

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN BULLETIN

THE DOMINICAN SAGA
Editorial

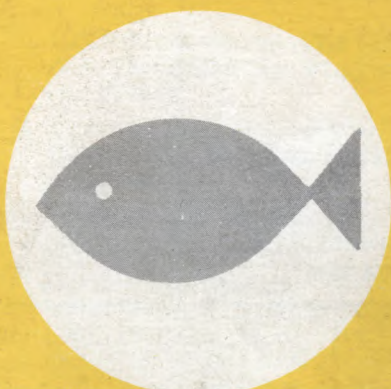
THE DOMINICAN PRESENCE
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YAN (1595-1934)
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OF OUR LADY OF THE
ROSARY IN 1814
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THE DOMINICAN SAGA

The introduction to the statutes of the Dominican Order, drafted and formulated by the founding Fathers in Mexico, stresses with absolute clarity the true missionary character of the Order:

“To this we have been called . . . so that with the rays of our doctrine and the splendor of our lives we may draw to the true light of the Gospel those who live in the shadow of death.”

And so, true to its mission, the Order sent out all over the world men imbued with the humanistic tradition of Aquinas, and equipped with missionary zeal to enlighten those who live in darkness.

The saga of the Dominican continues. Undaunted even in the face of privation, torments and death, they have uninterruptedly continued to open frontiers, going to far-flung countries like our corner of the world, spreading the Good News, building schools, building roads, building churches and even building lives. They have even worked, and intend to continue working, in different frontiers — the frontiers between belief and unbelief, life and death, humanity and inhumanity, justice and injustice, and war and peace.

Being among the first of the various religious orders that set foot on Philippine soil, and considering the tremendous success that has crowned their missionary work, it is only fitting that the 400th anniversary of the Dominican presence in the Philippines be auspiciously highlighted with the canonization to sainthood of the five UST martyrs, Bl. Antonio Gonzalez, O.P. (Rector 1636), Bl. Domingo Ibañez de Erquicia, O.P. (Professor, 1621-1623), Bl.

Lucas del Espiritu Santo, O.P. (Professor, 1622-1623), Bl. Guillaume Courtet, O.P. (Professor, 1635-1636), Bl. Tomas Hioji de San Jacinto, O.P. (Student, 1621-1626), and the canonization to sainthood of their companion, Bl. Lorenzo Ruiz.

In this auspicious celebration of the Dominican presence in the Philippines, it is certainly worthwhile to look back and to demonstrate to the whole world a clearer witness to Christ through unselfish and ever-ready embracing of obedience, authentic poverty and unquestioned chastity.

The witness to the evangelical counsels is a *conditio sine qua non* if the Dominican presence is to be continuously felt in the fifth century.

VICENTE CAJILIG, O.P.

Some Vicars of the Hospicio de San Jacinto de Mexico

(1598-1702)*

In the two hundred and twenty-odd years of its history the Hospicio de San Jacinto de Mexico was a truly unique establishment of the Dominican Province of Our Lady of the Rosary. The foundation was granted by the Order in 1598 and received Vice-regal approval in 1599. The house flourished until the uprisings preliminary to the Mexican Revolution brought it low in the early years of the nineteenth century. Here we are concerned with the seventeenth century alone. The story of San Jacinto could be told on basis of the property, its buildings and the legal rights in relation to Church, Order and State of its community. Equally worth recounting would be the tale of the thousands of Spanish Dominicans who passed through its halls, prayed in its chapel, ate in its refectory and slept in its dormitory. Nearly all of these friars were on their way to or from Spain and the Philippines. Their story, too, has been told in our sources.

My research and what I present in this article represent a much smaller segment of history. My interest is in the *assigned community* of San Jacinto. In this article I shall limit myself to

*The author wishes to thank Fr. Manuel González, O.P. of Madrid and Frs. Pablo Fernández, O.P. and Lucio Gutiérrez, O.P. at U.S.T. for their encouragement and help with sources, including rare archival materials. The comments in this article are based almost exclusively on the assignations and obituaries found in A. Orge, ed., *Acta Capitulum Provincialium Provinciae Sanctissimi Rosarii Philippinarum Ordinis Praedicatorum ab anno 1598*, T. I 1598-1698, Manila, and Fr. Ocio's voluminous (but not always consistent) works published anonymously as *Reseña Biográfica de los religiosos de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario de Filipinas desde su fundación hasta nuestros días*, Manila, Santo Tomas, 1891 and *Compendio de la Reseña (etc. ut supra)*, Manila Santo Tomas, 1895. This general statement is meant to save the reader from the tedium of a sprinkling of references impossible to check outside specialized Dominican libraries.

some of the "Vicars," as by that title were the local Superiors of this unformed house called, for they were personally appointed by Provincials, Provincial Chapters and Congregations at frequent intervals. The Vicar of San Jacinto was not even an elected Prior, much less a *sui juris* prelate. He was a priest who represented others and both his powers and his term of office (normally less than three years) were determined by their *ad nutum* concessions.

The house itself had to be roomy for it often held some fifty guests. But the community assigned to it was always small — seldom more than six even in the eighteenth century, in the seventeenth often only the Vicar and one *converso* (or "Cooperator Brother" as we should say today). Sometimes the prestigious Procurators of the Province (whether to the Holy See, the Royal Court of Madrid or the Viceregal Court of Nueva España, as Mexico was then called) passed part of their tour at San Jacinto, though the "Procurator General" of the Holy Rosary Province maintained a house at Puerto Real in the Province of Cadiz and a *celda* in the Convento de la Pasión, a house of the Spanish Province in Madrid. Sometimes the position of Vicar coincided with that of Mexican Procurator. Sometimes it was a stepping stone to a procuratorial position either in Mexico or Spain.

The house seems originally to have been dedicated to Saints Justus and Pastor, soon afterwards *Santa Maria del Guia* becomes its designation, but from 1602 onwards it is usually referred to as "San Jacinto de México" or a similar variant in Provincial documents. The first Vicar remains enigmatic, referred to variously as Fr. Bernaldo Bordiles, Fr. Bernardo Bundiles and Fr. Bernardo Dosdils by Fr. Ocio who lists him with *Misión VI* (1598). In the official Latin documents he is called "R.P. Fr. Bernardus Dosdil" in 1598, "R.P. Fr. Bernardus Bundiles" in 1600, and "R.P. Fr. Bernardus de Bordiles" in 1602. By 1604 he has disappeared from the history of the Province and is never mentioned again.

The next person mentioned in connection with San Jacinto was Fr. Pedro de San Vicente, elected definitor of the General Chapter in 1604. He, in turn, is commissioned to provide a Superior for San Jacinto, but, as Fr. San Vicente died before his ship arrived in Mexico, whatever provision was made remains unknown. No new Vicar is recorded by name until 1612 when undoubtedly the most illustrious name to grace the series is encountered, that

of the only one of the Vicars to be beatified. He is the Italian Dominican martyr, Fr. Angel Orsucci y Ferrer. In 1573 he was born in Lucca where he received the habit in the famous Observant Convento di San Romano. The future Blessed Angel studied at Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome before leading Holy Rosary *Misión VIII* in 1602. Having served in the Philippines and risen to the post of Vicar Provincial for Pangasinan, he returned to Mexico where the future Bishop Aduarte persuaded him to return to the Orient in 1615. In 1618 he was assigned to Japan where he shed his blood for Christ at Nagasaki on September 9, 1622. Blessed Angel Orsucci was beatified by Pope Pius IX on July 7, 1867.

The seventeenth century successors of the holy martyr followed one another in rapid succession. The first to hold office, it seems, for more than two years was Fr. Francisco Carrero. A Madrileño by birth, Fr. Carrero was a "son of the habit" of the Convento de Santo Domingo de Ocaña. He was a member of *Misión XI* which left Spain in 1613, spent 1614 in Mexico, and arrived in the Philippines in 1615. After having served in Camalaniugan, Lal-lo and Abucay he returned to Manila and dedicated himself to the Chinese apostolate in Binondo and Parian until 1633 when he was elected definitor to the Provincial Chapter. In 1635 Fr. Carrero was appointed Vicar for San Jacinto and was evidently in office there, despite the silence of the *Acta*, until 1643 after which there are no extant records of him. Probably he returned to Spain. By then he would have been in his mid-fifties. Possibly he died in his home convent of Ocaña.

The gap in the records applies not only to Fr. Carrero. Although a future Vicar, Fr. Mateo de Bermúdez, was assigned to San Jacinto as early as 1635, he lived in Madrid as Procurator until 1658. In the intervening Chapters and intermediate Congregations, from 1637-1648, as their *Acta* attest, it was left to the Provincial to provide a Vicar for San Jacinto. In 1647, however, Fr. Sebastian de Oquendo was named. He had been a member of *Misión XIV* (1626) and served in the Philippines until 1645. Fr. Sebastian, an *hijo de hábito* of the Oviedo convent, had had a distinguished academic career in Manila. He was a lector, first in philosophy and then in theology, at the Colegio de Santo Tomás from 1626 onwards. In 1639 he was elected Prior of Santo Domingo and was reelected in 1641. He was definitor of the 1641

Chapter and remained in Intramuros until 1645 when he sailed for Mexico. He was evidently Vicar at San Jacinto until 1650. He died in the Convento de Santo Domingo de Mexico in 1651 and his body was found to be incorrupt eight years later. Fr. Sebastian de Oquendo was the author of the manual of moral theology, *Summa Casuum Conscientiae*, published in Manila in 1637.

A gap of ten uncertain years now occurs in the list of Vicars. Fr. Salvador de Mejía, appointed in 1659, died in Santo Domingo de Manila where because of his illustrious career as Commissary of the Holy Office his obituary writer called him "*Pater antiquus*" though he was but fifty-six years old! In 1661 his successor was named. The Fr. Mateo de Bermúdez mentioned above had received the habit in Palencia and spent many years in Binondo, Formosa and mainland China before taking up procuratorial duties in Madrid and Rome in the mid-thirties of the seventeenth century. He left Madrid for Mexico in 1658 and was Vicar of San Jacinto from 1661 to 1667. He died at San Jacinto in 1673 being then nearly eighty years of age. In addition to his faithful service to the Rosary Province, Fr. Mateo had been on several occasions the Master General's personal *visitador* in various Provinces of Spanish America and greatly edified the people of Mexico by his holy life during sixteen years in their midst.

Fr. Francisco Sánchez, who was Vicar of San Jacinto for nineteen years from 1667 to 1686 has passed through Mexico on his way to Manila on *Misión XX* (1658). His career in the Philippines was purely scholastic. Born in the village of Lillo (Province of Toledo) he took the Dominican habit at the Convento de San Pedro Mártir de Toledo in 1643 and later studied at the renowned Colegio de San Gregorio in Valladolid. He was a lector at Santo Tomas de Manila where he was later Rector and taught at Letran College of which he became President in 1665. He spent the last thirty years of his life in Mexico, dying in the Hospicio de San Jacinto. He was tireless in his theological and liturgical investigations, producing a praiseworthy (and praised by the Holy See) volume on Indulgences and a controversial *Rituale*. Both at home and at large he was considered a great man, an excellent confessor and preacher and an *observantísimo hijo* of the Province. He was said to be "a true son and true portrait of St. Dominic." What higher praise could a Dominican desire?

Fr. Sánchez was immediately succeeded by Fr. Francisco de Villalba who held two two-year terms of office as Vicar of San Jacinto. Fr. Villalba had served as Procurator in Manila in 1667 and 1668 and then had a somewhat stormy career. Son of the Convento de San Pablo de Burgos in virtue of receiving the habit there, he was professed in 1661 and joined *Misión XXI* in 1666. He served as a missionary in Cavite and Abucay from 1668 to 1670 when he returned to Spain for reasons of bad health. However 1679 saw him back in Manila where on the Feast of the Epiphany of 1682 he preached an "offensive" sermon in Manila Cathedral which for its defense of the Church and the poor upset his aristocratic Spanish audience including the Governor and *Audiencia real*. The preacher was violently seized later that day and an attempt was made to deport him hatless and without a book from the Philippines (where he had done excellent work in Binondo). The story here is complicated, as Fr. Villalba, because the first ship never left Philippine waters, was relegated to the island of Romblon. But he was by then bed-ridden and too sick to be put ashore. He was taken to the Franciscan Friary of Nueva Caceres where he languished for a year before setting out again across the Pacific for Mexico. He lived, except for the period from 1689-1696 when he was Procurator in Madrid, at San Jacinto until his death in 1712. The author of his obituary praises his hard work, great patience (for he was summarily expelled from Manila without sufficient food or clothing), and the many journeys he made for the benefit of others.

Fr. Villalba's first term as Vicar being over, Fr. Jacinto Jorbá, a Catalan originally from the Convento de Santa Catalina de Barcelona, succeeded him. Although Fr. Jorbá spent only a few years from 1684 to 1688 in the Philippines, where he worked mostly in Zambales, the last apostolate-filled years of his life until 1699 must have edified the Mexicans greatly for his funeral in the Convento de Santo Domingo de Mexico had to be postponed an hour due to the great concourse of members of other religious orders who swelled the numbers of the faithful to pay him last earthly honors.

As can be seen below in the appended list, the first century of the Hospicio de San Jacinto de Mexico saw frequent changes of Vicar; I hope this article has shown there was a number of memo-

rable personages among them. I hope in a further contribution to *Boletin Ecclesiastico* to continue both the list and the comments and in time to present elsewhere a fuller and amply documented "Story of San Jacinto." May this first effort, however, contribute to the research on and rejoicing in four hundred years of Dominican history in the Province of Our Lady of the Rosary, a history not limited to Spain or the Orient but one which also took place in the stopping place between the two, the Hospicio de San Jacinto in the City of Mexico.

ROMAN CARTER, O.P.

(A list of the Vicars from 1598-1702 is appended on page 684.)

**A List of the Vicars
of the Hospicio de San Jacinto de Mexico
from its foundation to 1702**

*1598 – 1603	Fr. Bernaldo (Bernardo) de Bordiles (Bondiles or Dosdil [s])
*1604 – 1610(?)	Fr. Pedro de San Vicente (died before arrival) probably his Vicar
*1612 – 1614	Blessed Angel Orsucci y Ferrer
1616 – 1619/20	Fr. Atanasio de San Jacinto Moya
1623 – 1625/6	Fr. Alonso de la Visitación Sánchez
1627 – (?)	Fr. Jacinto Calvo
1633 – 1635	Fr. Pedro de Cuellar
*1635 – 1643(?)	Fr. Francisco Carrero
*1647 – 1651	Fr. Sebastián de Oquendo
*1659	Fr. Salvador de Mejía (died before arrival)
*1661 – 1667	Fr. Mateo de Bermúdez
*1667 – 1686	Fr. Francisco Sánchez
*1686 – 1688	Fr. Francisco de Villalba
*1688 – 1699	Fr. Jacinto Jorbá
*1700 – 1702	Fr. Francisco de Villalba

*Mentioned in the above article

DOMINICAN PRESENCE IN THE PROVINCE OF CAGAYAN

1595 — 1934

From among the several regions evangelized by the Dominicans in the Philippines on a permanent basis, that is, Bataan, Pangasinan, the Cagayan Valley and the Batanes-Babuyan group of islands, we have chosen the Cagayan Province due to its challenging, complex and picturesque history, replete with evangelizing attempts and their corresponding setbacks against the background of a conglomerate of ethnic groups, a variety of dialects and an extensive and generally rough terrain.

Little did Juan de Salcedo think, when from his boats he cast a glance on the coastlands and the mountains beyond in 1572 that there lay behind them a vast territory that would take the Spaniards three centuries to subdue fully, and the missionaries countless efforts and sacrifices to gain for Christ.

Following the discoverer, Salcedo, there arrived at the shores of Cagayan in 1571 its conqueror, Juan Pablo Carrion, dispatched by the Governor of the Philippines in order to dislodge the Japanese pirate Tayfusu from the mouth of the Ibanag river and then to annex the province to the Spanish domains. After defeating the Japanese in a fierce encounter, Carrion easily subdued all the riverine settlements as far as Tuguegarao, because the natives, divided as they were into internecine factions, could not put up an effective resistance against the well-armed and better disciplined Spanish invaders. Then Carrion founded Lal-loc which, under the

name of Nueva Segovia, was to be for two long centuries the capital of the whole valley and seat of the diocese of Nueva Segovia.

Accompanying the Spanish force and in the capacity of military chaplains there also arrived in Cagayan the religious priests, Frs. Cristobal de Salvatierra, O.P., and Francisco Rodriguez, O.S.A.. Later Carrion entrusted the Augustinians with the task of bringing the Cagayanos to the sheepfold of Christ, besides ministering to the Spanish garrison. Discouraged, however, by the bad conduct of the Spaniards and the passivity of the Cagayanos, they soon returned to Manila. Thus, both Spaniards and Cagayanos were left like a flock without a shepherd until 1594 when the then Acting Governor Luis Perez Dasmariñas approached the Dominicans requesting them to take charge of the spiritual care of the garrison and the conversion of the natives. This they did by sending to Cagayan Frs. Diego de Soria and Tomas de Castellar in the following year. Under the aegis of such first class missionaries, and of six more who arrived soon afterwards, the Cagayanos began, after some initial resistance; to give up their pagan beliefs and embrace Christianity, and the Christian towns of Camalaniugan, Patta and Abulug were formed from the scattered native settlements. But before discussing their missionary labours, let us describe first the geographical and political condition of the Province throughout the three long centuries of the Dominican presence there.

Watered by the rivers of Ibanag and Chico, the Cagayan Province, known simply as "Cagayan" from the very beginning, was delimited on the north by the sea of China; to the south it extended to the Irraya plains (now northern Isabela, from San Pablo to Gamu); on the east it was bounded by the Pacific Ocean, and it was separated on the west from Ilocos by the rugged mountain ranges of the Cordillera.

Within these boundaries, the various regions of the province were likewise divided into smaller areas, either by mountainous terrain or by dialects, in the following manner: along the coast and on both sides of the Ibanag river lay the region of Siguiran; farther up and west of Tuguegarao, watered by the Chico river, the valley of Itawes; south of Tuguegarao, as already stated, the Irraya plateau opened out; in the mountainous region towards the west

the Mandaya region, and between the Ibanag and the Pacific coast, a chain of mountains that remained unexplored and unvisited for the most part by the Spanish missionaries during the Spanish regime.

In 1839, Governor Luis de Lardizabal divided the whole valley of Cagayan into two large provinces: Cagayan and Nueva Vizcaya; the former included the territory from the northern coast to the confluence of the rivers Magat and Ibanag near the actual town of Gamu; and the latter from Cauayan to Aritao. On March 31, 1856, the province of Isabela was carved out of the two existing provinces and stretched from Cabagan to Carig (today, Santiago).

Having mentioned these things which we deem indispensable for forming an idea of the Dominican presence in Cagayan, we may now proceed to narrate the apostolic labours of the Dominicans.

To the towns already mentioned, which were the scene of the initial Dominican endeavors in the Valley, others were added in succeeding years. They were located either along the northern coast or on the right bank of the Ibanag. The following mission stations were founded or officially accepted in the years indicated: Nassiping and Buguey (1596), Dummun (1598), Daluddu, Tocolana, Nambunanga and Tuguegarao (1604), Iguig (1608), Masi and Gacu (1619), and Gattaran (1623).

It should be noted however, that the lack of personnel prevented the Superiors in Manila from staffing each of these missions with a resident priest; only the more important ones could be given a permanent missionary. It must be borne in mind, likewise, that some of the these mission stations or potential towns either vanished soon after their foundation, or changed their names or were merged with other places which in the passing of the years had attained a greater administrative, or commercial, or religious significance. It so happened with Dummun, Daluddu, Tocolana, Nambunanga and Gacu.

The Itawes region, situated to the west of Tuguegarao across the Ibanag river, as already stated, formerly included the present municipalities of Piat, Tuao, Tabang, Rizal (then Malaoeg) and Mauanan.

When Msgr. Miguel de Benavides, who had been promoted to the bishopric of Nueva Segovia in 1595, arrived in his diocese three years later, he found the Itawes valley already under the care of an encomendero. Yet, the abuses perpetrated there by the ruling Spaniards led to an uprising in 1603. In this year, Father Diego de Soria, successor of Benavides, arrived in Cagayan with the Royal Commission to negotiate with the Dominicans the sending of additional religious to Itawes to help in its pacification and bring its people to the fold of Christ. The labours of these missionaries resulted in the years following in the founding of the Christian communities of Lubo (1604), Malaoeg (1608), Piat (1610), Tuao (1612), Tabang (1623), and in the 18th century, of Mauanan (1735).

An image of Our Lady of the Rosary, carved in Macao, has been venerated in Piat since 1623. To her the inhabitants of Cagayan have resorted whether individually or on group pilgrimages to seek her protection from all sorts of maladies and calamities, and Our Lady has often granted them their requests, even in a miraculous way.

Besides the Siguiran and the Itawes valley there are in Cagayan three other regions of lesser historical importance where the Dominicans engaged in apostolic work, namely, the mountains overlooking Itawes, the Mandayas, and the coastal area east of Buguey.

In the mountains overlooking Itawes the Gospel was repeatedly announced by certain enterprising missionaries such as Fr. Juan Iñiguez, founder of the town of Tuga in the vicinity of Mt. Bamban, at the close of the 17th century; Fr. Fernando de Lara, a most zealous apostle who literally spent himself in behalf of his converts; Fr. Jose Galfaroso, heir to the apostolic zeal of Fr. Iñiguez, whose extraordinary dedication was directed towards the conversion of the highlanders inhabiting the hills of Malaoeg. Frs. Bernabe de la Magdalena, Tomas Tocho and Tomas Sampso were three other missionaries who likewise laboured mightily to win the Itawes mountain tribes for Christ and to gather them into towns. Yet, the settlements which they founded did not last long, due in part to the inconstancy of the neophytes and the hostility of the infidels, and in part to the often untimely deaths of some of these enterprising missionaries. As a result these missions were

dormant from about the middle of the 18th century until the last decade of the 19th, when Fr. Ramon Zubieta revived them under the protection of the Politico-military Commandancy of Saltan. His praiseworthy efforts, however, were nipped in the bud by the Philippine Revolution of 1898.

