helpful for ordinary readers as it provides background information and context in understanding the role of shrines in the evangelical mission of the Church in the present. It introduces the Church's teachings on shrines and pilgrimages, as well as the concept of New Evangelization vis-à-vis the roles and responsibilities of shrines.

The publication of this monograph is also a welcome addition to theological and pastoral studies in the Philippines. One reason for such is because it is a reliable reference material on how to implement the exhortations of a specific papal document within the Church in the Philippines. It should be noted that there are already published monographs that seek to provide reflections and ideas on how to implement the ideas stipulated in Church documents, such as *Selected Papers on Caritas in Veritate: The*

Philippine Experience (2010) and Fr. Amado L. Picardal, C.Ss.R.'s *Journeying Towards a New Way of Being Church: Basic Ecclesial Communities in the Philippines* (2016). However, the monograph is unique as it presents to its intended readers (shrine officials and personnel) a concrete framework in order for them to better fulfill the evangelical and pastoral mission of their institution (shrines) in line with Church documents (documents on shrines and the New Evangelization, in particular *Sanctuarium in Ecclesia*).

Another reason for such is because it contributes to the ongoing theological reflection on how the Philippine Church can better respond to the Universal Church's call towards New Evangelization. The monograph's presentation of the different "aspects of a shrine in view of the New Evangelization" drawn from papal documents on shrines and the New Evangelization is a helpful tool for shrine officials and personnel in conceptualizing activities and projects that will harness the shrines' responsibility and potential as a "a holy place... [that] represents a genuine place of evangelization where... it makes manifest the powerful action which God's mercy works in people's lives" (Pope Francis, *Sanctuarium in Ecclesia*, no. 4). In other words, it is both a handbook as well as a written reminder for shrines to greatly aid in realizing the Church's vision of evangelizing in the modern world.

The monograph should also be commended for its documentation of the different shrines that currently exist in the Philippines. Its appendix contains a list (as of the date of its publication) of the country's minor basilicas, cathedrals, national and diocesan shrines, and churches with special bonds of spiritual affinity; as well as a compilation of the documentary evidence (decrees from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines or markers installed by the shrines) pertaining to the status of national shrines. This is perhaps the first attempt to document all the shrines in the country. The author might consider the suggestion of writing a separate monograph which updates his list and includes relevant information such as a historical background narrating a particular church's elevation to a shrine.

It should be noted however that minor problems pertaining to the structure of the monograph's text is observable. One such problem is the author's overuse of block quotations and long sentences. While this is understandable as such may be an attempt to faithfully present the ideas in the documents and sources that are cited in the monograph, this hinders the author from masterfully summarizing the contents of the documents or scholarly works that he is presenting. It also restrains him from expressing his ideas or interpretations concerning the topics that he is discussing. There are also grammatical and punctuation errors in some of the sentences in the monograph. Nevertheless, the aforementioned problems do not diminish the monograph's presentation of ideas, and that such can be rectified by the author if he decides to release another printing or a new edition of the monograph.

Dennis Amarante