

Reviews & Notices

Maximiano, Jose Mario Bautista. *MCMLXXII 500-Taong Kristiyano (1872-1972) Vol. 2. Quezon City: Claretian Communications Foundations, 2021. pp. 312. ISBN: 978-621-426-147-5.*

In his endeavor to recount the 100-year-old history of the Philippine Catholic Church from 1872 to 1972, entitled *500-Taong Kristiyano (Second Volume)*, Jose Mario Bautista Maximiano traverses the lives of prominent Filipino heroes who championed the archipelago's independence against her colonizers and the select events that these endeavors entailed. Maximiano highlights the re-blossoming of the Catholic faith (which he described in this work as their *metanoia*) within the hearts of those local heroes after they abruptly abandoned it as influenced by various socio-political factors. More importantly, the author narrates in this volume how the Catholic Church in the Philippines, initially established at the beginning of the Spanish era, had withstood the signs of the times and how she influenced the events that transpired in this retelling of the country's 100-year-old history.

In this volume, the work of Maximiano is composed of 11 chapters containing carefully selected narratives, backed up with archival and other sources, from the onset of the reformist movement during the Spanish era to the promising effects of the Second Vatican Council in the Philippine Catholic Church. Each chapter opens with a Biblical verse embracing the chapter's gist and setting its ambiance, followed by a timeline of the events that occurred in the archipelago and discussed in the chapter's content. The author's utilization of various literary devices in relaying his messages from the select narratives makes this historical piece notable - from juxtaposing the lives of personalities (for example, Rizal versus del Pilar and Aurora versus Imelda) to stating rhetorical questions that entice the readers to critically think appearing to be a quasi-Socratic method to induce insights from the readers indirectly.

In the first two chapters, Maximiano shows us how the lives of two local reformist *illustrados* with contrasting personalities, who left the Catholic fold for masonry due to the Spanish clericalism during their times, met the same fate at the

end of their lives. Marcelo del Pilar, described as the “Practical Man,” and Jose Rizal, labeled as the “Universal Man,” experienced a *metanoia* or the re-blossoming of their Catholic faith. As this trend continued afterward from the cases of the labor champion Isabel delos Reyes (in the seventh chapter) to that of the former President Manuel Quezon (in the ninth chapter), *metanoia* appears to be one of the central themes of this work of Maximiano, or in the general sense, of the 500-year history of Christianity in the Philippines. Although these once-lost-sheep Catholic reverts had their reasons for returning to the Catholic fold, this *metanoia* reflects the Catholic Church’s re-opening doors as her imitation of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is full of forgiveness! Maximiano beautifully immortalizes this very act.

However, *metanoia* is not always the case. In the third and fourth chapters, although it focuses on the nature and characteristics of freemasonry and the textual Venn-diagram of Andres Bonifacio and Rizal, the author notes that not all Filipinos who left their Catholic fold reembraced their childhood Catholic faith. It veers toward Apolinario Mabini, the *Dakilang Lumpo*, who was once aspired by her mother to become a man in cloth. Accordingly, Maximiano briefly mentions how the mothers of the select Filipino heroes became the pillar of the latter’s Catholic faith. This directs to another emerging central theme in the book – the role of parents, particularly of mothers, and of family in planting and strengthening the Catholic faith (reflecting the *ad intra* mission of the Catholic Church). Mabini’s case indicates that not all faith seeded in their childhood retains as one person ages. As mentioned by Maximiano, “[f]aith is non-transferable and the best they [parents] can do is to inspire and teach while the kids are young.” It is an indirect call for the Church to reevaluate her family catechesis.

Another vital element in the fourth chapter is the extensive documentation of Fray Mariano Gil’s alleged breaking of the seal of the Sacrament of Confession during the untimely discovery of Katipunan. This chapter implicitly underscores the importance of history as a profession – on how historians could cure the poison of mere *chismis*. On a separate note, Maximiano even calls for the expertise of historians and historiographers to validate the accusations of forgery in the retractions of famous Filipinos from freemasonry (in the seventh chapter). Although evident throughout the book, this fourth chapter also emphasizes how this work of Maximiano, from the introduction of Archbishop Socrates Villegas, is “relevant, well-researched, historically validated, and amply referenced.”

In the fifth chapter, the author juxtaposes the two prominent faces of the Philippine revolution against the Spaniards. He shows the difference between the treatment of the self-educated and self-made Bonifacio and the country’s first president Emilio Aguinaldo towards the Spanish friars imprisoned during the heights of the revolution. In this narrative, together with the related snippet from the eleventh chapter, Maximiano underlines the term “clericalism” and indirectly claims that “the early Catholic missionaries were not bad and that it was *clericalism* which was evil.”

Simply put, implicitly based on the author's explanation, Bonifacio's violent treatment of the imprisoned Spanish friars is unjustifiable despite the atrocities committed by the latter, for the act itself is the evil, not the doers of such an act.

From the inception of the Church-State separation in the country (discussed in the sixth chapter), the book has detailed the Roman Catholic Church's trials and tribulations to withstand the archipelago's changing socio-political landscape from the American period to the Marcos declaration of Martial Law. Within the said period, Maximiano narrates how the Catholic Church fought the sudden rise of the Philippine Independent Church (detailed in the seventh chapter) and Protestantism during the American period (detailed in the eighth chapter). Moreover, he enthusiastically unfolds how the bishops during those times organized the Catholic Welfare Organization, which soon became the Catholic Bishop's Conference of the Philippines, championing the Church's social mission during the brutal occupation of Imperial Japan (discussed in the tenth chapter) and have stood still until today. In the last chapter, the author brings forth the effects of Pope John XXIII's legacy, specifically the Second Vatican Council, on the Philippine Catholic Church, which Maximiano cites as "a starting point for a general renewal, and a new and mighty flowering of the Holy Spirit throughout the world."

To reiterate, in this work, Maximiano reminisces with the readers on how the Catholic Church has remained standing and how Christianity is continuously flourishing in the country due to the efforts of the people, Filipinos or not, who stood before us! Their lives are worth immortalizing the same way Maximiano does in this book, indirectly calling us of our responsibility as Filipinos, Catholic or not, to celebrate their sacrifices *Pro Deo et Patria!*

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Alaurin, O.P., Edgardo D. *Sports in the Philippines HISTORY, VALUES, SPIRITUALITY*. Manila: The University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2021. pp. 244. ISBN 987-971-506-877-2.

Life for Filipinos will never be complete if there are no sports. It has become a social event, where everyone comes together as a player, athlete, coach, assistants, or mere spectators and audiences. Every arena, field, or courts where games will be held will be filled with audience enthusiastic to support their team of choice. You can also see customized basketball, volleyball, tennis and soccer courts in each barangay or towns. Even without proper training or education, a Filipino understands how the game works and can even participate at an instant when the need arises. Sports is viewed in so many ways: a hobby, past time, passion, means of living and survival, but most especially, it is a way of life. It is an integral part of our culture and tradition that is passed through generations.