The mission among the Mandayas, now called the Apayaos, is located in the mountainous region that lies west of the province of Cagayan and south of the town of Abulug.

In 1610 Frs. Jeronimo de Morer and Diego Carlos left Abulug in order to spread the Christian faith among the Mandayas, and they and other Dominican Fathers with the passing of time organized and formed the towns of Fottol, now Pudtol, (1610), Santa Cecilia (1614), Capinatan (1619), Amhao (1625) and Nuestra Señora del Pilar, today named Kabugao, (1633). This mission also experienced serious setbacks. First, there was the insurrection of 1625 which cost the Dominicans the lives of a priest and of a lay-brother. The second insurrection, which occurred in 1639, was due to the lack of tactfulness and excess of abuses of the local Spanish garrison and of civil authorities. Undismayed, the missionaries reorganized the mission both times.

When speaking of the Mandayan mission, we cannot bypass without honorable mention the figure of Fr. Pedro Jimenez who labored gloriously among these infidels for some years in the last quarter of the 17th century. With limited means he built a stone-vaulted church which, in spite of its total abandonment for a century and a half, was still in fairly good condition in the last decade of the 19th century.

East of Buguey there lay another sector of the province, for the most part desolate and unproductive, where the Dominican missionaries stationed in Buguey founded through the years some mission outposts mainly for the benefit of Christian fugitives and wandering Negritos. Such were: Palauig (1654), Bauag (1719), Wangag and, finally, the little Dao close to Cape Engaño.

Turning our attention again to the coastal region and the banks of the Ibanag river we see additional towns sprouting here and there in the shadow of an improved agriculture, better living conditions and a more stabilized peace and security. In chronolo-

gical order here are the more important ones: Aparri (1680), Amulung (1735), San Juan Nepomuceno (1755) now known as Pamplona, which resulted from the merging of Patta and its satellites Cabicungan, Masi and Bangan; the short-lived Aripa (1739) on the banks of the Chico river and not too far from the Ibanag; Alcala (1845), Enrile (1849), Solana (1851), Sanchez Mira (1893), Santo Niño (1894) in the valley of Itawes and, finally on the very eve of the Philippine Revolution, Peñablanca (1897).

In the midst of their missionary endeavors, the Dominicans did not forget the educational side of their Dominican vocation. They founded, although at the eleventh hour, the College of Blessed Imelda for girls in Tuguegarao, under the direction of the Dominicans of Santa Catalina.

After the Revolution this Institution was converted into an academy for boys under the advocacy of San Jacinto de Polonia and the management of the Dominican Fathers. Later it was converted into a diocesan seminary. Yet, neither as a college for boys nor as a training center for diocesan priests did it ever lead a flourishing life and, therefore, was definitively closed in 1934.

Its closure also spelled the end of the Dominican missionary action in Cagayan province. Together with the seminary, they relinquished a handful of parishes which they had half-heartedly accepted and administered from the early years of the present century. In truth, the Dominican presence in the valley of Cagayan should have ended with the Philippine Revolution, for the return and stay of the Dominicans during the first decades of the 20th century, especially in the parochial field, was but a dim reflection of their glorious past throughout three full centuries.

PABLO FERNANDEZ, O.P.

STATE OF THE PROVINCE OF OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY IN 1814

FOREWORD

In the present number of *Boletin Ecclesiastico de Filipinas*, dedicated to recalling some of the past achievements of the Dominican Province of Our Lady of the Rosary in its Fourth Centennial, it is fitting to begin by giving a comprehensive idea of the Province's most salient activities throughout its already long history. And, among the several summaries of its history, written from time to time by its chroniclers or administrators we have not found any more suitable to our purpose than the *Report* sent in the form of a letter to the Master of the Order by the Provincial, Fray Carlos Arbea, in 1818. Said *Report*, aside from its comprehensiveness, excels for the exquisiteness of its Spanish style, the orderliness in the exposition and the inclusion of some ancient practices of by-gone times that may be of interest to historians and readers alike.

To further round it off and update it, the *Report* has been supplemented with pertinent footnotes by its translator, Father Pablo Fernandez, O.P.

A few words about Father Arbea will be welcomed by our readers. A native of Almeria in Spain, he joined the Dominican Order at the Convento de Santa Cruz el Real in Granada, and a year after his profession, he enlisted in the Province of Our Lady of the Rosary of the Philippines. He reached Manila on September 12, 1790. Here he taught Humanities, Philosophy, Theology and Canon Law in the University of Santo Tomas, where he became Regent of Studies twice and twice again Rector Chancellor. Twice

also he was Prior of Santo Domingo, Prior Provincial for two terms (1814-1818; 1829-1833), Director of the Lay Dominicans (Venerable Orden Tercera), Chronicler of the Province and twice Regional Vicar of the Dominicans living in and around Manila. In the early years of the nineteenth century he did pastoral work in Pangasinan during two years. He passed to his reward in Navotas on 19 October 1834.

Remarkable for his fine manners and endowed with an extensive knowledge, he acquired for himself a lasting renown, and his name was often mentioned after his death when he was spoken of as a model of erudition.¹

* * * * *

Most Reverend Father:

I forward to Your Reverence the enclosed documents concerning the recent Provincial Election in this Your Reverence's Province of the Most Holy Rosary, and forward also the Acts of the last Chapter and, in fulfillment of my duty, I beg of Your Reverence the approval of it all.

So that Your Reverence may have an idea of how much these Your children of this Province labour for the greater honor and glory of God and profit of souls, I shall present Your Reverence with a brief summary of their various occupations.

The first and foremost of these are the Missions, wherein we labour for the conversion of the infidels; and, among them, the China Mission has been from its very start the primary goal of this Province. However, in it not much progress is being made at present due to the lack of missionaries and also because of the absolute repugnance by the Chinese people to relinquish their ancient customs, especially polygamy and usury. Still, our Religious are in charge of thirty to forty thousand souls, who have embraced and maintained their Religion in all its purity. There are among them souls greatly favoured by God, and the women are

¹Ma. Ocio, *Compendio de la Reseña biográfica de los Religiosos de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario*, Manila 1895, p. 534).

particularly pious. This is due, next to the grace of the Lord, to the special customs of the Empire which bind women to an absolute reclusion in their homes. In the room where they stay, nobody can enter unless he is a member of the family. On account of this, women grow up in the midst of a remarkable innocence; and among them there are many who voluntarily choose the state of virginity.²

The Tonkin Mission is at present in a flourishing condition, and this would be more so if there were Religious who could gather such an abundant harvest. A great length of time has passed since the persecutions ceased and, under the shadow of peace, those who come forward to acknowledge and adore Jesus Christ are many. This is a source of an inexpressible consolation in our unhappy times during which Religion is so much maligned in Europe.³

If it were up to the Province to send labourers to the Missions, there would be many more Religious in them, but the

²After several unsuccessful attempts, the Dominicans started their China Mission in the province of Fukien in 1631. Their missionary activity, interspersed with the famous controversies around the Chinese rites in the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth, was also perturbed or interrupted by occasional persecutions. These finally culminated in the martyrdom of five Spanish Dominicans – one bishop and four priests – in the years 1746 and 47. Restored again some years afterwards, the mission went on, in spite of additional sporadic persecutions and political instability until 1952 when its missionaries were forced to leave under the pressure of the victorious communistic regime.

³The Tonkinese (North Vietnam) Mission, so glorious for the phalanx of its martyrs – fifty-nine of them will soon be canonized – and, the high number and fervent life of its Christians, was founded in 1676 by its first Dominican Vicar Apostolic and charismatic organizer, Msgr. Juan de Santa Cruz. This Mission unswervingly went through two centuries of almost ceaseless persecutions until it began to enjoy religious freedom under the French protectorate during the last decades of the nineteenth century. In the early years of the twentieth, the Mission entered a period of an enviable expansion and prosperity in its manifold activities, like the teaching of Catechism, the building of beautiful churches and more comfortable residences, of schools, asylums and orphanages and, above all, by the formation of the clergy, diocesan as well as Dominican. Unfortunately, this flourishing period was abruptly brought to an end by the advancing Communists in 1954. However, most of its personnel migrated to the South where, in and around the Saigon area, they reorganized the Mission with such a startling success that in 1967 they were ready to form a separate province within the Dominican Order under the title of “Regina Martyrum.”

Government does not allow us to send these Religious unless the ministries of these Islands are sufficiently provided for.⁴

In the year 1779 (*sic*)* the Religious of this Province went to preach the faith in the island of Batanes, where there was not a single Christian, and today the whole island is converted. Of the 14,000 souls that dwell in it, there is not even one who does not adore Jesus Christ. Let Your Reverence form an opinion of how much these Religious must have laboured in learning the local idiom, in writing a Grammar with its Dictionary, a Catechism and other devotional books for local instruction; in uprooting the ancestral customs in Batanes and in shaping the people according to the law of the Gospel.⁵

In this island of Luzon this Province of Your Reverence has the missions of Ituy and Paniqui, which are situated in the very center of the Island, in a beautiful valley surrounded by mountains that are inhabited by infidels. Much spiritual fruit is gathered in these missions, especially in Ituy, to which many infidels go down, principally when they are beset by hunger in their mountains; and, although those grown in years are not so amenable to embracing the faith, yet, they always allow their little children to

⁴In his *Report* Father Arbea failed to mention the old and venerable missions of Japan and Formosa (Taiwan). This was because they were non-existent in his time. The Japan Mission, founded in 1602, and remarkable for the frightful persecutions it underwent and the heroism of its martyrs had come to a close in 1637 with the martyrdom of Blessed Lorenzo Ruiz and Companions. Its contemporary mission of Formosa lasted for an even shorter time, that is from 1626 to 1642. Both were reopened in modern times: Formosa in 1859 and Japan in 1904, and both are still in large part under the care of the Province of Our Lady of the Rosary, although their territory has notably shrunk, having been shared with other Religious families and Vicariates of the Order after the Pacific War.

⁵The Batanes Mission was permanently established in 1783 after several unsuccessful attempts during which some Religious died due to poor housing, deficient nourishment, lack of medical attention, and above all, over-exposure to the elements of nature. The sacrifices of these Religious, however, eventually brought about an abundant harvest of souls, inasmuch as after the year 1783 the islanders were rapidly converted to the faith, at the rate of one thousand per year. This was the work of two or three missionaries who were often sick and almost always wanting in the necessities of life. Forced to leave the islands by the Revolution in September of 1898, the Dominicans returned on April of 1900, and have remained until the present.

remain under the care of the missionary who spares no effort to bring them up in the (Christian) Religion and to settle them in the town.⁶

Besides the Missions this Province is in charge of Pangasinan and Cagayan that were converted to the faith by the first Religious of our Order who came to this Province. Their towns were subject to Diocesan visitation, and the Religious who administer them receive canonical institution, according to the laws of the Royal Patronage, as parish priests.

The Provincial visits the province of Pangasinan every year and that of Cagayan twice every four years by reason of its distance from the Capital.⁷

The spiritual harvest that the Religious gather in these towns is great. The natives, being naturally indolent, would easily forget their religious obligations were it not for the constant care and vigilance of the ministers. These two provinces belong to the Diocese of Nueva Segovia. In this Archdiocese [i.e., Manila] our Province has charge of only one town, under the advocacy of St. Rose in Laguna de Bay, five hours distant from the Capital.⁸

⁶The Ituy and Paniqui Missions, simply called "The Missions" by older historians, formerly comprised the territory that extends from northern slopes of the Caraballos, that is, from Santa Fe in Nueva Vizcaya to Cauayan in Isabela, along the banks of River Magat. They were inhabited by the Isinays and Gaddans. The Dominicans, after an unsuccessful initial attempt in 1609, first visited these places in 1632. However, due to various vicissitudes, they could not found permanent Missions there until 1740. On account of the after-effects of the Philippine Revolution, the Dominicans relinquished these Missions in 1898. During the first forty-two years of their Mission existence these places were run by our missionaries in a theocratic manner, i.e., with a very limited intervention of the civil authorities.

⁷No mention is made here of the historic ministries of Bataan because when Father Arbea wrote his *Report* they were in the hands of the secular clergy. Started as early as 1588 with the founding of Abucay, they were handed over to the secular clergy in 1768 by Archbishop Basilio Sancho. Then, as ordered by the Royal decree of 1826, the Dominicans gradually took them back as their secular pastors left them vacant by death or removal. Finally in 1898 the diocesan priests took once more possession of them, except for Pilar where Father Fermin Sanjulian stayed on until 1932. Something similar happened in Pangasinan and in the Cagayan valley.

⁸Today's very prosperous town of Santa Rosa, which at the close of 18th century was a barrio of Biñan, was raised to the category of town by the Governor

In Manila, Your Reverence has the only formal convent of this Province, under the patronage of our Father St. Dominic. In it, our Sacred Constitutions are rigorously observed: perpetual abstinence, fastings, Matins at midnight all the year long, common life, silence, and all other religious observances. To it all the Religious worn out by the tasks of the ministration of souls, retire; also the aged and the sick. Therein, there would be many more Religious if we were not compelled to keep so many at work in the ministration of souls due to the shortage of personnel.

The College of Santo Tomas, which concurrently is a University, is a very important establishment for this Capital and even for the Islands.

At Santo Tomas we are in charge of the public instruction and, for this reason, there is a primary school (*escuela de primeras letras*) here, as well as Grammar classes, two courses of Philosophy, two courses of Theology, one course of Canon Law, and the course one of Laws, served by a layman and endowed by the King. At present, only one Religious conducts a Grammar class and, due to the scarcity of personnel, we cannot but feel a bit distressed at seeing the other two classes entrusted to a layman, whose salary is paid from the funds of the College itself.

Something similar happens in regard to the primary school, whose funds originate from the Province, because, although from the start there was a pious foundation, it has not been enough even to cover the expenses incurred for the maintenance of the building, and the institution could not have acquired the productive farm-lands that it has today were it not for the financial help extended to it by the Province to help in its economic growth.⁹

General and accepted by the Dominican Corporation in 1794. The Governor entrusted it to the Dominicans in spite of the stiff opposition of the secular clergy because the church buildings were Dominican property and since the preceding century the Dominicans had possessed a large *hacienda* there. All of these remained in Dominican hands until the Revolution and, by way of exception, even for some years afterwards.

⁹For the support of its collegians and *capistas* and for other expenses, the University of Santo Tomas owned three haciendas, viz.: Biñan and Santa Rosa in Laguna and Santa Cruz de Malabon in Cavite. The first two in reality formed one large estate

The lay scholarship students (*colegiales de beca*), who are educated therein do not pay anything whatsoever. This also holds for the *capistas* whose duty is to serve the collegians and clean their rooms. Many poor young Spaniards are entirely supported with all their expenses shouldered by the funds of the College. As a result, this may be considered as a charitable institution.¹⁰

In the College of San Juan de Letran one hundred and fifty collegians are boarding and they all, excepting the orphaned Spaniards, pay their fees for their board and lodging. The said collegians are entirely supported by the College from its own funds.¹¹

The house of San Gabriel de Binondo was formerly the residence of the Religious who were in charge of the hospital for the Chinese, which was an establishment as old as the Province itself. Upon the expulsion of the Chinese, the Government decreed

within the jurisdictional grounds of their respective towns. They had been acquired by parts in the years 1641, 1653, 1677. That of Santa Cruz de Malabon, on the other hand, was purchased by the Province of Our Lady of the Rosary in favor of the University from Diego O'Kenedy and his wife on 7 April 1761.

¹⁰When speaking about the University of Santo Tomas in the Spanish times, we have to bear in mind the distinction between University and College. The University consisted of the Faculties of Arts, Philosophy, Theology, Canon and Civil Law, and late in the 19th century, of Medicine, Pharmacy, Philosophy and Letters, and Sciences. The College was made up of the collegians (*estudiantes de beca*, or scholars) and the *capistas* or *fámulos*. All lived under the same roof together with the Dominican professors. In order to be admitted, the collegians had to be full-blooded Spaniards, sons of a legitimate marriage, born of decent parents who were not tainted with Judaism, heresy, or the penalties of any ecclesiastical or civil tribunal as a result of any crime. The *capistas* or *fámulos* could be mestizos or natives on condition that they were Catholic, legitimate and bright enough to be able in due time to help as tutors (*pasantes*) to other students in one of the Faculties (Cfr. *Estatutos para el gobierno interior del Real Colegio de Santo Tomás de Manila*, por el P. Fr. Francisco Gaínza, Vice-rector del mismo, MS in the University archives, Folletos, Vol. 115, pp. 145, 153).

¹¹The exact date of the founding of San Juan de Letran College is not known. Certainly, it occurred about three years before 1623. The founder was a retired Spanish soldier named Juan Jeronimo Guerrero, and he founded the College for the benefit of orphan boys, sons of Spanish military men who had died in the service of the King. Later this institution was absorbed by a similar foundation which had been founded in the ground floor of Santo Domingo Convent by Brother Diego de Santa Maria. The College has remained ever since under Dominican management, first that of the Province of Our Lady of the Rosary, and since the creation of the Province of the Philippines in 1971 under Filipino Dominicans.

the closure of this hospital, and thus this house, built by the Province from its own funds, as well as the hospital and its properties could no longer serve their original purpose. For a long time the building served as residence for the Commissary of the Inquisition, since its location was well fitted to this end. Lately, it has been used as hospice for the Religious who come from the provinces because it is located outside of the city walls.¹²

The Beaterio de Santa Catalina is also a very useful institution for the people, inasmuch as therein many Spanish girls are educated, who have merited the esteem of the people due to the training given to them by the "Beatas." These ladies live in an edifying manner. Their revenues have experienced many losses, and for a long time the Province has been providing them with all that they need for their maintenance. They observe common life and live in enclosure. They use the chapel of San Juan de Letran, and in this College there lives an aged priest who attends to their spiritual needs.¹³

The climate of these Islands is rather mild and temperate, the best and healthiest of all India, and during the cold season at least in the northern part of the Islands, warmer clothing is welcomed.

¹²For the evangelization of the Chinese in the Manila area, the Dominicans founded successively the ministries of San Gabriel and Baybay in 1588, Binondo in 1596 and Parian in 1617. San Gabriel began as a Religious house for the conversion of the Chinese but gradually developed into a hospital for them. It was originally located somewhere between Letran College and the Parian (the site of the Metropolitan Theater today). Its original structure, consisting of one room of nipa and bamboo, was relocated in the Parian itself a little later, and towards the year 1598 rebuilt in a better form across the Pasig River. According to reliable statistics, some fifty thousand Chinese had been baptized therein up to 1760, thirty thousand of them at the hour of death. It was closed, as hospital, in 1774 by order to the *Audiencia Real*. Its lot and building were sold in the third decade of the 20th century.

¹³The Beaterio de Santa Catalina, founded in 1696 as a house of contemplation where solemn vows were made was converted later into a true "beaterio" of the Third Order of St. Dominic whose inmates made simple perpetual vows while dedicating themselves to the instruction of the youth. The building, heavily damaged by the Japanese aviation on the afternoon of December 27, 1941, went up in flames the next morning due to another bombing. The "beatas" were granted canonical recognition in 1934 according to the prescriptions of the Code of Canon Law of 1917, thus becoming the present-day Congregation of Santa Catalina de Sena or the Siena Sisters.

In this Capital and its environments we are blessed with a continuous spring. The soil is fertile and abounding in the best products of Asia. The hot season is rather uncomfortable but at the same time is the most salubrious. When the sun shines perpendicularly on us (i.e., at its zenith), the rainy season begins and then the rains refresh and cool the air. In this way, Divine Providence has made habitable a country which otherwise, would be unbearable.

Due to the heat, our habits are made of cotton; however, we all wear wool next to the skin, unless prevented from doing so by sickness.¹⁴

I can assure Your Reverence that at present we live a fairly observant life; the Religious exert considerable efforts in order to live up to the various responsibilities of the Province; peace and union reign among all, and we have a thousand reasons to thank the Lord for having called us to the ministry. Although we experience many trials, yet the Lord showers his consolations on us, and it is a source of amazement that a lonely European Religious may live at peace, obeyed and respected, among so many thousands of natives.

This is all that at present I can report to Your Reverence on the state of this Province. I wish, and beg from God Our Lord, to grant Your Reverence all happiness; and, placing myself at the disposal of Your Reverence, I ask for me and for all the sons of this Province Your Reverence's fatherly blessing, whose life may God preserve for many years.

The least subject of Your Reverence
who kisses Your Hand,

Carlos Arbea, O.P.

¹⁴In the year 1786 the Royal Visitor, Dean Jose Tomas de Quesada, ordered that the material for the religious habit of the Dominicans, which had been of coarse wool since the beginning of the Province, should henceforth be of cotton, taking into consideration the hot climate of the Islands. This order was implemented in spite of the objections of some of the Fathers.

Convent of our Father
St. Dominic of Manila
23 July, 1814

Most Reverend Master General
of the Order of Preachers

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(Taken from: AGOP [i.e. General Archives of the Order of
Preachers at Santa Sabina, Rome] XIII-27.070-16-3).

