

Editor's Note

“Persevering in fidelity to their founding charism
and to the splendid tradition to which they are heirs.”
(Pope Francis, *Prædicator Gratiae*)

This two-part special issue of the *Philippiniana Sacra* commemorates the contribution of the Dominicans in furthering the mission of the Church in the Philippines. It aims to complement the three issues of the current volume, which features studies that deal with topics relating to the 500th year of the coming of Christianity in the Philippines. Moreover, *Philippiniana Sacra* has decided to put up this two-part special issue that is focused on the ministry of the Dominicans in the country since coinciding with the celebration of the 500th year of Christianity in the Philippines is the commemoration of the 800th *dies natalis* of St. Dominic and the 50th founding anniversary of the Dominican Province of the Philippines.

Almost all of the studies included in this two-part special issue are proceedings of the lectures delivered during the Theology Week 2021, which was also the 7th Leonardo Legaspi Lecture Series on Theology, Religious Studies and Ethics, conjointly organized by the Faculty of Sacred Theology and the Center for Theology, Religious Studies, and Ethics (CTRSE) on Dec. 1-3, 2021. The theme adopted for the said three-day webinar is “Building the Church, the Dominican Way II.” In 2016, during the celebration of the 800th Founding Anniversary of the Order of Preachers, a conference was held with the same theme, the proceedings of which were also serialized in the *Philippiniana Sacra*. The inspiration then was to celebrate worth-sharing events in the history of the Order of Preachers and recall the narratives of the lives and ministries of the friars in the Philippines by reflecting on their import in the present day. The same idea runs through the conduct of the 2021 online conference. Hence, it was framed as a sequel to the first one held five years ago.

The secondary title chosen to specify further the theme of the online conference is taken from the document *Prædicator Gratiae*, the letter of Pope Francis to the Order of Preachers in celebration of the *dies natalis* of St. Dominic, namely, “Persevering in fidelity to their founding charism and to the splendid tradition to which they are heirs.” It guided the organizers to ascertain that the materials to be delivered in the conference should expound on the “legacies and prospects” of the Dominican missions in the Philippines. Put simply, what the speakers shared during the conference, the written versions of which are presented in this two-part special issue, are narratives about and reflections on the missionary efforts of the Dominicans in the Philippines, past and present, to persevere in the charism of the Order, so that, in persevering, they become worthy heirs of and, as well as, enrich the splendid tradition of which they are part.

In this first part, the beginnings of the Dominican mission in the Philippines are explored in the works of Jessie Yap, OP entitled, respectively, as “Prelude to Filipino Catholicism: The Hispanization of the Christian Mission (15th-16th Centuries)” and “The Establishment of the Dominican Presence (1581-1631) in the Period of the First Evangelization of the Philippines.” Moreover, Prof. Regalado Trota Jose surveys the material objects produced and employed in the early missionary activities of the Dominicans in his article, “Extant Artifacts from the First 150 Years of the Dominicans in the Philippines (1587-1750).” From the beginnings of the missions, the following three articles will bring the readers to the present, that is, the legacies and opportunities for new mission engagements of the Dominicans. Starting with the article of Rolando Mactal, OP, “The Dominican Influence in the Philippines in Terms of Marian Piety: Yesterday, Today and Beyond the 500 Years,” which looks into the pioneering initiatives of the Dominicans in propagating among the Filipinos the devotion to the Virgin Mother of God, and the enduring relevance of such Marian pious practices as well-spring of spiritual growth for the present generation. Cecilio Vladimir Magboo, OP suggests the richness of the ministry of local ecumenism as an area where the Dominicans can play a part in “Healing a Narrative to Achieve Christian Unity: The Case of the Catholic Church and the Iglesia Filipina Independiente.” Finally, in his article “Reaffirming the Biblical Understanding of Marital Indissolubility as a Proposal for Celebrating the Gift of 500 Years of Christianity in the Philippines,” Wenifredo Padilla III, OP postulates that the lasting love that sustains a marital relationship, which everyone must cultivate and be thankful for, is not only revealed and manifested in the events and words of God recorded in the Sacred Scriptures, but is also an abiding gift to the Filipinos in the 500-year history of the Christian faith in the Philippines.^{PS}

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Guest Editor