

blossom in the air, the uncertain light afternoon showers, and the quaint "santacruzans" of twilight. No other month of the year can boast of a more delightful atmosphere. In May the Philippines is at her best.

"Santacruzans" and "Flores de Mayo" have become characteristically native. Whether it be in the traffic-snarled city or in the secluded barrio the sight of a procession of children chanting the "Santa Maria" in shrill voices is as common in May as a balut vendor. "Santacruzans" un-adulterated are the Philippines' proof of devotion to the Queen of Heaven in its simplicity and innocence.

But like any innocent undertaking, "Santacruzans" in many parts of our country have undergone sorry changes at the hands of meddling adults. Sticking their fingers here and there into the cake the elderlies have finally come out with a different brand of "santacruzans." Fancy costumes, gossiping "zogeles" and their consorts, and bewildered innocent children are the ingredients of their new experiment. Thoughts of Our Lady as Queen of May, become afterthoughts, and the "Santa Maria" sung out merely to supply syllables to the notes.

It is deplorable that such practices are growing to be more common. What is holy has been made a mockery of. Perhaps it is only in the remote barrios beyond the reach of saphistry where these religious rituals still retain their purity and simplicity.

It certainly is not giving much honor to the Mother of God nor is it saying much of their Faith if our Catholics persist in distorting the religious nature of our "Flores de Mayo" and "Santacruzans." Faithfully and religiously practiced these May devotions become a beautiful expression of our love to Our Lady. They are characteristically Filipino. Let us keep them so by keeping them sacred.

MURDERERS-AT-LARGE

We believe our ordinary citizen is tolerant. We think he is great at fence-sitting. Especially on matters that do not affect him directly. He does not give a hoot if he finds that in his government a bad official is no longer exceptional or unusual. At least as long as the latter preys on the other fellow. The failure of a campaign by the Red Cross or the Community Chest does not concern him as long as the calamities are visiting another part of the country. He even finds the reckless-jeepney driver bearable.

But we doubt seriously if he could be tolerant enough to ignore a danger that directly menaces his own life and that of all the members of his family. For such a danger is now faced by every member of the community.

We have been reading in the papers about how some unscrupulous fishermen practice their trade by the use of deadly poison and dynamite. And about mass food-poisoning (fatal in several cases) among our fish-eating population. In a majority of these cases, it has been definitely established that the poor innocent victims had eaten fish containing the poison used by these fishermen.

Again, our citizen may ignore the important fact that the illegitimate fishing methods of these fishermen do great harm to the aquatic resources of our country. But certainly he, or all of us for that matter, cannot minimize the great threat that the illicit practices pose on the health of the community, of which we are a member.

The government is taking steps to curb these illegal fishing methods but it needs badly the cooperation of every citizen to apprehend and punish these fishermen-murderers!

MONSIGNOR CRONIN

Filial greetings to Mons. Patrick H. Cronin, the first Apostolic Administrator of the new Prelature of Ozamis in Northern Mindanao!

Born in Fullamore, Ireland, in 1913, Monsignor Cronin was educated by the Irish Christian Brothers at the Diocesan Seminary of St. Finian's, Mullingar, (High School).

Deciding to devote his life to the missions in the Far East he joined the Society of St. Columban, was ordained in 1937, assigned to the Philippines, and was one of the first group of Columban priests sent to Mindanao to take over the province of Misamis Occidental from the overburdened Jesuits. After six months in Cebu, studying the Visayan dialect, his first position in Mindanao was to assist in Tangub.

When the parish of Bonifacio was started as an offshoot from Tangub, young Father Cronin became its first pastor, and stayed there during the war years in the mountains, administering to the people and sharing their trials and hardships. On one occasion, he was almost ambushed by the Japanese. Spotting the soldiers hiding in the grass ahead of him, he jumped off his horse and threw himself into the mangrove swamp. Luckily he managed to escape, but lost to the Japs a good horse and saddle.

After the war he worked in the parish of Aurora in the diocese of Zamboanga, and also administered to the people in the new town of Salug where he eventually became the pastor in 1948. It was from there that he moved to Ozamis city as Regional Superior in 1951.

Our humble and heartfelt prayers for this zealous shepherd of souls in his new and important work. Ad multos annos!