A DOMINICAN PARISH PRIEST IN THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY PHILIPPINES

(Ramon Vilanova, O.P., 1830 – 1895)

One of the most interesting documents kept in the Dominican archives at the University of Santo Tomas is a 327-page autobiography entitled *La Vida De Un Atomo Catalan*. In it, the author refers to himself as “the atom” and does not reveal his own identity until the last page (*folio* 164), where he signs his name: “Friar Ramon Vilanova, Atomo Catalan.” Immediately preceding his signature was the date: 18 May 1894. That was a little over a year after 1 April 1893, when he started writing it upon the insistence of his confreres. The author died a little over a year after the work’s completion.

Reading his autobiography, one gets a representative idea of his life and that of his fellow Dominican friars who, like him, were engaged in the pastoral care of souls in the Philippines throughout the nineteenth century. Their lifestyle, their projects and activities, their experience with the people and with the ecclesiastical authorities, their problems and failures and their successes must have been generally much like his. Furthermore, the document narrates many events and incidents revelatory of the life and character of the native Fr. Vilanova was in contact with.

Two qualities are easily discernible in the autobiography. One is the humility of the writer. While it is easy for a person to call himself as small as an atom, it takes a truly humble man to describe, for example, the poverty of his family. The “Atomo” does precisely this, as can be seen in the first section below, subtitled “Home Background.”

More obvious perhaps than his humility, however, was his keen sense of humor. Wherever he was and with whomsoever he found himself, he easily made people laugh. An example of this is what is narrated below concerning the horse.

The two remaining sections give two examples of the serious part of his priestly apostolate: the foundation of the town of Moncada and the building of a road.

HOME BACKGROUND

Ramon Vilanova was born on 12 April 1830 in San Miguel de Rupit, a small village in the Province of Barcelona, with a population of one hundred families. The houses were made of hard stone with tile roofs. Each house had two or three floors ordinarily. In many cases, four families lived together in the same building, each family being allotted two or three bedrooms and a small hall which included a kitchen and a dining space. The ground floor was reserved for the trash and hog feed.

Most of the inhabitants who were of working age were either shepherds or household domestics in the neighboring towns. Jose Vilanova, Ramon's father, took care of the horses of a rich family, and for this job he received a monthly salary of negligible amount. He could not do more because, at the time of Ramon's birth, he was already around sixty years old and sickly. The wife and mother, Teresa Puig, worked as a midwife both in Rupit itself and in nearby parishes. For every service that she rendered, she earned money that lasted for a few days.

Describing their poverty still further, he writes:

"There were days when we had nothing to eat. We would all then go to all the country houses and beg. The house where my father worked was frequented by the poor of Rupit who were then given either bread or a job to perform, with which they at least earned their food."

Jose and Teresa had thirteen children, six boys and seven girls, and the youngest of them all was the future friar. He was baptized minutes after he was born, with only the bare essentials of the ceremonies being performed, because he looked so weak people thought he would not survive long. This, plus the fact that

his mother had a high fever while he was being born, were the reasons why they named him after the patron saint of difficult childbirth, San Ramon Nonato.

The following sections are excerpts from the autobiography, where Fr. Vilanova refers to himself in the third person, except those parts enclosed in brackets.

THE SECRET OF THE FRIAR

The altar boys of Paniqui rocked the whole town with a rumor which they spread concerning the parish priest. The parishioners could not believe it. They could not see how their pastor — a Spanish Dominican friar — was capable of doing that. But the *monaguillos* insisted that the friar himself was the one who revealed it to them. "According to him," so they reported, "he can do it and he indeed has done it more than once, sometimes even in the presence of other people."

Feeling uneasy about it, the *gobernadorcillo*, Don Bonifacio Ferrer, decided to raise the matter with the priest. And so, one afternoon, after discussing official business with him in the convent, Don Bonifacio broke the ice.

"Father," he began. "People are talking about you. They cannot believe what the altar boys have been telling them."

Then he went straight to the point and asked: "Is it true, Father? Can you really place the head of a horse where its tail is and place the tail of the horse where its head is? "

"Oh, sure, I can," the friar answered unhesitatingly.

"I suppose you have to cut off the head and cut the tail," the *gobernadorcillo* theorized.

"No, I just do it without hurting the horse at all," replied the friar.

"After doing that, can one still ride on the horse? "

"Yes, of course! "

"Will the horse walk backwards? "

"No, it will walk the way it used to."

Don Bonifacio paused for a while, his eyes blank. Then, abruptly, he struck his forehead with his palm and exclaimed, "Omigosh! I can't imagine it! "

Hurriedly, he kissed the hand of the priest goodbye, and went back to the municipal house, leaving the latter controlling his laughter.

The Sunday that followed, after saying his Mass and taking his cup of steaming chocolate, the priest was surprised to see a big crowd gather in front of the convent: men and women, old and young, including toddlers. The *gobernadorcillo* was with them. He approached the priest and told him:

"Father, the people would like to see with their own eyes how you can place the head of the horse where its tail is and the tail of the horse where its head is."

"Okay, you wait here for a while," replied the priest.

He left them and proceeded to the stable (*caballeriza*), where he ordered the rig-driver (*cochero*) to do something. Then, he went back to where the people were waiting and told them:

"Now, everything is ready. Come, see for yourselves."

He led them to the stable. There they saw with their own eyes how the friar had done it. There was silence for a very short while. Then, abruptly, all in unison broke into thunderous laughter.

[For the modern reader to get the story, it must be mentioned here that a *caballeriza* was to a horse what a car is to a garage. Just as the first visible part of a car parked in a garage is usually the back, so, in a *caballeriza*, what appeared to the onlooker was the tail of the horse, while its head is facing the manger near the wall inside.]

All that the priest did, with the help of the *cochero*, was to change the position of the six horses there. What appeared to the crowd were the heads and not the tails as was the usual case. The priest, therefore, showed them how he could place the head of a horse where its tail was and the tail of the horse where its head was, by simply turning it around.

ORIGINS OF MONCADA

There was a barrio of Ilocanos near Mangabol, composed of a population too sparse to be a full *cabecera*. The *cabeza de barangay* was concurrently *teniente del barrio* and his name was Antonio Longa. When the local people there saw that the priest was treating them like other parishioners, they felt happy and visited him often. He, in turn, visited their barrio. During one of his visits, they informed him that the place got flooded very easily on rainy days. They could not leave their houses on such occasions except by riding on *balsa*, they complained. They knew of of another place, beyond to the east, which did not suffer from floods. They told him about it and asked if he would allow them to transfer there. He answered that it was alright as far as he was concerned and advised them to draw up a petition to the provincial governor. Before sending it, the priest would sign it willingly (*pondría con gusto el visto bueno*). They did as the priest requested, and while waiting for the answer, the barrio increased in numbers to include another *cabecera*. They presented him with a written petition for his approval and signature. The petition requested that the new settlement be headed by one Agustin Tolentino. When the priest read the petition, he was caught off guard and laughed. In the inventory of things, there was only one unit for each item. What was written there was something like this: "One house. Valued at so much. One ricefield. Valued at so much. One carabao . . . one horse for riding . . . one breeding mare . . . one breeding swine . . . and finally, one warehouse for palay." Still laughing, he asked them: "How come there is only one of each item?" At any rate he affixed his signature (*visto bueno*) and had the document brought to the provincial governor's office, where the officials appointed the powerful Agustin Tolentino the *cabeza de barangay*.

These two *cabecera* — those of Don Antonio Longa and Don Agustin Tolentino — constituted the beginning of what today is the town of Moncada, whose present pastor (Fr. GiralDOS) is now the fifth or sixth. When Governor Comas granted those people permission to transfer to the new site, he specified the condition that there should be a spacious place for a plaza and that the location of public buildings such as church, convent, town hall and school should be marked.

They set a definite date to begin the work. The favored Ilocanos first built a big resthouse (*camarín*) where those who went there could spend the day. On the day agreed upon, the priest mounted a steed and went to the place accompanied by all the *principales* of Paniqui who were not occupied in public service. They rested for a while and they marked off where the plaza would be and a place was set aside for each building as indicated in the regulation issued by provincial governor's office (*disposición superior*).

They drew up an account of what they had done. Before starting, they had been asked what name they would call the place. The priest asked them in turn: "What is the name of this place?" It was the old custom to name the political units (*administraciones*) after the original native name of the place. They answered that the name was Cabayaoasan, meaning a place of *bayaoas* (guavas). The priest commented that this name was very ugly. He advised them to call it San Ramon. And thus it was called until it became an independent town. The place was delightful with its wide horizons towards the south, southeast, southwest and west, but a stone's throw away, there was a thick forest which hid it from the north, northeast and northwest. This forest has long since been transformed into ricefields. Formerly, nothing could be seen but a fenced cowfold. However, two years after the place was found, many houses accommodating around a thousand souls mushroomed there.

The Ilocanos returned home on this first planning evening obviously very contented.

THE MONCADA-PANIQUEI ROAD

After the Ilocanos had been resettled at the site which became known as San Ramon, the next project that came to their mind was the building of a road linking the new place with the mother town. Thus far they had been using a path which involved many detours on rainy days . . . The "Atom" used to encounter those going on horseback from Paniqui to the new barrio, thus he came to know at first hand the difficulty of making the trip. He then made up his mind to open a road where even a carriage could pass during both seasons of the year: wet and dry.

So one day he sent this note to the provincial governor. Mr. Comas: "Dear Distinguished Sir: The *principales* (prominent residents) of this town and yours truly will immediately begin making the site where a road will be constructed connecting these towns with the others in this province under your loving care, etc . . ."

Immediately after dropping the letter, the "Atom" put his boots on and began directing the construction of the road. It started from the *tribunal* or town hall, the first stretch following the path of the original track. Then, it went northeast onto elevated ground, and, a bit farther on, it crossed a river, an affluent of the *Canareñ*.

Describing a half-moon arc to the northwest, the road crossed through the barrio of San Ramon and entered a thick forest which occupied around three kilometers starting in the south and extended to the north and occupied some leagues from the southeast to the northwest. At about one kilometer from this forest, there was afterwards constructed the landmark (*mojón de mampostería*) dividing Paniqui from Bayambang, which subsequently became the boundary between Tarlac province and Pangasinan.

This delineation had to be modified because when the workers began cutting the trees, they found out that the ground was too low. It would easily get flooded. They therefore changed the course, abandoning the old part of the track leading to the west. Instead of using this path, they started from the road which passed in front of the principal door of the *tribunal* and went straight to the extreme east and then, declining a little to the north, they cut out a straight road for one kilometer, with a few slight deviations, up to the above-mentioned *mojón*. From here on, the "Atomo" left the supervision of the work to the *ministro de saneo* (public official in charge of draining and improving the conditions of low and marshy lands).

The most difficult work was on the Paniqui-stretch of twelve kilometers. The workers had to clear the forests of big trees and make eight to ten bridges over as many streams and rivers. Two of these were quite large. There was, however, the advantage of the presence of a big supply of good timber taken right from

these forests. It was also from this good material that the Ilocanos of San Ramon were able to build their houses, townhall, schools and church. The Paniqui-stretch of the road was completed in four years.

CONCLUSION

Fr. Ramon Vilanova died in the convent of Santo Domingo of Manila on 9 September 1895. He had, by that time, exercised the parish apostolate in Paniqui, Santa Barbara, Salasa, Malasiqui, Calasiao, Binmaley and in the province of Nueva Vizcaya, aside from holding other positions.

In an essay as short as this one, only a very few things can be mentioned about this "Catalonian Atom," much of the rest of whose autobiography is interesting, inspiring and important. This article has not said anything for instance about the stages of his formation as a Dominican friar and priest. Nor does it touch the fire in the western street of Malasiqui in March 1872 when around twenty houses of the well-to-do residents were reduced to ashes; or the time when, in 1873, the "atomo" anointed a sick person and when he was about to leave the house, he fell down the stairs; or about the cholera epidemic in Pangasinan in 1864 when the death toll in Santa Barbara was ten to fifteen, or even eighteen a day; or about how a certain bishop harrassed Fr. Vilanova and how the friar answered back causing the bishop to berate him and say: "You are possessed by Satan! "

The basic conclusion here is that this autobiography should be translated and published *in toto* for the cultural and spiritual benefits of many people.

FR. EDILBERTO V. SANTOS

A GIFT TO THE WORLD: FIVE SAINTS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS*

*We did not come to Japan to die
but to preach God to the Japanese
and to teach them the way of salvation.
Not to die, I repeat, but to preach,
and if necessary, to give our lives for God.*

St. Guillermo Courtet, O.P.

The holy man was burning with fever. But the dreaded Shogun executioners poured buckets of water through a funnel in his mouth until his body ballooned with the liquid. Then they put boards over him and two men jumped up and down and cavorted on top until clots of blood, water and body fluids shot out of the mouth, nose, ears and other orifices of the man. Again and again the water treatment was repeated until he weakened and fainted only to be revived and allowed to rest in preparation for another day with the torturers.

Such was the standard fare dished out to Catholic missionaries in 17th century Japan by the Shogun or Supreme Military Ruler of the Tokugawa line. Five of its victims came from the academic world of Manila, specifically the University of Sto. Tomas, which sent to the Japan missions the best men from its ranks. This is their story.

*Published in *Sunday Times*, October 18, 1987 under the title, "With Lorenzo Ruiz, They, Too, Suffered."

ST. GUILLERMO COURTET, O.P. was 45 years of age when he arrived in 1634 to teach at UST then called the Colegio de Santo Tomas. He took the name Tomas de Santo Domingo as a Dominican religious. He was very French: delicately-sensitive, blond hair, fair complexion; very learned: a lector and a theologian; an ascetic: a man of prayers, of renunciation and self-denial.

One day he had a public discussion with a younger co-professor of Theology on academic topics. In the realization that he had forcefully argued his point to the disadvantage of his brother, he prostrated himself flat on the floor and begged pardon of his colleague in front of all the priests and laymen in attendance.

St. Guillermo's very religious life at UST prepared him well for the sufferings ahead. He fasted three times a week, took very little food, worked hard and spent nights flogging himself in the chapel with six strands of iron chains. He slept on a chair with his habit on. He often wore a tight girdle with pointed barbs which drew blood upon contact, arranged in fifteen rosettes in honor of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary. He also put on under his habit a steel chain or a skin-tight hairshirt with big and sharp iron barbs.

This French Dominican was so hard on himself and yet he was the meekest and gentlest of men who was never heard to say a mean word and who had a soft heart for repentant sinners. He wanted so much to go to Japan to bring the light of the gospel and the love of Christ to the oppressed Christians and the unconverted. His wish was fulfilled when on June 10, 1636, he joined the secret Japan mission headed by his Rector Fr. Antonio Gonzalez which was unfortunately intercepted by the authorities in Okinawa. Together with Lorenzo Ruiz and a Japanese leper they were imprisoned for a year and then brought to Nagasaki.

Fr. Guillermo cheerfully endured the water torture to the consternation of his persecutors. So he was hanged by the feet and his head was repeatedly submerged in a bucket of water. Still he would not give up his faith. The enraged Shogun minions finally had him seated, his neck and feet bound to the chair and his hands tied before him. Then one by one and inch by terribly painful inch, slivers of bamboo were inserted between the nails and flesh

of every finger, driving these deeper and deeper with each refusal to renounce Christ. And to make the pain more intense, the executioners would strike the bamboo slivers as if playing the guitar!

But Fr. Guillermo and his brother Dominican, Father Miguel, only smiled through tears of holy joy, praising God and the Blessed Mother with such mystical phrases, "Oh what pretty carnations, etc." as they watched the blood dripping from their fingers and felt the tendrils of extreme pain shooting through every little nerve of their bodies. Still no apostasy. They finally hanged him upside down, his upper torso inside a pit and when he was still alive after three days, they then beheaded him.

ST. ANTONIO GONZALEZ, O.P. was forty when he arrived in the Philippines in 1632. He was a Lector and a Theologian with years of teaching and active preaching throughout Spain. Even before he became Dominican Student Master, his one burning desire was to join the foreign missions and be a martyr for Christ in Japan.

But first he taught theology at the College of Santo Tomas where he not only attained prominence by becoming Acting Rector in 1636 but by living an intense life of prayers and self-renunciation. He was known to flog himself with iron strands daily, say his prayers with arms outstretched or completely prostrate on the floor and sleep on a wooden bed — all for the conversion of sinners and pagans.

Heading the 1636 Japan mission, he was imprisoned with his group in Okinawa thence brought to Nagasaki. Fr. Antonio, tall and dignified even in an improvised scapular, was ordered to trample on the image of the Blessed Virgin. He refused even in the face of death. When other ministers started to step on the image to save their lives, Fr. Antonio threw himself bodily on the floor, and even with bound hands, tried to protect the image from further indignities. He was thus subjected repeatedly to the water torture, burning fever and all, until he died in the night still desirous to suffer more for Christ. Lorenzo Ruiz who resolutely stood by his superior and University Rector through all the tortures was so carried by Fr. Antonio's deep love for the Lord that he himself would repeatedly declare that if he had a thousand lives he would give them all for Christ.

ST. DOMINGO IBÁÑEZ de ERQUICIA was only twenty-two when he came to the Philippines from Spain in 1611, the year of the UST Foundation Act. He spent eight years in the Pangasinan mission and four years as Professor of Theology at the Colegio de Santo Tomas. In 1623 he was sent to Japan where for ten years he lived the life of the hunted: hiding on mountains and in caves or remote houses by day and saying Mass, administering the sacraments and giving catechetical instructions by night to oppressed Catholic converts huddled in very secret places. He travelled by day only during heavy snows, rains and hailstorms. His fame was such that when he was finally caught in 1633, he was offered 13,000 ounces of gold (not less than ₱4 million today) and the emperor's protection and influence if he would renounce the faith. He consistently refused, so he was given the dubious honor of being the first to undergo the newly invented torture of *anatsurushi*: "hanged by the feet from the gallows, his head and half of the body falling into a pit, the mouth of which was closed with two boards adjusted to the waist."

The next day, Fr. Domingo was found dead either from bleeding or suffocation. It was said that when the authorities tried to turn his nude body as it lay prostrate in the pit, they were unable to budge it — which many considered a miracle.

ST. LUCAS DEL ESPIRITU SANTO, O.P. came to the Philippines from Spain in 1618, worked four years in the Cagayan Valley field mission and was Professor of Philosophy at the Colegio de Santo Tomas. Three years later he was sent to Japan with Fr. Domingo where for ten years he worked tirelessly among the persecuted Christians, hiding by day and doing his priestly duties at night. He became an expert at many forms of disguise, travelling far and wide bringing the gospel and the sacraments. The police caught him on September 8, 1633 in Osaka and brought him 200 miles to Nagasaki chained to a heavy piece of wood which he carried on his shoulders. Still he continued to preach and sing to the people who gathered to see him along the way. On October 18, he was hanged from the gallows in the pit (*anatsurushi*) where he died the following day. His body was cut to pieces and burned.

ST. TOMAS HIOJI ROKUZAYEMON NISHI de SAN JACINTO, O.P. was the first Thomasian alumnus from Japan. He

was 30 when he came to the Philippines begging to be admitted to the Dominican Order. He proved to be a brilliant student in Philosophy that he became assistant to the professor on the subject of his thesis. When he was admitted to the novitiate his scholastic occupations, humility and cheerfulness earned him the love and respect of the community. He was constant in prayer, fastings and many acts of mortification. He was ordained priest at the age of 39 and in 1626 was sent to Formosa from where he was smuggled to Japan. For the next five years he was tireless in the propagation of the faith which made him the most wanted man in his own country.

Fr. Tomas, being Japanese, was not easy to catch and the authorities tortured many to reveal his whereabouts. The terrible persecutions was at its heights then and many were "beheaded, crucified, roasted alive in slow fire, thrown into boiling water, burned alive, immersed into icy waters, sawed with bamboo saws in an agony prolonged for days and weeks . . ."

On August 4, 1634, he was caught with Fr. Jordan de San Esteban. For three months, they were submitted to horrible tortures and interrogations including the water and the bamboo slivers treatment. They hid their bleeding fingers with those most painful bamboo slivers sticking out from between the nails and flesh under their sleeves in their great concern for the weakness of the other prisoners who might be scared into apostasy. So they were stripped naked, tied to a post and rough bamboo sticks were inserted and rotated into their lower abdomen. The intense pain was compounded by the extreme humiliation of being immodestly handled and made sports of by men with bestial inclinations.

On November 11, 1634, Fr. Tomas with Fr. Jordan and sixty other Christians were paraded around Nagasaki while a public crier announced that they were to be executed "for having preached and taught the law of Christ in Japan." Fr. Tomas joyfully proclaimed the same message at the top of his voice before he was hanged upside down in the pit where he bled to death after seven days.

Four professors and one alumnus of the University of Sto. Tomas earned the crown of martyrdom. Of them it can truly be

said: "They lived what they preached and preached what they lived." In Rome, on October 18, 1987, their heroic witnessing to the faith with twelve companions including Lorenzo Ruiz was the focus of celebrations for the whole Christian world when they were elevated to sainthood. They are UST's gift to Christendom.

This year, the Sons of St. Dominic celebrate their 400 years of service in the Philippines, it is but fitting that such an honor should be the reward of their collective labors in the vineyard of the Lord.

D. MAGALLANES NAVARRO*

*The writer wishes to acknowledge gratefully the help of two church historians, Fr. Fidel Villarroel, O.P., and Fr. Pablo Fernandez, O.P. of the UST Faculty of Theology in compiling facts for this article.

XVI Martyrs Canonized: What is a Missionary?

Sunday, 18 October, the Holy Father canonized sixteen martyrs who died for the faith in Japan between 1633 and 1636. The following is the text of the Pope's homily on the occasion, provided by the Synod's Committee for Information.

1. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go . . . make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:18-19).

Today the Church listens once again to these words of Christ recorded by the evangelist Matthew. They were pronounced by *Jesus in Galilee*, on the mountain, where the Apostles had gathered. They are not simply words of farewell. They are *words which contain the entrusting of a mission*. Christ departs after having fulfilled his messianic mission on the earth. And at the same time, he remains: "I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt 28:20).

The third *Sunday* of October is called *Mission Sunday*. On this day the whole *Church* listens to these words of Jesus with particular emotion. She takes account of the fact that she is wholly missionary; that she is wholly *in statu missionis*. It cannot be otherwise. Precisely this fact is underscored by the last Council.

2. Today, here in St. Peter's Square, *the bishops* who have gathered in the Synod listen to these words concerning the

missionary mandate with special attention. The Synod regards the mission of the laity in the Church. *Representative of the catechists of all nations and continents*, especially of mission countries, *were invited to Mission Sunday*.

Together with all the pastors of the Church present here, I greet you, dear brothers and sisters. The missionary message pronounced by Christ on the mountain in Galilee has reached, and continues to reach, you in a special way. Precisely you are the ones who realize, in large part, *the missionary character of the Church*. United with your bishops and priests, you participate in the great, timely and always renewed *work of evangelization of the world*.

The words of the Psalm which the Apostle Paul applied to the first generation of the Gospel's heralds apply to you: *Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world*" (Rom 10:18).

PRAISE OF MISSION

3. Three centuries ago, the missionary martyrs whom this morning the Church solemnly numbers among the saints heard those words as if addressed to them. Among them there were also several laypersons: a Filipino and two Japanese. With courage they were able to make their contribution so that the proclamation of the Gospel might reach "the ends of the world."

These words resound today for all of you who serve the cause of the Gospel in mission lands. Especially for you laity, whose vocation and mission in the Church are being examined by the Synod in the course of these weeks. The missionary apostolate to the laity *is the fruit of a faith open to the witness of the word*:

"If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, *you will be saved*" (Rom 10:9).

Will only you be saved, perhaps? Certainly not. Indeed, God "is Lord of all and bestows his riches *upon all who call upon him . . . Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved*" (Rom 10:12-13).

Every one! . . .

Salvation is for all. "God desires all men to be saved" (cf. 1 Tim 2:4).

The harvest is truly great. It is boundless. You, dear brothers and sisters, are called by the Lord of the harvest. And your vocation and service are priceless. Irreplaceable.

Let us listen once again to *the pressing questions* of the Apostle Paul in the Letter to the Romans, in relation to the missionary work of the first generation of the Church.

But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? *And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?* And how are they to hear without a *preacher?* And how can men preach unless they are sent? " (10:14-15).

4. Let us all listen to the Apostle's words. Listen to them, especially you men and women missionaries, religious and laity. Listen to them, you catechists.

The Apostle Paul's questions refer directly to you. They speak of you. The Church of our day makes totally her own the questions contained in this passage from the Letter to the Romans. The present Bishop of Rome *carries them in his heart*, after the example of the Apostle. And, echoing the apostolic words, he proclaims, together with the Synod Bishops present here, *the praise of your mission*, a praise which we find already in the Old Testament, in the book of the Prophet Isaiah:

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings" (Is 52:7).

5. Today's canonization of Blessed Lorenzo Ruiz and his companions, martyred in and around Nagasaki between 1633 and 1637, constitutes an eloquent confirmation of these words. Sixteen men and women bore witness, by their heroic sufferings and death, to their belief in the message of salvation in Christ which had reached them after being proclaimed from generation to generation since the time of the Apostles.

In their sufferings, their love and imitation of Jesus reached its fulfillment, and their sacramental configuration with Jesus, the

one Mediator, was brought to perfection. "For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his" (Rom 6:5).

These holy martyrs, different in origin, language, race and social condition, are united with each other and with the entire People of God in the saving mystery of Christ, the Redeemer. Together with them, we too, gathered here with the Synod Fathers from almost every country of the world, sing to the Lamb the new song of the Book of Revelation:

"Worthy are you to receive the scroll and to break open its seals, for you were slain and with your blood you purchased for God those from every tribe and tongue, people and nation. You made them a kingdom and priests for our God, and they will reign on earth" (Rev 5:9-10).

The martyrs' message of supreme fidelity to Christ speaks to Europe, with its common Christian foundation laid by the Apostles Peter and Paul — Europe, which has been a seedbed of missionaries for two thousand years.

It speaks to the Philippines, which was the place of immediate preparation and strengthening in faith for eleven of the new Saints — the Philippines which, as I remarked on the occasion of the martyrs' Beatification in Manila in 1981, from being evangelizer in the great work of bringing the Gospel to the peoples of Asia. May this task of evangelization begin in Philippine families, following the example of Lorenzo Ruiz, husband and father of three children, who first collaborated with the Dominican Fathers in Manila, and then shared their martyrdom in Nagasaki, and who is now *the first canonized Filipino saint*.

The Holy Martyrs speak to the Church in Japan, particularly to Archdiocese of Nagasaki, to the Church in Taiwan and in Macao and to all Christ's followers in Asia: may the example and intercession of the new Saints help to extend Christian truth and love throughout the length and breadth of this vast continent!

6. On this World Mission Sunday, the Church solemnly proclaims the sanctity of these Dominican missionary priests, of their collaborators and of two young woman members of the Domini-

can Third Order who were arrested and condemned to death for their work of evangelization.

In the course of the Synod of Bishops on the role and the mission of the laity in the Church and in the world, the Filipino father of a family and two Japanese laypersons, all involved in catechesis, are being honoured for their total fidelity to the grace of their baptism. The same is true for several Dominican religious, including the Frenchman Guillaume Courtet.

The whole Church of God rejoices at their victory. The Church in Italy, France, Spain, Taiwan, Macao, the Philippines and Japan is full of admiration and joy for the Good News proclaimed by the passion and death of these valorous disciples of Jesus Christ, "the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead" (Rev 1:5).

Through the witness of their lives, generously offered for love of Christ, the new Saints speak to the entire Church today, they draw her on and stimulate her in her evangelizing mission. In fact, according to the Conciliar Decree *Ad Gentes* the Church in order to fulfill her mission, "in obedience to Christ's command and moved by the grace and love of the Holy Spirit . . . makes herself fully present to all men and peoples in order to lead them to the faith, freedom and peace of Christ by the example of her life and teaching by the sacraments and other means of grace" (n. 5).

7. Today the new Saints speak also to all the missionaries who — urged by Christ's mandate to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:19) — have gone throughout the world to proclaim the Good News of salvation to all men, particularly to the most needy.

With their message and their martyrdom, they speak to catechists, to pastoral workers, to the laity, to those in the Church who are showing special attention and solicitude in the context of this Synod of Bishops. They remind us that "to die for the faith is a gift granted to few; but to live the faith is a call addressed to all" (Discourse in Luneta Park, 18 February 1981, n. 5).

Today the great Dominican family, and in particular the Province of Santo Rosario, which is celebrating the fourth centennial of its foundation, welcomes to its roll of saints, with legitimate

pride, these martyrs, some of whom were particularly linked to the College of St. Thomas of Manila. This centre, today a university, as well as other illustrious ecclesial institutions, has made a notable contribution to the installation and development of the Church in the Far East.

The missionaries who are being canonized today, on this day of prayer for the missions, speak to all the Christian faithful, exhorting them to rekindle their missionary conscience. As the Council states: "All Christians by the example of their lives and the witness of the word, wherever they live, have an obligation to manifest the new man which they put on the baptism" (*Ad Gentes*, 11). Every member of the baptized, then, must feel himself urged on by his vocation to holiness. In this, the new Saints must serve as models for us to follow with boundless ardour in responding to God's call. One of them, Father Lucas del Espiritu Santo, wrote: "The gift which I most highly prize is that of having been sent into this land in the company of such great servants of God, of whom some are already enjoying, and others have earned, a great treasure before Almighty God" (Letter to Fr. Miguel Ruiz, O.P., 28 September 1630).

THE GOSPEL OF LOVE AND PEACE

8. "*Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord . . . that he may teach us his ways . . .*" (Is 2:3).

Thus speaks the Prophet Isaiah in his vision. And this vision is realized when the Risen Christ *goes up the mountain in Galilee* together with the Apostles. He tells them: "Go . . . make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, *teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you*" (Mt 28:19-20).

This "all" *is the Gospel of love and of peace.*

Did Isaiah not prophecy, perhaps, the transformation of swords into ploughshares and of spears into pruning hooks, that men might no longer exercise the art of war (cf. 2:4)? He proclaimed *the paths of the true progress* of people already here on

heart, and at the same time the paths of the eternal salvation which is the future and definitive destiny of man in God.

9. I address all of you, then — you who are listening to me today, *and all of you* who labour in the field of the missionary Church throughout the world: may *your consolation and hope be the Gospel* of love and of peace.

“Come . . . house of Jacob, *come*, let us walk in the light of the Lord” (Is 2:3, 5).

Yes. Let us walk tirelessly! Christ walks with us!

To Filipino Pilgrims: On Imitating St. Lorenzo*

Your Eminences, Your Excellencies,
Dear Filipino Friends,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

During my visit to your country, on 18 February 1981, the whole Philippine nation rejoiced in the Beatification of sixteen martyrs, among them the first Philippine Beatus. Now today, Filipinos have their first native-born Saint: Saint Lorenzo Ruiz. This is indeed a day of joy and happiness for the nation and for the Church in your land. It is a time of prayerful gratitude to God for all who see in this new Saint — and in the European and Asian companions, many of whom are related in one way or another to your country — the highest recognition of the work of evangelization begun nearly four-hundred and fifty years ago.

Through the work of evangelization and conversion, Jesus Christ became a Filipino. He entered the hearts of your forefathers. He shared the hopes, the sufferings, all the dramatic events of your nation's history. His grace transformed lives. His saving message shaped your culture. And he did not hesitate to call a humble son of Binondo, of Manila "extra muros," to become one with him in the great mystery of his saving passion and death, not in his own land, but far away in Japan, as a seed transported to another field, at the beginning of another heroic page in the history of evangelization in Asia.

Saint Lorenzo Ruiz calls Philippine Catholics of today to uphold and strengthen their nation's baptismal consecration. His

*Address of Pope John Paul II to the large pilgrimage of Filipinos who had come to Rome for the canonization of the first Philippine saint, Lorenzo Ruiz, on 18 October 1987. Published in *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly Edition in English, N. 43 (1011), 26 October 1987.

example urges you to meet the challenges of the present with the same strength of character and trust in God with which he faced the supreme test of love. In a special way, Saint Lorenzo Ruiz calls Philippine families to grow in dignity, harmony and responsibility as the "domestic Church," where each one learns to be at the service of all, witnessing to the sanctity of human life at every stage and in every condition. For all of this we must pray to God through the intercession of Mary, for whom you have such great devotion, and through the intercession of the newly canonized martyrs.

I wish to greet each one of you present at this commemorative act. I welcome the representatives of the Philippine Government; the bishops, priests, religious and laity who have come from the Philippines and from other parts of the world to celebrate this great occasion. I greet the sons and daughters of Saint Dominic; the representatives of the University of Saint Thomas in Manila; the staff and students of the Pontifical Filipino College; and all of you present here close to the tomb of Saint Peter.

Through your new Saint, Jesus Christ renews his call to persevere in the genuine work of evangelization. Faith rests, not on the wisdom of man, but on the power of God (cf. 1 Cor 2:5). You must look to Jesus Christ and to the grace of our heavenly Father for the light and courage to proclaim "*God's design in all its entirety*" (Acts 20:27). The sign that you belong to God will be that his love has been poured into your hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to you (cf. Rom 5:5).

May Almighty God bless you all; together with your families and friends, your children, your sick and all who need your care and solidarity. God bless the Philippines.

To Canonization Pilgrims:

What is a Martyr?*

My greeting goes first of all to you, pilgrims of the Italian language, and in a special way to you who have come from Sicily to join the numerous throngs of people from other countries to pay homage to the new martyr saints. One of these is from your country; St. Jordan Ansalone was, in fact, born in Santo Stefano Quisquina, in the diocese of Agrigento. I greet the bishop of that city, Most Rev. Luigi Bommarito, and the bishops of the region present here.

Your Church is rejoicing to see one of her sons presented for the veneration and imitation of all believers. His life is characterized by the special vocation to martyrdom. St. Jordan asked to be allowed to die for Christ, as a preacher of the Gospel, when he asked for and obtained from the Virgin a cure of a serious illness. He entered the Dominican Order with the very intention of becoming a missionary in Japan where the Church was being persecuted. His preparation finished, his superiors sent him first to Spain, and from there to the Philippines where, for six years, he worked among the sick Chinese in Manila. He left for Japan in 1632 and was imprisoned two years later. From 4 August to 17 November 1634, the days of his death, he remained unshakeably firm in his faith, throughout long and agonizing torments, accept-

*Address of Pope John Paul II to the various groups of pilgrims who had come for the canonization of the sixteen martyrs on 18 October 1987, given in the Paul VI Hall, on 19 October 1987. Published in *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly Edition in English, N. 43 (1011), 26 October 1987.

ing with strength and without hesitation, suffering and death. Thus he brought to fulfillment his plan to be, through sacrifice, like Christ his teacher in all things.

I invite you to reflect on his example. If we are amazed to consider such ardour which faces with clarity and joy the evident risk of one's life and which does not lessen one's desire to preach the Gospel to every creature, we must be encouraged to accept the message of his apostolic zeal, to make it our own, imitating the readiness of his will in obedience to the plan of God even to the point of the supreme sacrifice.

I entrust this model to your reflection, with the wish that he may inspire in you courageous faith, the desire to witness, the generous acceptance of the service of the word of the Gospel. The incomparable lesson of the love of Christ and dedication to the spread of his knowledge is the true message which the new martyr saint leaves the Church and your community in particular.

I impart my Blessing to all of you!

— oOo —

I would now like to address our beloved brothers in the episcopate, the honourable authorities, and the beloved brothers and sisters who have come from Spain to honour the new saints whom I had the joy of proclaiming before the universal Church yesterday, World Mission Sunday.

The sixteen canonized martyrs belonged to the Spanish Dominican mission of Japan which was founded in 1602 on the Island of Kinshu by the religious of the Province of the Rosary.

The four Spanish Dominicans come from Castile, Leon, and the Basque Territory. Motivated by an ardent missionary enthusiasm, and following the footsteps of the discoverers Urdaneta and Legazpi, they went to meet new peoples and cultures to carry the Gospel message there.

All of them were religious fully consecrated to God. Their convents were centres of intense spiritual and apostolic life, which could not but express themselves in missionary vocations. San Telmo in San Sebastian, Santo Domingo in Vitoria, Leon and

Benavente (Zamora) as well as many other convents of the Spanish province were centres of missionary outreach stimulated by the discovery of America. Many religious enthusiastically offered themselves to the new missionary province of the Rosary to bring the Gospel to the Far East; among them, the new Dominican saints were religious of exemplary lives, which were authenticated with the palm of martyrdom. According to the spirit of St. Dominic, they were united in the observance of the Constitution and in the Colegio of Santo Tomas in Manila. From there they went to Japan, moved by the zeal to announce the Good News of salvation, even at great risk to their lives. However, as St. Augustine wrote, "many are those who suffer tribulations: they suffer the same pain, but not for the same cause . . . a martyr is not made by the suffering but by the motive" (Sermon 327:1-2).

The exaltation to the honour of the altars of these exemplary sons who augment the number of many men and women of the Catholic Church and of the noble Spanish nation is a cause for rejoicing for the entire Church, and in particular for the Church in Spain.

Besides their companions in martyrdom, I would like to mention in particular the first canonized saint from the Philippines, the layman Lorenzo Ruiz of Manila. In this the current celebration of the Synod of Bishops on the mission of the laity in the Church and in the world there is a happy coincidence. This lay Filipino protomartyr, together with the other four Japanese laymen and women, is a model of charity and perfect holiness, sealed with the Cross of Christ.

May the joyous celebration which unites us be a stimulus and leaven to inflame in the pastors and faithful of Spain the missionary vocation which has written such glorious pages in your history, making the Catholic faith an essential part of the spirit of your people and its spread throughout the world.

I cordially bless you all.

(The Holy Father then concluded this portion of the audience with a brief greetings in the Basque language).

— oOo —

I would like to greet cordially the group of French pilgrims who have come to honour St. William Courtet. Your presence, along with that of Most Rev. Louis Boffer, Bishop of Montpellier, and Father Etienne Salvetti, Provincial of the Dominicans in Toulouse, bears witness to your fidelity to your illustrious countryman. In fact, his memory has been kept alive throughout the centuries at Serignan where he was born, at Beziers, Albi, Toulouse, Saint-Maximin, and in still other cities. We recall that Father Lacordaire himself invoked him with confidence.

You can be happy to see this religious from Languedoc exalted before the entire Church. Having entered the Reformed Dominican Congregation of St. Louis, from the beginning William Courtet desired to go to the missions. The example of the Jesuits martyred in Japan had impressed him. Therefore it was only natural that, after years of study, religious life and teaching theology he enthusiastically agreed to join the Holy Rosary Province in Manila.

Upon his departure, he wrote to one of his Dominican confreres: "I shall be glad . . . to be scoffed at, despised, slandered, even crucified . . . Pray the Lord that it may please him to make me worthy of such a great gift . . ." (Letter to Fr. Adriani, 30 August 1628). Penetrated by a spirituality centred on the Cross of the Redeemer, he arrived in Japan nine years later. Certainly, his desire was to preach the Gospel there, and not to seek death. However, his preaching, indeed, would be, according to his own words, "to imitate the Son of God and the saints in truth" (ibid.). The gift which he gave, that is, his constancy throughout a year of prison and torture, was his fidelity to Christ to the very hour in which all was consummated.

St. William Courtet joins the choir of the saints of France and the Dominican saints. May he inspire you and sustain you through his intercession, his brothers of the Order, and his countrymen, in the pursuit of the missionary enthusiasm which has so marked your history every day with the courage of evangelical witness to those around you! May he aid you today to stimulate new vocations! May his holiness be a sign of hope for you!

God bless you!

— oOo —

Welcome to Rome!

Yesterday was a glorious day for the Church in Japan. The sixteen martyrs of Japan, nine of whom are Japanese, were canonized. I congratulate you for this.

I remember my pastoral visit to Nagasaki six years ago. I was moved then by the profound faith of the Catholics who, during a snowstorm, dauntlessly and perseveringly participated in an outdoor Mass, truly worthy descendants of the martyrs of Nagasaki.

"Sanguis martyrum semen christianorum."

You also, following the good example of your forebears in the faith, seek to give witness to the Catholic faith at the cost of your life, becoming apostles of evangelization in the midst of your Japanese countrymen.

In conclusion I cordially bless you and your families.

— oOo —

Finally, I would like to offer an affectionate greeting to the pilgrims of the Spanish Augustinian Recollects and those who have come from the various religious provinces of the Order of Friars Preachers.

One of the saints canonized today, Magdalene of Nagasaki, before becoming a Dominican tertiary, belonged to the spiritual family of the Augustinian Recollects; all the other saints were, in some way or another, members of the Dominican family.

This is how your presence here today is understood. Your joy, in which the entire Church shares, is certainly understandable. It is the joy of seeing the bounty of your choice of religious life in complete fulfillment of the evangelic message confirmed. The saints canonized yesterday shed a still greater light on the beauty of your ideal and are a further help in view of its fulfillment.

I bless all of you.

Singer or Saint

He had written to a friend:

*I have already awakened and yet they have not stopped their dancing and singing which had begun long before I fell asleep. My ears are already used to the crude sounds from their wooden horns and drums. All of them are happy. The young men dance all day long and rare is the night when they are not all gathered together. When the evening prayer is over, they start performing their dances for me. They ask me first if I like it, and not wanting to displease them with the truth, I tell them "yes." When the moon appears, it is this way and when it doesn't, they build a bonfire.*¹

The Dominican missionary, Francisco de la Maza, had just crossed the Caraballo mountains to Nueva Vizcaya from the parishes he had served in Pangasinan, and was describing the welcoming scenario that had greeted him upon his arrival there.

*He appeared among the savages like an angel, and they received him as a messenger from Above.*²

This essay is one of the end-products of the author's current research on Francisco de la Maza, O.P., made possible through funding from the Francisco Cubeñas Professorial Chair granted by the UST Integrated Research Committee.

¹Juan Ferrando, O.P., *Historia de los Padres Dominicos en las Islas Filipinas y en sus Misiones del Japon, China, Tung-kin y Formosa*, Tomo III, (Madrid: Imprenta y Esterotipia de M. Rivadeneyra, 1871), p. 724.

²*ibid.*, p. 725.

Dressed in his white priestly frock, De la Maza might indeed have looked like some sort of angel or saint, with his clear white skin, chestnut-colored hair and beard, and the blue eyes that practically sparkled above a well-shaped nose and an easy smile.³

He had spent many fruitful years working in the plains of Pangasinan, but he had always been obsessed by the Caraballos in a way that only one who was himself born in the mountains (of Santander, in Spain, in 1646) could be.⁴

From the town of Burubur, where he had established his last mission before his death in 1703, he could freely roam about dangerous Ilongot territories, where no fear of the deadly head-hunters ever seemed to bother him.

He placated the fierce Caraballo chieftains through the persuasive powers of music, usually sending in advance of his "crusades" a messenger whom he had taught to play the rebec, an ancient type of violin.

In his previous missions he had educated many in the arts, for he was a painter, a sculptor and a musician as well.

The Church of San Luis de Asingan, built with De la Maza as architect and his servants as construction workers, was decorated with paintings and *retablos* done by the priest and his servants-turned-apprentices.

As far as music was concerned, there was Dalaz, a native of San Jacinto, Pangasinan, whose fame as the leading harpist in his province brought him all the way to Manila, which was quite a

³Fernando Sta. María, O.P., *Relacion de la Prodigiosa Vida y Virtudes del Venerable Padre Fr. Francisco de la Maza, O.P.* (Ms. in Dominican Archives, Manila, Sección "Biografías," Tomo 1, Fols. 351-362.), p. 137.

⁴All further data were called from the abovementioned works by Ferrando and Sta. María, as well as from:

Hilario Ma. Ocio, O.P., *Reseña Biografica de los Religiosos de la Provincia del Santisimo Rosario de Filipinas desde su Fundación Hasta Nuestros Días, Parte Segunda 1658 a 1700* (Manila: Establecimiento Tipográfico del Real Colegio de Santo Tomás, 1891), pp. 162-169.

distance in the 1680's. He had no other teacher aside from De la Maza.

The priest may have had some sort of quasi-magical effects on Dalaz as he did on all his other students. In fact, he was able to make them play competently on instruments which even he himself could not play.

A typical lesson with De la Maza began with the *Maestro* beating a baton against a chair to the rhythm of the particular piece of music which was being taught at the moment. The lesson ended when the student finally got the music right through imitation.

By today's pedagogical standards his methods may have been a bit crude but nevertheless he was able to produce competent instrumentalists through them.

His musical skills were perhaps only as puzzling as his personal sanctity. For have not artists, with their freewheeling and egotistic lifestyles, since time immemorial been known to be the least likely candidates for sainthood?

Was the artist in De la Maza, as he knelt in prayer for hours on a floor purposely made rougher to further mortify himself, often tempted to just suddenly stand up, pick up his brushes and simply paint?

What really drove him to castigate himself night after night with a whip until he bled?

How difficult was it for his European ear to accustom itself to the seemingly endless "crude" music-making of the Caraballo natives he had sought to convert? He was after all, no musicologist with the time or the inclination for absorbing strange cultures.

But this was the man who never lost his sense of humor even through the thirteen years that he wore the heavy chain found embedded on his body after his death.

With the chain and the carved "kneeling floor" De la Maza the sculptor was perhaps still at work on his true *obra maestra* which was his own body.

A body strengthened by his voluntary abstention from meat, tobacco and alcohol at all times. A body so purified it was found totally incorrupt one year after he died. A sculpture so real that fresh blood oozed from a vein when accidentally struck by the gravedigger who was assigned to transfer his remains to Caranglang in 1704 from Burubur, where he was originally buried in 1703.

Could De la Maza really have been considered a musical performer or pedagogue in the modern day sense of both words? Maybe not. But then again, maybe yes.

After all, when he died, invisible bells were heard to be ringing, and even the angels sang.⁵

JULIE ANN A. HALLAZGO

⁵“Es común tradición en esta provincia de Pangasinan que, para morir, se arrimó el Siervo de Dios a un árbol y que en su muerte se oyeron campanillas que se tocaban en lo alto. Y unas voces muy sonoras que causaban una suave música, y que todo, esto lo oyeron hasta los gentiles, y decían ser música de ángeles . . .” in Sta. Maria, *Relacion*, p. 147.

ROSA DE SANTA MARIA A DOMINICAN "BEATA"

What's in a name? How often we hear those words spoken quite lightly, even jokingly; yet there are times they could bring forth a reply far more significant than a tag which distinguishes one person from another; perhaps the name might have a mysterious identity with its bearer. When the saintly Archbishop of Lima in South America inadvertently gave the name Rosa to the infant he was baptizing after a mother-grandmother debate had settled on the child named Isabel, we can assume Rosa was heaven chosen: there was "something" in that name.

Approximately one century after the above instance, far distant from South America, an infant born to Captain Bartolome Prieto and his wife of Manila, Philippines, was baptized Rosa.¹ We do not know if the baby was named for some relative, or piously placed under the patronage of St. Rosa de Santa Maria of Lima, canonized about this time — 1671. Be that as it may, we shall see subsequently the spiritual affinity that existed between the two Rosas.

Unfortunately, la Señora de Prieto is not mentioned in our chronicles, but the fact is emphasized that Rosa was the apple of her father's eye. It is rather amusing that the family name, Prieto, in Spanish, means "dark complexioned"; yet, little Rosa was as fair as a white rose tinged with red. The Captain watched with pride his beloved daughter grow ever more beautiful and charming as she advanced from infancy to girlhood, and her quick intelligence endeared her to all. What the doting father did not perceive was the hidden life of his child. God had lavished His love on Rosa,

¹This account is based in large part on V. De Salazar *Tercera Parte de la Historia de la Provincia [de N.S. del Rosario]* Manila, 1742, pp. 736-741, praes. p. 736.

captivating her will toward the love of His Divine Goodness, and this with such burning attraction that from her early childhood, she consecrated her virginity to Him, for as her patron, she must have heard within her soul: "Rose of My Heart, be My Bride."

When the time arrived to consider Rosa's education, her father, not realizing how well he was cooperating with God's plan, placed her in Santa Potenciana College where she would receive the best education for a young lady of her social standing. True to his expectations, Rosa responded to the high standards of the college; however, from her point of view, the greatest advantages in the college were the religious instruction, opportunity for spiritual reading, prayer and solitude. Although she had little contact with the outside world at that time, the beautiful daughter of Captain Prieto was well known to the social groups of Manila, among whom was a wealthy gentleman of noble parentage, determined to have her for his wife. When he mustered the necessary courage, he asked the captain for his daughter's hand. Prieto promised her to the swain, fully confident that his docile Rosa would readily agree. However, when the alliance was made known, Rosa calmly but firmly refused to marry. She was willing, if necessary, to fulfill St. Jerome's stern dictum that if parents are an obstacle to their child's serving God, all things being equal, the child must be ready to step over mother or father, and not draw back.²

The Captain was astounded. Never before had his beloved daughter refused him the slightest request. He simply could not fathom her courageous resistance. She must have imbibed this rebellious attitude at college. He would withdraw her from Santa Potenciana. Besides, if he had Rosa at home, he could easily change her extreme religious ideas. Without further explanation, Rosa was informed that her father wished her to return home. Whether or not she saw through the ruse, we do not know.

After the first pleasant days at home, Rosa found herself in the midst of a well organized team of friends and relatives pressing her to accept that advantageous marriage. How to get out of the dilemma, she knew not, but with full confidence in her Beloved, she waited and prayed. Even during persecutions, there is usually

²Sic, de Salazar, op. cit. 737.

one person who will soften toward the victim. In the Prieto household there must have been at least one sympathetic soul, for Rosa was able to escape from her father's home, and arrived safely at the house of the *Beatas* where she begged Mother Francisca to allow her to take refuge from the fury of her father who was trying to force her to marry against her will. At that time, 1695, the *Beatas*, Dominican Tertiaries, were only four in number, living a religious life under the care of the Provincial, Fray Juan de Santo Domingo. Mother Francisca, a kind and prudent woman, was head of the little group. She knew trouble would ensue Rosa's living with them, so to forestall difficulties, she obtained from His Lordship the Provisor, a decree threatening major excommunication for any person who would inflict violence either on Rosa or the house where she was staying.

Meanwhile, Captain Prieto lost no time after he learned his lovely Rosa escaped him, and was staying with the *Beatas*. Knowing that the house of those women was neither a sacred place for a monastery, he would simply go in, and, if necessary, take Rosa by force. What a shock when Mother Francisca met the determined pursuer at the entrance and read him the decree of His Lordship. With mixed emotions of frustration and anger, he left the house without argument. Mother Francisca held a serious weapon over his head, but she would not defeat him.

With another plan in mind, the Captain turned to the Convento where he would tell the story to his very good friend, the Provincial, who was in charge of the *Beatas*; he could release Rosa from her self-imprisonment. However, it was a day of disappointments: the Father Provincial was out of town on a visitation of the provinces. Prieto must wait, but assured of obtaining his request, he felt less agitated. As soon as he learned of the Father Provincial's return to Manila, he hastened to relate the story of Rosa's running away from home. After listening to the Captain, the Father said he must become well informed of the whole situation. Then, he promised Prieto, he would do for him whatever he could.

Meanwhile, Mother Francisca and Rosa went to see the Provincial. Rosa told of her escape from home with all the unpleasant circumstances; her manner was simple and direct. On examining

her, Father found the girl of remarkable innocence, solid humility, with an ardent desire to keep her virginity for God alone. Rosa made her confession to the Provincial several times, which convinced him of the idea that he had formed about her at their first meeting. He encouraged Rosa to persevere, but reminded her that disobedience to her father could be reconciled only by her being compelled by a higher motive coming from God. Their meeting ended with the Father Provincial's assurance that he would not order her to leave the *Beatas*.

In due time the Captain went to see Fray Juan to learn of his decision regarding Rosa. The Provincial related what had transpired, and promised to protect Rosa in her vocation. The Captain's anger rose to a high point; a flood of words poured out about this being a sad proof of their long-standing friendship; it was gross ingratitude, etc. Father tried to calm the irate man, but to no avail. "Neither Your Reverence nor Rosa will ever see me crossing your threshold again," shouted the Captain as he started out of the room. Father Provincial replied with all gentleness: "God be with you, lord Captain, before a month passes you will come to ask me to allow you to see Rosa." That reply of Fray Juan was, very possibly, more than a chance remark, for it has been well attested that he had the gift of prophecy.

A few days later, the Father Provincial clothed Rosa with the Dominican habit. When news of this reached the Captain, grace touched him; he experienced an intense longing to see his daughter in the religious habit, but due to shame, he did not dare approach the Provincial with his request. Finally, love won over embarrassment; he went to the convent, threw himself at the Provincial's feet, asking to be forgiven for his angry and discourteous manners. Joyfully, the Father helped him to his feet, embraced him saying: "Lord Captain, be mindful of God's ways, for not even a month has been completed and you have already come to see me, feeling happy about God's plan for your daughter. Let us go; you shall see her." The Provincial put on his *cappa* and accompanied the repentant Captain to see the new *Beata*. When Rosa came to the visitor's room, radiant with spiritual joy, her father broke into tears: the conversion was complete. From that day on, he began to help the Beaterio in the material construction of their building,

and all that pertained to their sustenance, for they were very poor; often in dire need.³

At her final profession, July 26, 1696, Sister Rosa added "de Santa Maria" to her name in honor of her patron saint. There is a striking similarity in the lives of those two "Roses." Both had to fight valiantly to preserve their virginity and consecration to God. Each was called to the Dominican Order, though in different circumstances. St. Rosa of Lima was a lay tertiary; she wore the habit, as was customary at that time, but lived in a small hut on the family's property. Both proved their burning love for God by rigorous penances. Some will say that their great austerities were the result of fanaticism, sadism, masochism. Seen at face value, self-inflicted pain could be described by any one of the above terms. But we must look more deeply and from a spiritual point of view. When austerities are practiced by an emotionally mature person, under the guidance of the approved rule of the religious institute, and/or with the guidance of an experienced spiritual director, they can atone for the sins of the individual, or, as in some instances, be vicarious suffering. Only in eternity will we know the countless souls that have been saved through the severe austerities endured by victim souls in union with the Passion of Christ. Such a victim of love was our Sister Rosa de Santa Maria. As one of the early members of the Beaterio de Santa Catalina de Manila, her holy life was, no doubt, a means of God blessing the little seed planted by Mother Francisca that has grown into the largest congregation of Dominican Sisters in the Philippines, the Congregation of Saint Catherine of Siena — Blessed be God in His Saints!

SR. MARY OF THE CROSS, O.P.

³Cf. de Salazar, op. cit. p. 740.

Dominican Towns in Tarlac

CAMILING

Earliest Beginning

A distinction must be made between San Jose de Camiling and San Miguel de Camiling. They are two different places, though not far from each other. The former used to be a part of Bautista.¹ The latter used to be a part of Bayambang.² The former is described as being "near the barrio of Binaca, southwest of Paniqui."³ The latter is partly described as "having a barrio known as Binaca."⁴ They also differ in time: the former existing juridically ahead of the latter. Taken together, however, they form one moral entity. They are what one may call two distinct phases of the origin of the present town/parish.

¹Hilario Maria Ocio, O.P., *Monumento Dominicano*, MS in APSR, section "Ministerios," vol. 1, nos. 120-1.

²Gregorio Arnaiz, O.P., *Historia de la Provincia de Nuestra Señora del Rosario*, MS in AUST, tomo 3, no. 34; Ramon Suárez, O.P., *Apuntes curiosos sobre los pueblos de Pangasinan*, MS in APSR, section "Pangasinan," vol. 7, doc. 15a, fol. 195; Juan Ferrando, *Estado de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario en 1848*, MS in AUST, section "Provincia," fol. 23; and Ocio, *ibid.*, nos. 122-3.

³Ocio, *ibid.*

⁴Suárez, *ibid.*, fol. 195v-6.

San Jose de Camiling was accepted as a *casa* by the provincial chapter of the Dominicans held in 1686, which also simultaneously accepted Santa Rosa de Paniqui as a *casa*.⁵ When Paniqui became a parish in 1718, San Jose de Camiling became a *visita* of Paniqui. It was raised to a parish in 1722, its vicars being Fr. Blas Iglesias and, afterwards, Fr. Felipe Fernandez. In 1725, it reverted to its status of *visita* of Paniqui, and in 1769, it ceased to be mentioned by the acts of the provincial chapters.⁶

San Miguel de Camiling was founded as a *bario/visita*, of Bayambang by Fr. Juan Alvarez del Manzano in 1834, and as a town by Fr. Benito Foncuberta in 1841, the later being also the year the Dominican order accepted it as a vicariate under the patronage of Saint Michael.⁷ Such an acceptance was equivalent to erecting it into a parish.

The pioneering group formed by Fr. Manzano was made up of inhabitants of Bayambang, of which he was then the parish priest, and of immigrant families from the Ilocos. The former and the latter were both engaged in the cultivation of lands approximately two leagues south of the town proper.⁸ After Fr. Manzano was succeeded by Fr. Foncuberta, there came a time when the later is said to have become disgusted with the frequent quarrels (*cabilosidades y pleitos*) of the towns-people.⁹ He consequently left Bayambang to his assistant, Fr. Jose Ibañez, and moved to the newly-formed *barrio*. He worked for its independence from the mother town, something which, as already mentioned, he was able to accomplish. He was appointed its first parish priest.¹⁰

⁵"Item, in provincia de Pangasinan, acceptamus domos nostras Stae. Rosae de Paniqui et S. Josephi de Camiling, earumque curam R.P. Vicario de Telban commitimus" (*Acta Capitulorum Provincialium Provinciae Santissimi Rosarii Philippinarum* . . . Tomus Primus, ab anno 1588 ad annum 1698. Manilae: Typis Collegii Sancti Thomae, 1874).

⁶Ocio, *ibid.*, nos. 120-1.

⁷Arnaiz, *ibid.*, Suarez, *ibid.*, fol. 195; Ferrando, *ibid.*; and Ocio, *ibid.*, nos. 122-3.

⁸Arnaiz, *ibid.*, and Ocio, *ibid.*

⁹Suarez, *ibid.*, fol. 195v.

¹⁰Arnaiz, *ibid.*; Suarez, *ibid.*; Ferrando, *ibid.*; and Ocio, *ibid.*

Earlier than 1834, San Miguel de Camiling started as a grazing ground for cows (*corral de vacas*).¹¹ The first one to use it as such was a certain Don Andres Casas (or Casal?), a Spaniard, who had just at that time retired from the military, and who, when he died, was buried in the hometown of a certain Doña Condao, that is, Bayambang, where, in the words of Fr. Suarez, "he remains a prisoner of her love."¹²

There used to be negritos living in the area, but they went retreating as the shepherds of Don Andres advanced, and whatever was vacated by the former was turned into more pasture land by the latter.¹³

Shifting Boundaries

Four different documents — one dated 1848, the second 1850, the third 1869, the fourth 1898 — describe the municipal boundaries of Camiling in four different ways, their only common denominator being Bayambang in the north. According to them, the immediate neighbors of Camiling in the south were Zambales mountains (1848); Pampanga (1850); Tarlac, "a town of Pampanga" (1869); and Sta. Ignacia (1898). West of it were Mangatarem (1848, 1850, 1869) and Zambales, together with San Clemente (1898). In 1850, Mangatarem is described as being in the northwest, and in 1869, it shares the west with the Zambales mountains. Finally, in the east were Pampanga (1848); Paniqui and Barug (1850); Paniqui and Gerona (or Barug) (1869); and Paniqui alone (1898).¹⁴

¹¹Suarez, *ibid.* This must have been the reason why the barrio which is closely associated with the two Camilings was called *Binaca*, which is a combination of the syllable *in* of the Philippine native language and the root-word *vaca*.

¹²Suarez, *ibid.* He adds: "The love story of the two used to be told with colorful details by Fr. Ibañez, but this is not the place to recount it."

¹³Suarez, *ibid.*

¹⁴Ferrando, *ibid.*; Manuel Buzeta and Felipe Bravo (ed.) *Diccionario Geografico — Estadístico-Histórico de las Islas Filipinas* (Madrid, 1850), p. 489; Idem (Madrid, 1851), *apendice*, p. 7; Suarez, *ibid.*; and Ocio, *ibid.* "Barug" was the former name of Gerona. The 1869 chronicle of Fr. Suarez says that Camiling meets Gerona in barrio *Binaca*.

The first three sources do not mention Sta. Ignacia and San Clemente which, however, appear in the 1898 description. This is because by 1898, they had already become independent towns, which they were not yet during the three earlier years.

Sta. Ignacia

This place became a town independent of Camiling by virtue of a decree of the *Superior Gobierno*, dated 7 May 1874. It was made a parish by a royal order dated 7 January 1881, countersigned (*cumplimentada*) in Manila on 2 March of that year, but this juridical act of the State did not take effect in the ecclesiastical field.¹⁵

Sta. Ignacia appears in only five out of thirty-one annual reports mentioning what at present are towns of Tarlac province, some issued by the Dominicans, others by the government, from 1795 to 1898, inclusive, and read by the present writer.¹⁶ The first one was in that of 1876. Here, the town has its own figures under the columns "population" (*almas*) and "taxpayers" (*tributos*), but shares with Camiling the same Dominican pastor and the same statistical data for baptism, marriages and funerals.¹⁷ In the directory of priests for the year 1884, there is only one pastor for Moncada and Sta. Ignacia together, while those for 1885 and 1886, there is only one pastor for Camiling and Sta. Ignacia.¹⁸ Even up to as late as 1900, the latter was still a mere *visita* of Camiling.¹⁹ The official reports for the years 1895 and

¹⁵Ocio, *ibid.*, no. 122.

¹⁶The years carried by the directories which were available were: 1795, 1798, 1812, 1824, 1839, 1849, 1853-9, 1866-7, 1872, 1874, 1876, 1884, 1888-98. Notice that these are only 31 random years out of 104 from 1795 to 1898.

¹⁷Estados General de la Provincia del Smo. Rosario de PP. Dominicos en Filipinas. Fr. Jose Hevia Campomanes, procurador general. Manila, 1 de Mayo de 1876.

¹⁸*Guia oficial de Filipinas*, 1885 (Manila: Establecimiento Tipog. de Ramirez y Giraudier, 1884). Idem, 1885, 1886.

¹⁹Jose Ma. Gonzalez, O.P., *Labor Evangelica y Civilizadora de los Religiosos Dominicos en Pangasinan, 1587-1898* (Manila, U.S.T. Press, 1946), p. 127.

1898 classifies it as a town (*pueblo con gobernadorcillo*), but with no parish priest.²⁰

The Town in 1850

"Camiling, also known as San Miguel, is a town thirty leagues far from Manila, on 123° 59' 50" longitude, 15° 46' 30" latitude. It has its own parish priest and a *gobernadorcillo*. It is on the left bank of a small branch of the Agno River. Its climate is healthy and temperate, with plenty of fresh air. The common illnesses are fever and colic.

"There are more or less 1,143 houses, mostly simple, along the several streets and in the *plaza*. The most noticeable structures are the parish house and the municipal hall (*tribunal*), both a bit more sophisticated than the rest. There are two primary schools supported by the community funds. There is also a prison house.

"The church is well constructed. Its patron saint is St. Michael the Archangel. The pastor is a member of a religious order. Near the church is the cemetery, which is quite large and has a lot of fresh air. Not far from the church is the barrio known as *Binaca*, which belongs to this town. The roads that connect Camiling to its neighbors — Bayambang, Binaca and Tarlac — are just perfect during the dry season, but are almost impassable during rainy days. The mail comes through a horse-riding postman *baligero*, i.e., mail pouch carrier).

"A river known as Telbang runs from north to south of the town. It comes from the Zambales mountains and is very rich. It has a number of branches. One league from the town proper, it unites with the Agno River, over which is a wooden bridge. The water of that river is good for drinking, for irrigating and other household needs. The terrain is plain, the soil fertile. The mountains which are very far from the population centers, are teeming with lumber excellent for construction purposes and for finely wrought furniture (*ebanistería*).

²⁰ *Guía Oficial de las Islas para 1895* (Manila: Secretaria del Gobierno General, 1895), pp. 649-52.

"Along the Zambales mountains there are many excellent grazing grounds, where very many animals are brought by people from this and the other towns. Among the animals frequently seen grazing there are herds of cows, horses, swine (*vacuno*, *caballar*, *de cerda*) and buffalos. The principal products of Camiling are rice, corn and a little indigo (*añil*). It has also deer and several kinds of birds and fishes, the most common among the last one being *dalag* and *anguilas*. The main occupation of the natives is agriculture and the sale of their natural resources and handicrafts (*fabriles*). The population in 1848 was 7,162, the tributaries being 1,648½. At present, it is 6,922 and 1,463½ respectively."²¹

The Town in 1869

Fr. Ramon Suarez, O.P., describes Camiling in 1869 as follows:

"Its inhabitants are all Ilocanos, almost all from the north. Certainly, at the start, the majority were from Sarrat, because they chose St. Michael the Archangel as the patron of the new town of Camiling. He is the same patron saint whom they left behind in their town of origin. It is common among them to refer to the town not as "Camiling" but as "San Miguel," just as in Ilocos Norte, they usually say "San Miguel," instead of Sarrat.

"Camiling covers an area greater than that of any other town in Pangasinan. It is doubtless the best in the whole province. Its streets are long and wide, marked by rope. Their plan was drawn up by Fr. Luis.

"Without counting the barrios of Binaca and Macaran, which, together, have a total of less than seven hundred taxpayers or inhabitants, all of whom are farmers living within a radius reached by the sound of the church bell . . .

"The *banquillas* pass by the river up to the middle of the town proceeding afterwards to Aguilar, Lingayen, Dagupan, and so on. Without any doubt, Camiling has the highest ground in

²¹Buzeta and Bravo, *ibid*

Pangasinan. It is reputedly the healthiest and coziest in this province."²²

Ecclesiastical Buildings²³

On his arrival in the center of the town proper, a visitor of Camiling may easily notice first its plaza, or public square, remarkable for its unusually large dimension; then the church which is not perhaps too spacious for such a big population but roomy enough and, above all, airy, comfortable and clean, and next to the church an imposing convent showing everywhere the scars of the passing of the years. Finally, he shall notice a solid one-story school building that is today owned by the government but that in the past must have been Church property inasmuch as it is included within its compound. Behind these buildings there hides the rectory which, according to tradition was nothing else but the stable for the priests' horses. It is a comfortable two-story dwelling place for the parish priest and his household. If, to these structures we add a solid two-story brick kitchen, attached to the old convent by a wooden corridor, we shall have the complete set of ecclesiastical buildings that graced Camiling yesterday and still grace it today. All these buildings clearly show that Camiling must have been in the past, as it is still today, a wealthy and prosperous town, inhabited by industrious and cooperative people.

Let us now describe the genesis and vicissitudes of those buildings as reported by the Dominican historians, especially, by Father Ocio.

When Fr. Juan Luis was appointed Parish Priest of Camiling on June 9th, 1841, he at once started the construction of a church, which he left one *vara* already above the ground at the time he was appointed Procurator General. Besides this, he constructed a municipal hall and a school building, both from *tabique pampango*. The lay-out of the town, which was considered

²²Suarez, *ibid.*, fol. 195v-6.

²³This subtitle on Ecclesiastical Buildings has been written and added here by Fr. Pablo Fernandez, O.P., in order to round off the description of such an important town as Camiling.

as the best in Pangasinan, was also the product of the ingenuity of this father.²⁴

Father Angel Gómez, his successor, started the work of the convent, continued the construction of the church until he saw it almost finished in 1863, and laid the foundations of a more solid and durable school building.²⁵

This church, inaugurated in 1863, which is described as having built of polished stones, of the Corinthian order, and the most artistic in the whole of Pangasinan, was not destined to last for long, because its walls were so badly shaken by the tremors of 1880, that Father Salvador Millán, Vicar of the town from 1879 to 1887, had to demolish them, in order to make way for the present ones, which seem to be thick enough in their lower section to withstand the strongest earthquakes. In their upper story they are only of wood, lined with iron sheets.

The second church, completed by Father Balbino Ezpeleta in 1889, consisted of three naves topped by a roof of corrugated iron sheets and by a beautiful dome.²⁶

The apse seems to be a remnant of the first church, since it is built of polished stones up to the roof.

In the construction of the convent which was, without doubt, one of the largest and most imposing of Pangasinan, one may easily observe three stages or sections: the primitive, adjacent to the church, consisting of two stories, both of stone; the middle one, whose ground floor is partly of stone, and partly of brick, while the upper floor is all wood; and a third one, that excels the preceding two or its elegance and spaciousness. These three parts clearly shows that the convent was built in three stages by three different parish priests.²⁷

²⁴Ocio, *Compendio de la Roseña*, p. 779.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 787.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 1093.

²⁷For additional information on the history of Camiling, especially about the efforts exerted by the Dominican parish priests for the promotion of education and temporal well-being of their parishioners, see all the above mentioned Dominican

The preliminary observation in this column in the last issue mentions the year 1874 as the date of creation of the province of Tarlac. That was a mistake. And, unfortunately, it was made by the entire province when it celebrated its centennial in 1974.

An official publication, the *Anuario Filipino Para 1877*, gives the exact date — 28 May 1873 — when Tarlac became a province.²⁸

GERONA

Earliest Beginnings

During the provincial chapter of the Dominicans in 1704, the vicar of *Malunguey*,²⁹ was officially given the charge of converting the inhabitants of a place known as *Paontalon*. They were all Negritos. The incipient mission was placed under the patronage of St. Catherine, virgin and martyr.³⁰ In 1722, the provincial chapter declared it to be a part of the parish of Paniqui.³¹ In 1844, it

historians. In the days of the Philippine Revolution of 1898, Camiling's convent was the scene of the tragic death of Pedroche and of some of his men, perpetrated by a certain Ancheta, leader of the forces of the Katipunan in that area. They were invited to a banquet, during which their attackers suddenly fell upon them, stabbing some with their bolos, and throwing the others down the stairs or over the windows. Pedroche was the leader of the *Guardias de Honor*, a sort of religious, civic and military organization that was inimical to the objectives of the Katipunan and bent in setting the Religious free from their captors (Cfr. Ulpiano Herrero, O.P., *Nuestra Prision en poder de los revolucionarios filipinos*, Manila, Imprenta del Colegio de Sto. Tomas, 1900, pp. 272-275; and: Joaquin D. Duran, *Episodios de la Revolucion Filipina*, Manila, Tip. "Amigos del Pais," 1900, pp. 71-72).

²⁸Ramon Gonzalez Fernandez and Federico Moreno Perez, *Anuario Filipino para 1877* (Manila: Establecimiento Tipografico de Plana, y Ca., 1977), p.

²⁹Known at present as *Bayambang*.

³⁰Juan Ferrando, O.P., *Estado de la Provincia del Santisimo Rosario en 1848*, MS in AUST, section "Provincia," vol. 10, fol. 24v.

³¹Hilario Maria Ocio, O.P., *Monumento Dominicano*, MS in APSR, section "Ministerios," vol. 1, pp. 120-1.

became an independent town, but it was only in 1846 that it got its first *gobernadorcillo*, Don Anacleto Meligrito. It was erected into a parish on 28 February 1849, with Fr. Juan Gutierrez as its first pastor.³² In 1851, it was accepted as a vicariate by the Dominican Order.³³

The name Paontalon appeared in the official acts of the Order for the last time in 1751. From then on, they referred to the place as *Barug*.³⁴ This, in turn, was later changed into *Gerona*, in honor of Governor-General Claveria, who was a native of the city in Spain bearing that name.³⁵

The Town in 1851

"Gerona, formerly known as Barug, has a temperate and healthy climate. The only common diseases here are colic, dysentery and fever. There are 741 houses, all of them simple and small. The prominent structures are the convent and the town hall where the jail is. There are two schoolhouses, one for girls and one for boys, both supported by public funds and both with big enrolments. There is also a parish church, which is administered by a religious. The patroness is St. Catherine, Virgin and Martyr. Near the church is the cemetery which is in an ideal place, with plenty of fresh air. There are roads going to the neighboring towns, but they are flooded on rainy days. Fortunately, though, the water does not stay for long. The two principal roads are those leading

³²*Relaciones Dominicanas (Pueblos)*, MS in APSR, tomo IV, fol. 236; and Ocio, *ibid.*

³³Ocio, *ibid.*

³⁴Ferrando, *ibid.*

³⁵Ocio, *ibid.* The earliest official report referring to this place as "Gerona" which the present writer has seen carries the year 1845. It is the *Estado General de los Religiosos y Religiosas* (Manila: Establecimiento tipografico del Colegio de Santo Tomas, 1844).

to Tarlac and Paniqui. The mail passes through these places on its way between Ilocos Norte and Manila. For their domestic needs, the inhabitants avail themselves of the waters of Tarlac River, that is, the small portion of Pampanga River. To the north of Gerona is Paniqui; to the east is Nueva Ecija; to the south is Tarlac; to the west are San Miguel and Binaca. There is a wooden bridge along the road to Tarlac. The soil is fertile and irrigated by the above-mentioned river. The principal products are rice, corn, indigo, vegetables and fruits. The people also raise cows, buffalos, hogs and horses. There are wild deer and various species of birds and fishes, such as the one known as *dalag*, and so on. The population is 4,444 out of whom 1,030 are taxpayers."³⁶

Some Salient Events

Writing in 1888, Fr. Juan Bautista Tenza, then pastor of Gerona recorded things that happened in the town which he considered worth remembering. The first three events he enumerated were: (1) *the burning down of the original municipal hall (tribunal) in 1855*; (2) *the construction and blessing of the church and convent in 1858*; and (3) *the outbreak, in 1863, of cholera epidemic*.³⁷

³⁶Manuel Buzeta and Felipe Bravo (ed.), *Diccionario-Geografico-Estadistico-Historico de las Islas Filipinas* (Madrid: 1851), p. 61.

³⁷*Relaciones Dominicanas*, fol. 238v. Father Ramon Vilanova (the *Atomo Catalan*) provides us with some additional information about the church and convent inaugurated in 1858 during the incumbency of Father Modesto Perez, Fr. Vilanova says that Father Perez built the convent and church, whose walls were a combination of wooden posts (*harigues*) and masonry. The church was reputed to be the largest in Pangasinan. Then Fr. Vilanova adds that Fr. Perez also built the court-house (*tribunal*), first of wood, and then of more durable materials, and two wooden school buildings, one for boys and another for girls. At the same time he took care that the roads were kept in good condition with their corresponding bridges and culverts. Finally, when the order for Fr. Perez's transfer arrived, he was busy in opening a canal intended to provide the town proper with water. Yet Vilanova further adds — as Fr. Perez's works lacked solidity, nothing remained of them after fourteen years, except their ruins, and the worst part of it was that Fr. Perez made the townspeople work too hard and under heavy pressure in construction that could have been worth the trouble had they been more solid and durable. (Footnote inserted by Father Pablo Fernandez). (Cfr. *El Atomo*

Then there was what can be described as "the *Bulic Gang* assault" on 24 June 1868. The details are recorded by Tenza's predecessor, Fr. Victoriano Garcia Ciaño.³⁸ At four o'clock at dawn on that date, a gang of thieves attacked the town. They were led by a certain Ciriaco Bulic, who was greatly feared in the area as a terrorist. They broke into the town hall, forced the lockers open and carried away the weapons kept there. They attacked the headquarters of the carabinieri, killing one guard, seriously wounding the two others and carting away the firearms they found. Then, they proceeded to the convent into which they forced themselves very noisily, threatened the parish priest, Fr. Jose Ma. Villades, and ransacked every corner of the house. They made him open all the safes and lockers. They took away the money, the clothes and other valuables belonging to the church. Finally, as freely as they entered, they left without anybody daring to confront them.³⁹ This must have been traumatic for Fr. Villades, because, immediately afterwards, he exchanged parishes with the pastor of San Isidro, Fr. Mariano Termis.⁴⁰

The year 1876 comes fifth in the list of Fr. Tenza. It was the 20th of May. The belfry of the church was struck by lightning, which caused a fire that destroyed not only the church, but also the convent.⁴¹ This was during the incumbency of Fr. Ciaño (1873-1876). The reconstruction was done by his two successors: Fr. Juan Tetilla Nuñez (1877-1880) and Fr. Tenza, who was

Catalan - Autobiografia del P. Ramon Vilanova, O.P., Hacia 1894, in APSR, Section "Pangasinan," Vol. 10, fol. 81; also: Hilario Ma. Ocio *Compendio de la Reseña Biografica*, Manila, 1895, p. 838.

³⁸*Ibid.*, fol. 236v. Although Tenza says that this happened in 1867, Ciaño is more credible because he wrote in 1877, which was nearer in time to the event than that when Tenza wrote, namely, 1888.

³⁹*Ibid.*

⁴⁰Ramon Suarez, O.P., *Apuntes curiosos sobre los pueblos de Pangasinan*, MS in APSR, section "Pangasinan," vol. 7, doc. 15a, fol. 197.

⁴¹*Relaciones Dominicanas*, fol. 236; Ocio, *ibid.*, p. 120; and Gregorio Arnaiz, O.P., *Historia de la Provincia de Nuestra Señora del Rosario*, MS in AUST, tomo 3, no. 36.

appointed parish priest on 17 July 1880. Fr. Nuñez began rebuilding the church and Fr. Tenza completed it and had it blessed.⁴²

Completing the list of important events given by Fr. Tenza are a great flood in 1878 and a big fire on 2 February 1884. In the first case, the river overflowed into the ricefields, converting them from fertile soil to barren sand. In the second case, around eighty houses were reduced to ashes, including the one where the pastor temporarily resided in the absence of a convent. This priest — victim, eyewitness, and chronicler — namely Fr. Tenza, says that the only things he was able to save were the parish records, the church vestments and an insignificant number of household articles. The fire victims received a donation of money amounting to eight hundred pesos, coming partly from the Order (*depósito de la Provincia*), partly from the meagre savings of the pastor.⁴³

The Town in 1877

A document signed in Gerona by the above-mentioned Fr. Cíaño on 13 June 1877 records the population of this town the previous year (1876) as 11,173 and the tributes as 2,864½. The figures for the then newly-created town of Pura are included in these data, he says.

Then he gives an evaluation of the ethnic groups composing the two towns and the then new province of Tarlac as well as of their places of origin. The following excerpt from the document is given here, uncensored, for the sole purpose of concerned readers regarding the nature of this so-called "Melting Pot of Central Luzon" that is Tarlac Province. Fr. Cíaño merely offers the occasion for the interested reader to ask the question and the challenge to search for the answer. He does not give the complete picture. He has to be read in conjunction with the evaluations and reports given by the other Dominican chronicles.

⁴²*Relaciones Dominicanas*, fol. 238-9.

⁴³*Ibid.*, fol. 238v-9.

Here then is what Fr. Cíaño says about the inhabitants of this area:

"Some of them live in the town proper; others, in the nine far-flung barrios, the nearest of which is one league away from the town. They all have roads for horse-riding. Six of these barrios are at the other side of Tarlac River, and since there is neither a bridge nor any raft (*balsa*), it is difficult to reach them during the rainy season . . .

"Their livelihood is almost the same as that of the other towns of Pangasinan. They are engaged in agriculture. An exception to this are the Tagalogs who occupy more than five barangays (*cabecerías*). The Tagalogs are the ones who run the shops: goldsmith, silversmith, ironsmith. They are the painters and tailors of the town. The Ilocanos distinguish themselves by their native textiles: cotton and silk, specifically Ilocano. The main agricultural product is rice, from which they get what is necessary for their subsistence and for their payment of tribute. Sugar is also produced here, although in smaller quantity as compared to rice.

"Almost the entire land area of the town is ideal for cultivation. The ground is level and clear. And yet, only one-fourth of it is cultivated. Why? First, there are not enough people to work. Secondly, the people are lazy as regards work. Thirdly, they have only a few needs and a few aspirations.

"In the moral order, the principal improvement that can be made here is to assign a priest of our Order in the new town of *Pura*, which at present has 650 taxpayers. I have already said that this parish [Gerona] had three big barrios, the principal one being what is now the above-mentioned new town of *Pura*, with its annex, *Estepona*. They are more than one league away from the mother-town, and they now constitute one independent [political] unit. Almost all of the inhabitants are Ilocanos from the north and therefore indolent and careless about religious matters. For these and other reasons, they live in the crudest ignorance of their obligations as Christians. They hardly hear Mass at all. Neither do they comply with their Easter duties. It is difficult and almost impossible for the priest to go to them in person to instruct them, because they are thinly spread over a wide area.

"The problem is aggravated by the fact that some of the towns included in the newly-created province of Tarlac used to belong to Upper Pampanga (Nueva Ecija), and these towns are quite depraved, thereby adversely influencing the towns which used to belong to Pangasinan. The latter are inhabited by people who, if left to themselves, are simple, obedient and not so bad. Their contact with the people of Nueva Ecija might make them lose their old habit of simplicity. And so, it would be advisable to have another priest in Pura, so that the two towns [Pura and Gerona] can be better administered and their spiritual needs better taken care of. The more Dominican priests there are in this [new] province, the easier it will be to prevent the above-mentioned towns from corruption and immorality.

"This town [Gerona] has four languages, because those who immigrated to this place came from different regions the languages of which are: Pangasinan, Ilocano, Tagalog, Pampangan. Of these, the most widespread language is Ilocano, because out of the sixty-one *cabecerías* in the town, fifty-one are composed of Ilocanos. Around seven are Pangasinan, and four or five are Tagalog. Their customs are different from one another. The Ilocanos are simple, hard-working and peaceful. They dislike troubles. Their principal vices are drunkenness and laziness in religious matters. On the other hand, the Pangasinans and the Tagalogs, especially the latter, are much given to laziness, gambling and *lujuria* [lust]. They are the ones who promote dissensions in the town. They want to impose their own laws and customs on all the rest. They are fond of wearing expensive clothes.

"The Tagalogs are the most troublesome in the town, because they are the riff-raff (*escoria; hez*) of the towns of their origin and many of them are jobless. They pervert the morality of the people with their corrupt habits, especially since they harrass and bully other groups into adopting their own lifestyle."⁴⁴

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, fol. 236-7v.

PURA

Origins and Boundaries

The above-mentioned document signed by Fr. Tenza ends with the following paragraph:

"No other detail can be added to these memoirs because my predecessors did not leave any account, except the one written by Fr. Modesto Perez where he gives the details of the creation of the town and parish of Pura, including its topography, but the manuscript was destroyed by fire in 1884. Another source of information would be the acts of the provincial chapters up to the present."⁴⁵

The Dominican historians, Fr. Gregorio Arnaiz and Fr. Hilario Ma. Ocio, say that Pura was made a town composed of the barrios of San Modesto and San Isidro by a decree of the *superior gobierno* on 18 November 1873, and a parish by a royal order dated 2 March 1887 countersigned (*cumplimentada*) in Manila on 18 April that same year.⁴⁶ Arnaiz adds that the first pastor, Fr. Tomas Rodriguez, O.P., built a wooden church with strong posts (*arigues*) and a roof of galvanized iron and that, when he was making the finishing touches in 1898, he was captured by the Tagalog revolutionaries.⁴⁷

The immediate neighbors of Pura, when Fr. Ocio was writing, were Anao and Cuyapo (north), Victoria, (south), Gerona (west) and San Juan de Guimba (east).⁴⁸

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, fol. 239.

⁴⁶Arnaiz, *ibid.*, no. 37; and Ocio, *ibid.*, p. 124. Pura was accepted by the Dominican provincial chapter of 1890 under the patronage of St. Antoninus. "Acceptamus in domus nostrae Provinciae . . . Sanctum Antoninum de Pura . . . in natione Pangasinana . . ." (*Acta Capituli Provinciae Ssni. Rosarii Philippinarum* . . . anni 1890. Manilae: Typis Collegii Sancti Thomae, 1890.

⁴⁷Arnaiz, *ibid.*

⁴⁸Ocio, *ibid.*

MONCADA

Origins: Barrio, Town and Parish

On 18 November 1857, a newly appointed pastor took over Paniqui. Soon after that, almost certainly before the end of that year, he founded a barrio to which he gave the name San Ramon. The priest was Fr. Ramon Vilanova, a Dominican. How it was founded is recounted in his biography, which appears elsewhere in this issue.

A decree of the *superior gobierno* dated 2 May 1874 made it a town, independent of Paniqui, and changed its name to Moncada.⁴⁹ Following a formal request filed by the prominent residents (*principales*) in 1879, it was made a parish by a royal order dated 17 April 1880, countersigned (*cumplimentada*) in Manila on June 9 of that year.⁵⁰ However, it did not get its own pastor until October 1882, when Fr. Silvestre Fernandez took over.⁵¹ Subsequently, in 1886, the provincial chapter of the Dominicans accepted it as a vicariate.⁵²

The First Pastors

A short document signed in Moncada on 25 September 1888 by Fr. Eugenio Rodriguez enumerates the first four parish priests of this town. They were: (1) Silvestre Fernandez (17 October 1882 to 10 November 1884); (2) Cipriano Pampliega (to 14

⁴⁹ Arnaiz, *ibid.*, no. 35.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, and Ocio, *ibid.*, p. 123. Arnaiz gives a date (2 May 1880) different from that given by Ocio (17 April 1880). According to Fr. Pablo Fernandez, O.P., the latter is more accurate in giving dates.

⁵¹ Arnaiz, *ibid.*, and Ocio, *ibid.*

⁵² *Acceptamus in domus nostrae Provinciae Sanctum Raymundum Nonnatum de Moncada in natione Pangasinana...*" (Acta Capituli Provinciae Ssmi. Rosarii Philippinarum ... *anni 1886*. Manilae: Typis Collegii Sancti Thomae, 1886).

August 1885); (3) Eduardo Garcia (to 7 June 1886); and (4) Eugenio Rodriguez (7 June 1886 "to the present").⁵³

The first one built the church, the convent and the schools, but with weak materials. He drew the plan of the streets and improved the road going to Paniqui, making it smooth for those who walk and those who travel on horseback or by carriage. He raised the ground of the public park which used to be flooded during rainy days and promoted health and cleanliness.⁵⁴

⁵³MS in APSR, tomo 7, doc. 42, fols. 66-6v. In this document, Fr. Rodriguez says that Moncada became a town in 1875 and a parish in 1882.

⁵⁴Arnaiz, *ibid.*; Ocio, *ibid.*; and Valentin Marin y Morales, *Ensayo de una sintesis de los trabajos realizados por las corporaciones religiosas de Filipinas* (Manila: Imprenta de Santo Tomas, 1901), vol. 2, pp. 649-50.

A Sermon on our Martyrs*

Your Excellency, President Corazon C. Aquino
Distinguished Guests
Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The month of October is truly fraught with causes for joy. For us Filipinos, October cannot be more significant, for the La Naval celebration reminds us of the triumph of the Holy Rosary.

For us Filipinos, October cannot be more blitheful. The first Filipino Servant of God will be canonized come the 18th.

October generates strength and inspiration especially for the Dominicans because seven Dominican Servants of God will be canonized. Five of them, on the 18th.

The University of Santo Tomas exults because these seven men were its products: all academicians, intellectuals, missionaries and martyrs.

The five who met their martyrdom in Japan were:

Fr. Antonio Gonzalez, Acting Rector and Professor of Theology;

Fr. Domingo Ibañez de Irquicia, Professor of Theology;

Fr. Lucas Alonso del Espiritu Santo, Professor of Philosophy;

Fr. Guillermo Courtet, Professor of Theology; and

*Homily given by Fr. N. Castillo, O.P., Rector of the University of Santo Tomas, in the Mass celebrated in honor of the UST Martyrs and St. Lorenzo Ruiz, at the UST Chapel, on October 7, 1987.

Fr. Tomas Hioji Nishi de San Jacinto, Student.

The two who met their martyrdom in Vietnam were: Bishop Jose Ma. Diaz Sanjurjo, Professor of Humanities and Fr. Vicente Liem de la Paz, student.

Though hailing from different nations such as Spain, France, Japan and Vietnam, they were one in heart and mind in the Dominican religious profession, in academic endeavors, in missionary ideals, and even in death for the cause of His Holy name. A rare combination, by all standards.

Five of them taught at this University between the years 1621 and 1636. One of them studied in the eighteenth century and another one taught in the nineteenth century.

Their destiny prepared by God, was to go to the mission field, in the most trying vineyard where utmost difficulty lurked. From the moment they exchanged the classroom for the missionary cross, martyrdom became an imminent possibility, their ardent desire. They knew they would go through the "great tribulation" (*Rev. 7:14*); they knew they would have to "drink the cup Christ had to drink" (*Mk. 10:38*), for "if the Master was persecuted, they would be persecuted too," (*Jn. 15:29*). They realized that they would stand before governors and kings for God's sake" (*Mk. 13:9-10*).

What they had experienced in contemplation, they were totally determined to confess valiantly. Japan, then raging with Christian persecution, was a place for every difficulty, unbearable anxiety, excruciating solitude, trying hunger and sickness, lethal imprisonment and torture. The five missionaries endured all of these, with God's grace, for the cause of the Faith.

Before his judges, Fr. Antonio said: "I have no other purpose in coming to Japan than to preach the Good News and the way of salvation and to show the errors in which you and your people live." Fr. Courtet said something similar when interrogated: "We did not come to Japan to die, but to preach God to the Japanese and to teach them the way of salvation. *Not to die, but to preach, and if necessary, to give our lives for God.*

They died willingly, as Christ accepted His death freely. Fr. Antonio died in prison as a consequence of inhuman torture. Fr.

Erquicia, in the torment of the "gallows in the pit"; the same torture and death awaited Fr. Lucas del Espiritu Santo and Fr. Tomas Nishi de San Jacinto. Fr. Guillermo Courtet was beheaded. Neither imprisonment nor the sword, neither hanging nor death could "come between them and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus Our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39).

Indeed, this Pontifical University has been gifted with these blessed ones — all paradigm of unshaken faith. The 376 years of its existence have exuded a thread of sanctity, missionary spirit and martyrdom, made visible by them, UST's purest glory. They are a constant reminder that in a Catholic University nothing is purely academic, for everything is meant to serve an evangelical, moral and transcendental purpose.

Lorenzo Ruiz gave witness to such saying. Born in Binondo, Manila, around the year 1600, of a Chinese father and a Tagala Filipina mother, Lorenzo was educated by the Dominican Fathers. As a simple Church clerk and family man, he sallied to Japan in the company of four Dominican missionaries and one Japanese layman. His devotion to the Lady of the Holy Rosary (he being a member of the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary) strengthened him in the face of persecution. Lorenzo, the pride of the Filipino people, died in torment, hung from the gallows by his feet, his body falling into a pit.

All of these men had their share in the call for all Christians to live the Faith. More than this, they were blessed with a gift to die for the Faith. Witnessing to the truth and the love of God, they made incarnate. As a student, or a professor, an employee, an administrator, a religious, a citizen, or a leader, *we can draw the truth in the Gospel of Love*. It is the love of dedication and commitment to learning and teaching, performing effective office work, managing reasonably and well, zealously carrying out the duties of the religious profession, helping build a sound Christian community and stable nation, and leading the community, in the light of the Gospel of salvation *especially in preserving the basic fabric of society, the family*.

Martyrdom does not seek death for its very sake. It necessitates torment, calumny and death for the sake of the truth. Clearly, martyrdom does not show hatred and pack of lies but it

shows the truth in love and reaps the bliss in glory. Certainly, martyrdom does not call for unfounded courage nor for efforts to destabilize an institution or a nation for the cause of *one's goal*. It demands efforts geared towards the *final goal*. TRUTH, JUSTICE, UNITY, PEACE. These may be elusive but we have to work for their attainment.

May our Lady of the Rosary always keep us under the mantle of her protection, as she had done in the history of the Filipino nation. In this Eucharistic celebration, we give praise and thanks to God for giving us Mary, the Queen of Peace, the Queen of Martyrs, who, with her Holy Rosary, has welcome our Dominican brothers and Lorenzo Ruiz in the heavenly kingdom.

On behalf of the University of Santo Tomas and the Dominican Community, I should like to thank Your Excellency, Mrs. President, and the members of your family, for being with us on this occasion. We hope and fervently pray that, through the intercession of the UST Saints and San Lorenzo Ruiz will achieve your avowed goals for the whole nation. To everyone who is with us in this celebration, our profoundest appreciation and gratitude.

Mga kapatid, tunay ngang makahulugan ang buwan ng Oktubre.

NORBERTO CASTILLO, O.P.

SOME DISCORDS

The canonization of St. Lorenzo Ruiz was received and celebrated by the whole Filipino nation with great demonstrations of joy, mirth and satisfaction. However, in the midst of this general acceptance, certain voices were raised in protest sounding discords, missing the beat and displaying bad taste.

I am referring concretely to two articles which appeared on the occasion of the canonization; the first in the *Sunday Inquirer Magazine* of October 11, 1987 and the second in *Cor Manila* dated November 1, 1987.

Both articles, which seem to be cut to the same pattern, attempt to tell us that St. Lorenzo was more a victim of Spanish imperialism and expansionism than a martyr of Christian faith. Both authors are sorry about this and feel deep compassion for poor Lorenzo Ruiz.

It is perfectly understandable that differences of opinion arise in a pluralistic society like our own. But what is less understandable is that there would be those who plunge into the ring of history without a glance at the criteria of historic objectivity. Even pluralism has its limits.

Pronouncements of the type in question merit only the disapproval of those who read them and can well cast them aside with the strongest repulsion.

The first thing that should be pointed out is that for a faithful believer the canonization of any saint at all presupposes the final declaration and definitive seal on the statement that the saint in question is in heaven. Only the Supreme Pontiff can make such a declaration, and he does so under the protection of his infallible

prerogative. It should be obvious that the Church cannot act lightly in a solemn moment such as that of canonization, and that a saint could not be canonized without a study-in-depth of all facts relevant to his person. Concretely the case of Lorenzo Ruiz and his companions required a demonstration of the truth regarding his and their martyrdom for Christ's sake. If Lorenzo and his companions had only died for some political cause or some other worldly trifle the Church would never have canonized such people. We insist once again that when a saint is canonized the Pope affirms with infallible authority a moral fact: the sanctity and (in this case) the authentic martyrdom of the person thus elevated.

However, looking historically at the facts, without going too deeply into detail, the whole world knows how the group in which Lorenzo Ruiz went to Japan slipped through the net of strict vigilance set up by the authorities in Manila who allowed no one to go to Japan in those days because of the bloody persecution then raging. Therefore, the religious involved, and Lorenzo Ruiz with them, had nothing to do with what the authors of the two articles would dub "Spanish geographical expansion." Given the bad grace into which some religious Orders had then fallen with the civil authorities, we must conclude that going to Japan would not have signified collaboration with any political power at all.

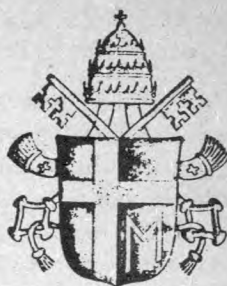
When we read the process of their martyrdom it is no surprise to find therein nothing at all which we could call political motivation or anything like it. All the martyrs confess that they went to Japan to preach the truth of Christ. They went to the country for that motive and for it alone. Their torturers understood this well and did everything in their power to make the martyrs renounce the faith verbally or by treading the cross underfoot or by desecrating other religious objects. Not once were they asked to renounce their nationality or to tread on the Spanish flag!

The facts of history, seen with prejudiced eyes, can be turned into anything. Whoever wants to deny someone else's martyrdom can find reasons to do so, as is seen in the two articles cited above. This hardly proves that the arguments involved therein represent in true appraisal of the facts. What history really demands is that, before giving a passing judgment, *all* the facts, circumstances, witnesses and motives of those directly involved be impartially investigated.

Lorenzo Ruiz and his companions died confessing Christ, and they offered him their lives in a long and terrible martyrdom which only makes sense in the light of a deep faith animated at such moments by an extraordinary gift of God.

Lorenzo gave his life (and would have given a thousand lives had he had them) to defend the treasure of this Christian faith. This is what makes him great. This gives him the title of saint. No one can rob him of such glory.

PEDRO GONZALEZ TEJERO, O.P.



TO OUR VENERABLE BROTHER
BRUNO TORPIGLIANI
TITULAR BISHOP OF MALLIANA
APOSTOLIC NUNCIQ

As the auspicious day approaches when you celebrate the anniversary of your ordination to the Priesthood, We think that you are touched by an immense joy. To you who commemorate this event, We wish to send Our Letter conveying congratulatory and augurious wishes. Certainly, the fraternal charity and bond of friendship which unite us, Venerable Brother, do not allow Our voice to be separated from the chorus of your well-wishers. Indeed, it fits with the affirmation of your ability and diligence, which you perceive from these around you, to receive now from Us the accumulation of Our love.

If indeed, Venerable Brother, you look back at the course of your priesthood and recall all the works which you have taken up for the Kingdom of Christ, you will be suffused with grateful and satisfying sense of consolation, while being aware also that you have done these things for the welfare of the Church with the help of God, source of all wisdom. From the sequence of your ministry, it behooves to recall those official duties which you have discharged, firstly for the welfare of the souls in the communities of Arezzo and Sienna, then afterwards, those various ministries and services which you have pursued earnestly as Apostolic Nuncio in behalf of the Holy See, principally in Guatemala, El

Salvador and Zaire, and now you are completing meritoriously for fifteen years in the Philippines amidst great difficulties.

We look at these and other worthy achievements that ought to be praised, rejoice with you on account of the sacred ministry carried on lengthily and unwaveringly, and we convey to you Our benevolence corresponding to your excellent merits; indeed, we cannot let the occasion of confirming Our affection glide by, as you are about to reach happily the 50th anniversary of your priesthood.

Hence, we wish you to accept this greeting, Venerable Brother, as proof of Our appreciation and sign of Our perception of this exalted event in your life. We pray fervently, therefore, that you be endowed with the abundance of heavenly favors, so that you may continue joyfully to render service for the glory of God and on behalf of the Holy See. Finally, from the bottom of Our heart, We lovingly impart Our Apostolic Blessing upon you, Venerable Brother, and upon the whole Philippine nation, as auspice of divine protection and a sure pledge of Our love.

Given at the Vatican, this first day of October, 1987, in the
X9th year of Our Pontificate.

Joannes Paulus PP II

The Beginning of Religious Life

Canon 646 of the new Code of Canon Law reads: "The purpose of the novitiate, by which life in an institute begins, is to give the novices a greater understanding of their divine vocation, and their vocation to that institute." This canon seems to affirm two different things, namely that novitiate is a preparation of the novices in order to understand their divine vocation and their being called to that institute, and that novitiate is the beginning of religious life. I have read one book stressing the latter aspect of novitiate, giving the impression that religious life begins with the novitiate. I was always taught that religious life begins with the religious profession. Which is the correct view?

A Religious

In order to dissipate the confusion of our consultant a distinction is to be made or rather a two-fold problem on religious life should be pointed out. One thing is the beginning of religious life proper and another the beginning of a new life in a religious institute. The words of canon 646 "by which life in an institute begins" points out obviously the latter meaning only. The novice starts a new life with the novitiate. He is initiated in the religious observances proper to the institute to which the novice intends to belong. The whole canon 646 has been newly formulated in the new Code. It deals with the nature and purpose of the novitiate. Obviously it has its origin in the Instruction *Renovationis causa*.

The whole canon 646 reads: "The purpose of the novitiate, by which life in an institute begins, is to give the novices a greater understanding of their divine vocation, and of their vocation to that institute. During the novitiate the novices are to experience

the manner of life of the institute and form their minds and hearts in its spirit. At the same time their resolution and suitability are to be tested."

Carefully reading this canon, it is easily detected that novitiate is for the novice the start of a new life in a religious institute. It implies a disruption of a previous way of life and an initiation into another with different commitments. The purpose of novitiate is four-fold namely: 1) to understand better the divine calling, most particularly in that religious institute; 2) to experience the peculiar life in that institute by following its religious observances; 3) to adjust both mind and heart to the spirit of the institute; 4) to test the intention and suitability of the novices. This implies that novices undergo a disciplinary and spiritual training before being admitted as members of the institute.

The religious life proper begins with the religious profession, as stated in canon 654, which reads: "By religious profession members make a public vow to observe the three evangelical counsels. Through the ministry of the Church, they are consecrated to God, and are incorporated into the institute with the rights and duties defined by law." Three elements are to be considered in the religious profession, which are essential in religious life, namely: 1) the evangelical counsels accepted through public vows; 2) consecration to God through the ministry of the Church, which has been entrusted with the evangelical counsels and is their legitimate interpreter; 3) incorporation into the institute. The foregoing elements are lacking in the novitiate. Hence, the novice cannot be said properly to begin the religious life in his novitiate. He only starts a new life in the religious institute, being trained in its religious observances.

The new *Ritual of Religious Profession* as corrected in conformity with the Decree issued on September 12, 1983 by the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship and with the new Code of Canon Law, confirms what we have said above. The old Ritual, number 4 of the *Praenotanda*, said: "The novitiate, by which religious life begins . . ." Obviously the expression was not accurate. The new Ritual, however, in conformity with the new Code of Canon Law, reads: "The novitiate by which a new life in the religious institute is initiated . . ." This expression is correct.

PONTIFICAL COMMISSION FOR THE AUTHENTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE CODE OF CANON LAW

The Fathers of the Pontifical Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the Code of Canon Law, in their plenary meeting of 29 April 1987, decided that the following *dubia* should be answered as follows:

I

D. Whether the word "religious" in canon 684, par. 3 is to be understood solely of religious in perpetual vows, or also of religious in temporary vows.

R. *In the negative to the first, in the affirmative to the second.*

II

D. Whether the permission spoken of in canon 830 par. 3 is to be printed in the published books, together with the name of the person granting the permission, and the date and place of the grant.

R. *In the affirmative.*

The fathers of the Pontifical Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the Code of Canon Law, meeting in plenary session on 26 May 1987, decided to reply to the following *dubium* as follows:

D. Whether the diocesan bishop can dispense from the norm of canon 767 par. 1, which reserves the homily to a priest or deacon.

R. *In the negative.*

The Supreme Pontiff John Paul II, in an audience granted to the undersigned on 20 June 1987, was informed of the above-mentioned decisions, and ordered their publication.

CARDINAL ROSALIO GUISEPPE CASTILLO LARA
President

JULIAN HERRANZ
Secretary

**HOMILIES FOR
JANUARY, FEBRUARY
AND MARCH
—YEAR B—**

**Year of
the Mother of God**

LUKE 2:16-21

*SOLEMNITY OF MARY,
MOTHER OF GOD,
JANUARY 1, 1988*

TODAY we begin a new calendar year. "Happy New Year," we greet one another. We are now on the first day of the New Year 1988, but the air is still charged with the spirit of Christmas 1987.

It must be the fact that the spirit of Christmas is still hovering strong around us, that the Church celebrates today, the Octave day of Christmas, as the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God. You know Christmas was made possible through Mother Mary.

Divine Providence decreed to make us live in this country which happens to be not only a Christian nation, but a nation where the devotion to Mary is very popular. We can hardly find a Filipino who cannot sing the "O Virgen Maria." Many of us do not only have statues and images of Mary in our homes, in our offices,

jeepneys, etc., but a good number of us also possess rosary beads, Marian scapulars and medals which hang around many of our necks. Look at our names . . . are they not the names and titles of the Blessed Virgin Mary?

Whenever and wherever people gather together to pray, whether in a barrio chapel in preparation of the feast of their patron saint or in a hut for a deceased lying in state, you can be sure that they will recite the Holy Rosary.

Some say that the Marian devotion is popular in the Philippines because ours is a matriarchal society. But try asking why the Filipino is a *pueblo amante de Maria*, a people who loves Mary. And the answer will be because Mary is the Mother of God.

But is Mary really the Mother of God? Definitely yes, we say. The question is: What do you call the bearer of a child? You cannot call her "auntie," or "niece," or "cousin," much less "grandma." The woman who bears a child is definitely the *mother* of that child.

Jesus Christ is true God and true man. And, as Jesus Christ was born of Mary, Mary is truly the Mother of God. The Second Person of the Holy Trinity was born of Mary according to the humanity He derived from her.

Mary is not a goddess, because God did not take His Divine Being from her. But she is the Mother of God since the Second Person of the Holy Trinity was truly born of her in His human nature.

Some might say: "How could Mary be the mother of the one who created her? Mary owed her being, of course, to God, but this under the aspect of His eternal nature. Subsequent to her creation that human nature was born of her which the Son of God had assumed to Himself. She is, therefore, the Mother of Jesus Christ. But Christ was one Divine Person existing in two natures, one eternal and divine; the other temporal and human. Mary necessarily gave birth to a being with one Personality and that Divine, and she is rightly called the Mother of God.

As we now celebrate the feast of Mary the Mother of God, let us renew and strengthen our filial devotion to her. Remember she is our spiritual mother.

And also remember that we are now in the midst of the Marian Year. His Holiness Pope John Paul II has proclaimed the Marian Year beginning on the Pentecost Sunday, June 7, last year 1987, up to the feast of the Assumption of Mary, August 15, this year 1988.

Our Holy Father has enjoined on all Christ's faithful to profit from this Marian Year for the growth of our spiritual life and salvation. According to the Pope, as the Church "goes forward with the whole of humanity towards the frontier between the two Millennia, the Church . . . sees Mary deeply rooted in humanity's history . . . maternally present and sharing in the many complicated problems which today beset the lives of individuals, families and nations; . . . and helping the Christian people in the constant struggle between good and evil, to ensure that it *does not fall*, or if it has fallen, that *it rises again*" (Encyclical, *Redemptoris Mater*, 52).

During this Marian Year, we are encouraged by our Holy Mother the Church to gain Plenary Indulgences by performing works of *piety*, *mercy* and *penance*. We must bear in mind that we are fortunate to remain alive for this Marian Year which is enriched with Plenary Indulgences.

Out of gratitude, be diligent enough to ask your parish priest or the Marian associations in our parish for a list of the prescribed works to which a Plenary Indulgence is attached. The usual conditions for gaining the Plenary Indulgence are individual sacramental confession, Holy Communion and Prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father.

Let us not forget that as Jesus chose to come into this world through Mary, so He continues to give us His graces through her.

Our Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh

MATTHEW 2:1-12

*THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD,
JANUARY 3, 1988*

THE Sacred Liturgy of Christmas finds its culmination with the feast of today, the Epiphany of our Lord. Epiphany means "manifestation," and it is especially said of the public appearance of a king before his people after victory over his enemies.

On Christmas Eve, the Son of God manifested Himself to the Jews in the persons of some humble shepherds, who were His first adorers and who also represented the poor.

At the Epiphany, Christ manifest Himself to all nations of the earth in the persons of the Magi who were not Jews and who were at the time lost in paganism. The Magi, who, as the Gospel says, were "men who studied the stars," represented the rich. It is said that the Magi, also known as the three Wise Men from the East, were Melchor, Gaspar and Balthasar.

Because of what they represent we have reason to pray at the Responsorial Psalm and say: "O Lord, every nation on earth will adore you."

In the behavior of the Magi we can admire and imitate their promptness and courage in heeding the voice of God who called them by means of a star. The undertaking was risky and difficult; the journey from the East was long and hazardous; to save on the distance they necessarily had to traverse deserts, climb mountains, run many dangers.

If at the midst of their journey the star became hidden, they did not change course, they pushed forward. Let us not change our course in times of trial.

But if great was their perseverance in following the star, greater still was their faith in the presence of the child. They find Him, not in a prince's royal cradle in a magnificent palace, but in a poor manger in a stable.

Notwithstanding the sight, the Gospel relates "they knelt down and worshipped Him. They brought out their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, and presented them to Him."

Today the star of faith shines for us also. As the prophet Isaiah said, "On you the light of the Lord will shine. The brightness of His presence will be with you." St. Paul tells us: "By means of the Gospel the Gentiles have a part with the Jews in God's blessings; they are members of the same body and share in the promise that God made through Christ Jesus."

How much should we thank God for the gift of faith! This faith teaches us in the opening prayer of today's Mass that God, who revealed His Son to the nations by the guidance of a star, will one day lead us to His glory in heaven by the light of faith. Now, like the Magi, we painstakingly undertake the long and tedious journey of life. One day, we will happily reach our homeland.

Today, as in the days of Isaiah, the darkness of unbelief covers a great portion of the earth. Let us think not only of the immense continent of Asia and its off-shore islands, of China, India, Japan, Indonesia, Pakistan, North and South Korea, Vietnam, etc., but also of Mindanao, the Mountain Province, Mindoro, Palawan, etc.

On this feast of Our Lord's Epiphany, the missionary apostolate of the Church in Africa is being remembered. The collection at all Masses of Epiphany and the evening before is for the Church in Africa.

Africa is a continent of more than five hundred million inhabitants. Only about ten percent of them are Catholics. The Second Vatican Council declares that "as members of the living Christ, incorporated into Him and made like Him by Baptism,

Confirmation and the Eucharist, all the faithful have an obligation to collaborate in the expansion and spread of His Body, so that they might bring it to fullness as soon as possible (cf. Eph. 4:13). So all the children of the Church should have a lively consciousness of their own responsibility for the world, they should foster within themselves a truly Catholic spirit, they should spend themselves in the work of the Gospel" (*Ad Gentes*, 36).

The Magi offered Jesus gold, frankincense and myrrh. Let us offer the Church's Missions in Africa the frankincense of our fervent prayers, the myrrh of our sacrifices and the gold of our material contribution.

However, today's feast of our Lord's Epiphany should remind us of the declaration of the Second Vatican Council: "Let everyone be aware that the primary and most important contribution he can make to the spread of the faith is to lead a profound Christian life" (*Ad Gentes*, 36).

Baptism: Passport to Heaven

- MARK 1:7-11

*FEAST OF THE LORD'S BAPTISM,
JANUARY 10, 1988*

THE Liturgy of the Word today speaks about the greatness of being a Christian, that is, of those who have validly received the Sacrament of Baptism. Today we celebrate the feast of the Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That is why we are made to listen to Isaiah who wrote: "I, the Lord, have called you and given you power to see that justice is done on earth;" to St. Luke who said: "God poured out on Him the Holy Spirit and power;" and to St. Mark, in the Gospel: "You are my own dear Son. I am pleased with you."

These words are meant to help us consider our own Baptism which reproduces the Baptism of Christ. Baptism is the sacrament that gives us the new life of sanctifying grace by which we become children of God and heirs of heaven. Baptism is the very first sacrament we can receive. Unless we are baptized, we are forbidden to receive any other sacrament.

Baptism is necessary for salvation, because Christ has said: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." From the time of Christ this has been the unequivocal teaching of the Church. The reason lies in the fact that only Baptism can remit original sin; no one with any taint can enter heaven.

If an adult receives baptism with the proper dispositions, that is, with faith and contrition, his actual sins are taken away with original sin, as well as all temporal punishments due to his actual sin. Thus, if an adult dies immediately after baptism, he goes straight to heaven, whatever sins he may have committed.

By Baptism we become members of the Church and we assume the obligation to act as *lay apostles* for the spread of the Faith. Baptism imprints an indelible sign or character on the soul. This character marks us as Christians, and cannot be removed by anything, even mortal sin. And this character prevents the sacrament from being repeated: we can be baptized only once.

Since Baptism is absolutely necessary for salvation, children should be baptized as soon as possible after birth. If possible, this should be done *within a week*. Catholic parents who put off for a long time, or entirely neglect, the Baptism of their children, put their children in danger of losing heaven and the vision of God eternally.

The priest is the usual, the ordinary minister of Baptism, but if there is danger of death without Baptism, anyone can and should baptize, acting as extraordinary minister of Baptism. Because

Baptism is a necessary prerequisite to enter heaven when an unbaptized person is in danger of death, and no priest is available, anyone may baptize. However, it would be very wrong to do so without serious reasons.

In emergency cases, you can give Baptism by pouring ordinary water on the forehead of the person to be baptized, saying while pouring it: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." These words must be said at the same time the water is poured, and must be said by the same person pouring the water, so that everything takes place as one act.

No changes may be made in the wording. For example, the words "of the Holy Trinity" may not be substituted for "of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," because Jesus explicitly commanded baptism to be given "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

In order to baptize validly, natural fresh water or holy water is poured, on the head, or face, or body of the person being baptized, and at the same time the words are pronounced.

When properly given, lay baptism is as valid as baptism given by a priest. If a person baptized by an extraordinary minister survives, he cannot be baptized again. However, he is taken to the Church, and the baptismal ceremonies that have been omitted, are supplied.

Baptism administered by a Protestant or other minister is valid if properly performed: that is, with the use of water, together with the form (words) of Baptism, and having the intention to do what the Church does. Conditional Baptism is given when it is uncertain whether a person has been baptized, or when there is fear of the sacrament having been administered improperly. No one may baptize himself.

Let us thank God for the wonderful sacrament of Baptism by which we became children of God, members of God's Church and heirs to the Kingdom of Heaven. Even as we say our thanksgiving prayer, let us silently but seriously renew our Baptismal Vows whereby we promised through our godparents to renounce the devil and all his words, and to live according to the teachings of Christ and of His Church.

The Future of the Philippines

MARK 10:13-16

FEAST OF SANTO NIÑO,
PROPER FEAST IN THE PHILIPPINES
2nd SUNDAY OF THE YEAR,
JANUARY 17, 1988

TODAY is a feast which is proper in the Philippines, the feast of SANTO NIÑO.

History tells us that on September 20, 1519, a fleet of five galleons under the command of Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese navigator at the service of the Spanish Crown, set sail from Spain in search of the Spice Islands. They reached Samar, then Leyte and finally, Cebu. It was in Cebu that Magellan took possession of the Islands in the name of the Spanish King, which Islands would be named *Filipinas*.

When the wife of Cebu's native chieftain, Rajah Humabon, was converted to Christianity, upon her baptism she was given an image of the Holy Child Jesus by Magellan. This wooden image, claimed to be like those carved in Flanders (Belgium) during the 16th century and reputed to possess miraculous powers, is said to be the very same image now enshrined at the Basilica Minore of Santo Niño in the heart of the City of Cebu.

The Santo Niño image in Cebu has its counterparts and replicas all over the Islands. It has played a very important role in the conversion of the Filipinos to the Christian faith and has attracted millions of devotees. The perpetual novena to the Santo Niño is prayed every Friday in all the churches of Cebu and in some churches all over the country.

The Gospel of today's feast of the Santo Niño focuses our attention to one great personal characteristic of Jesus. Our Lord

was the kind of person who cared for children and for whom the children cared. His reason is "because the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Imagine His love for them when, as the Gospel says, "He took the children in His arms, placed His hands on each of them, and blessed them."

We are Christians and that is what we profess to be . . . followers of Christ Jesus. Thus, as Pope John Paul II said: "Acceptance, love, esteem, many-sided and united material, emotional, educational and spiritual concern for every child that comes into this world, should always constitute a distinctive characteristic of all Christians, in particular of the Christian family (*Familiaris Consortio*, 26)."

But look at our society today. "Child Abuse" is one top tune of our times. This term "child abuse" covers not only physical assault to babies and children, but also emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect of dietary, medical, educational and spiritual needs.

Since the child is a growing being, the abuse may occur in any or in all phases of his life — as a fetus, newborn, infant, child, adolescent and so forth.

Whereas formerly a child was considered a blessing, today he is considered as a disturbance, a nuisance, an expense, a problem and a pain. It is sad to realize that even before conception, there are children rejected either by one or both parents.

After birth, abuses are of various forms. Over the years one sees a number of children injured not by accident, but by their own parents and guardians.

Most mothers occasionally feel that their nerves are stretched to breaking point by their young children. But, while majority can cope with their exasperation, a few, classified as *battering mothers*, cannot and end up hitting their child, burning him, shaking twisting his legs or arms. The "non-accidental" injury varies from slight bruises to brain damage and actual fractures.

A more serious problem is the child who is subtly rejected, continually blamed and told off, always made fun of, even some-

times terrorized or made the scape-goat of the family. Such children grow up with a lasting damage to their personalities in almost all cases.

Presently, there is an exodus of parents to the Middle East, Europe, USA, Canada, etc. The separation of parents and children creates manifold psychological problems. "Child abuse" enters the picture when, because of a chain of reasons, there is a disruption of family life: the child is either neglected or over-protected.

In his address to the General Assembly of the United Nations, the Vicar of Christ on earth said: "I wish to express the joy that we find in children . . . the anticipation of the history of each of our present earthly homelands. No country on earth, no political system can think of its own future otherwise than through the image of these new generations that will receive from their parents the manifold heritage of values, duties and aspirations of the nations to which they belong and of the whole human family. Concern for the child, even before birth, from the first moment of conception and then throughout the years of infancy and youth, is the primary and fundamental test of the relationship of one being to another. And so, what better wish can I express for every nation and for the whole of mankind, and all the children of the world than a better future in which respect for human rights will become a complete reality throughout the third millennium, which is drawing near."

Let us all pray that the Santo Niño bless the children and thus He would bless the future of the Philippines.

Conversion and the Good News

MARK 1:14-20

*3rd SUNDAY,
IN ORDINARY TIME,
JANUARY 24, 1988*

NOT many of us know the Italian Saint, Margaret of Cortona. A very attractive girl she run away from home before she was sixteen years of age and gave herself to a life of sin.

One day she saw a dog barking sorrowfully. By his barking he seemed to be asking her to follow him. Under a heap of dried leaves, she found the decomposing body of her live-in partner.

Drowned with painful sorrow, she exclaimed: "And his soul, where is his soul?" Margaret took his death as a judgment on her sins. She changed her life. She gave herself up to penance with such ardor that today she is one of the most penitent saints of the Church. Her feast is February 22.

"The right time has come . . . Turn away from your sins and believe the Good News," says the Lord in today's Gospel.

To "turn away from sin" is to be "converted." We all need to be converted, because we all are sinners.

It will do us no good to change unjust structures, if we continue with hearts corrupted by sin and vice. We would just turn around and construct other still worse structures. What we have to change first is our own inner selves.

To be converted is to change the course of our day-to-day conduct.

To be converted is to transform our heart so that in it may dwell loving concern and not beastly instincts.

To be converted is seriously to propose to ourselves being different from what we are today and to strive for this difference with the grace of God.

To be converted is to return to Christ Jesus. And this will seriously render us accountable to God, to the Church and to our fellowman, aside from our own selves.

"Turn away from your sins," says the Lord, "and believe the Good News." "Good News" is the complete message of God of the Old and New Testament. "Good News," however, is especially the four Gospels of New Testament which tell us what Jesus said and did.

At every Mass, parts of the Good News are read. Since the words and actions of Jesus are so important to us, we surround the reading at Mass of the Gospel with actions that are full of meaning.

Before the reading of the Gospel, the greeting "The Lord be with you" is said by the priest or deacon to show that we need the Lord to be able to hear His words correctly and to carry them out in our daily lives.

During the reading of the Gospel, we stand. This standing means principally four things. First of all, it shows our deep reverence for the message of God. Secondly, by standing we act like a good soldier in the presence of his commanding officer, listening carefully to the orders of our Lord and Master, ready to carry them out, no matter what it will cost us. Thirdly, standing expresses a spiritual resurrection, a getting up from the shadows of ignorance, sin and death to the light of the Truth, the Way and the Life. Fourthly, it means that God's word fills us with the joy of the freedom of God's children.

A small sign of the cross is made by the priest with the thumb of his right hand at the first words of the Gospel text. This signifies that the whole word of salvation is expressed in the mystery of the cross, the love, wisdom and fatherly care of God.

We then make small sign of the cross with our right thumb on

our forehead — to understand and remember the message of God. On our lips — to declare openly our belief in God's word and to teach it to others. On our breast, that is, our heart — because we want to love and live what God has made known to us by the Good News.

After the reading, the priest on behalf of the community kisses the beginning word of the sacred page. This signifies that we have tasted the sweetness of the Lord, the comfort of His holy word. We truly love the words of God.

Our task now is to turn away from our sins and believe the Good News, as Jesus commands us to do.

Christ's Form of Power

MARK 1:21-28

*4th SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME,
JANUARY 31, 1988*

TODAY'S Gospel tells us that the people who heard Jesus teaching in the synagogue and witnessed how He drove away the evil spirit, were amazed. The reason for their amazement was the authority with which Jesus had acted. Jesus "was not like the teachers of the Law; instead, He taught with authority." And Jesus "has authority to give orders to the evil spirits and they obey him."

Teaching with authority was something new for those people. And much more amazing for them was the authority to give orders to the evil spirits who in turn would obey him.

We all want to have authority, but not all of us know what

authority is. More often than not, we confuse authority with power. Authority is one form of power, but it is not the only form. Authority is based on the voluntary acceptance by its subject; power perches on the capacity to impose oneself on subjects.

There are forms of power which are not based on authority, but on fear, on violence, on money, on force . . . on the idea that "might is right." Over all these powers authority must precisely rise up, because authority is before all else a service for the common good which must neutralize all possible abuse of power.

Let us not identify authority with power. But, one thing is authoritarianism which seeks to uphold power at all cost, and another is authority which rests on the truth in order to serve all and to frustrate the abuses of the powerful.

To speak with authority is not to speak authoritatively. Authoritarianism relies on power. Authority relies on the truth.

There are two kinds of authority: the authority that accepts an office, employment or ministry to avail one's self of and gain from it, and the authority that accepts an office, employment or ministry in order to serve by means of it. Only the latter is legitimate and genuine authority. The first produce functionaries that take up their duty to make a living or enrich themselves; the second raises up leaders who can persuade and convince because they serve.

The power of authority is the power of its service for the common good. If an authority does not serve the common good, this means it is worthless.

One would ask: "From where did that authority of Jesus come from?" The authority of Jesus in the first place came from the quality of His life and from His "s.o.p." (standard operating procedure).

Jesus was a free and independent man, who could not sell Himself to anybody: neither to the powerful of those times, nor to the masses whom He severely rebuked when necessary.

Jesus was not a mere repeater of an old doctrine, as were the scribes; nor was He an original commentator. He was much more:

He was a real creator much of the time (It was said . . . but I say to you . . .).

Jesus preached a new doctrine, which was like a fresh and enrapturing breeze. Against the legalism of the official religion, Jesus preached love and placed man above the sabbath, opening new horizons for God's people.

Jesus not only preached, but He practiced what He preached. His word was an efficacious word.

Jesus lived His life in gratuitous and total service for others. for all others, absolutely excluding no one.

This was the authority of Jesus, and this is the authority of our mother, the Church. Jesus made the Church the depository and herald of His authority.

Let us learn to handle authority in our own concrete circumstances according to the style of Jesus. And we shall be doing a great service to mankind.

Let our authority be based upon the truth, upon unselfish service, upon respect for all. Then and only then will Jesus accept us as His true disciples.

Jesus' Schedule of Activities

MARK 1:29-39

*5th SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME,
FEBRUARY 7, 1988*

TODAY'S Gospel presents more or less the schedule of activities of Jesus for a day.

The first thing in the morning for Jesus was *prayer*. "Very early . . . long before daylight, Jesus got up and left the house . . . went . . . to a lonely place, where He prayed." All through His life Jesus prayed.

"When Christ was about to come into the world," He prayed (Heb. 10:5). "Jesus also was baptized, while He was praying" (Lk. 3:21). Before choosing His apostles, He prayed (Lk. 6:12). Before promising the Primacy to St. Peter, Jesus prayed (Lk. 9:18). His Transfiguration occurred, "while He was praying" (Lk. 9:29). He prayed when He instituted the Holy Eucharist (Mt. 26:26). He prayed after the Last Supper (Jn. 17, prayer for priests). At the most difficult moment of His life, in the garden of Gethsemane, He prayed (Mt. 26: 36). Jesus prayed on the cross (Mt. 27:46). Before performing a miracle, He prayed, as when He cured the deaf-mute (Mt. 7:34), and when He raised Lazarus from the dead (Jn. 11:41).

Jesus prayed so much that His apostles were inspired to say: "Lord, teach us to pray" (Lk. 11:1). At this point, we can exclaim: "How happy, how blessed and how lucky is the man or woman whose children, because of the example of their parents, are inspired to say: Daddy or Mommy, teach us to pray."

But, now, why did Jesus pray so much? Jesus prayed because as man He knew that He was totally dependent on the will of the Father; because the Father is the Lord and Master, and He the servant and follower who came, not to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him.

Jesus was constantly aware that God is the Creator and He as man was the creature, and as such He recognized that He depended on the Lord God up to the last filament of His being. That is why we have the wonderful examples of prayer which Jesus offers us in all the circumstances of His life.

"Jesus," says St. Augustine, "prayed as man, but as God, He listens to our prayers." "And if He, who is without sin, prayed," adds St. Cyprian, "how much more should we sinners have to pray! "

The second item in Jesus' agenda was *preaching*. That is why, as the Gospel says, He said: "We must go on to the other villages around here. I have to preach in them also, because that is why I came." And the evangelist adds, "so He travelled all over Galilee, preaching in the synagogues."

Jesus preached in the synagogues. Jesus as well as the apostles and St. Paul always availed themselves of the great opportunity that the synagogues afforded them to preach the Good News.

At this point let us reflect on this. Today we have so many clubs and associations, so many societies and organizations where we meet and talk to people. We have the P.T.A and alumni associations, the Mothers' and Youth Clubs, the civic and religious organizations, the service clubs (Lions, Rotarians, Kiwanis, etc.), the athletic, philanthropic, professional and political groups. Do we make use of these occasions to speak about God and the Gospels? If not, why not?

Have we forgotten what Jesus assured us? Jesus assured you and me that "whoever is not against us is for us" (Mark 9:39). And more often than not, if they are against us, it is perhaps, because we put ourselves against them.

But why is it that we have an excessive fear that we might be accused of undue proselytizing? How about the members of your family and those of your household, is it not our duty to preach to them?

The Gospel goes on to say that "Jesus healed many who were sick of all kinds of diseases and drove out many demons." This is now the so called *work of apostolate*, to cure the sick and expel demons. The Church has always regarded as "work of apostolate" everything relating to the works of mercy, the spiritual as well as the corporal works of mercy. Several religious congregations were founded by the Church for this particular purpose, to heal the sick and drive out demons. Some may perhaps call this paternalism, but such and all, by the way, is the Gospel.

Jesus cured "all kinds of diseases." Therefore, the followers of Jesus, which means you and me and every Christian, will have to cure those who are afflicted with physiological as well as psychological ailments.

Now, about driving out demons mentioned in today's Gospel. We can very well say that demons are not a kind of so called "*dwende*" that go roaming around. Demons are the powers of this world in as much as these represent a rejection of God and temptation for all men.

And this attitude is realized personally in people. The demon in a person is sin incarnate, personified. And demons are of all kinds: incarnate pride, vanity, envy, thirst for power, greed, lust, pornography, drug addiction . . .

There are also incarnate demons in political parties, in systems, in regional and national structures, in business enterprises . . .

But let us not forget that demons are much more to be found in persons than in structures.

Prayer, it is said, fills the cup. Action makes the cup run over the brim into works of mercy.

Day in and day out, Jesus prayed, preached and helped others. This should also be your daily schedule and mine.

"If You Want to You Can"

MARK 1:40-45

*6th SUNDAY,
IN ORDINARY TIME,
FEBRUARY 14, 1988*

AS we reflect on the parables of the Gospel, mankind seems to be a universal Prodigal Son, a Lost Sheep, a Foolish Virgin. As we listen to the reading of today's Gospel we can

consider what the electronic and print media carry everyday. Talks are that our politics are rotten, our structures corrupt, and individuals are morally lepers.

Everybody says things like this, but oddly nobody admits his own corruption, his peculiar leprosy. We recognize the leprosy of others, not our own. That is why we are incapable of saying: "Lord, if you want to, you can make me clean."

And, if we do say it, we do not say it with a sense of humility but because we all have to say "I am a sinner." But it seems we will not say it "with conviction."

Today we prefer to say: "Lord, if you want to, you can make *us* clean," because behind the "us" and the "we" I can squeeze in my self-justification and my self-canonization: I am a sinner (although strictly speaking I am without sin and a saint) because out of fraternal charity I have to establish solidarity with the sins of others. The most that I can admit is that, if I indeed am a sinner, it is because the structures and the environment have made me a sinner, but I am good and virtuous.

It is not difficult to say: In my family, in my place of work, in my town, in my parish there are plenty of problems, there is a lot of wrong. What is difficult to say is: I, So-and-So, I am a problem, I am a sinner, I am wilfully causing problems.

And it is still much more difficult to say: I want to stop being a problem, I want to make myself clean.

What have I effectively done to change myself, to cleanse my own self?

The Gospel says that the leper "knelt down." I too need to kneel down. It is said that never is a man so great and so lofty as when he falls down on his knees, like the leper in the Gospel, and says: "Lord, I am a leper, I am a sinner; if you want to, you can make me clean." I have to kneel down and confess my sins.

Some say that they do not confess to the priest, that they confess directly to God. You know very well, that it is the offended party, not the offender, that determines the manner by which pardon of offense can be obtained. Let us say I committed

an offense, I sinned against you; and I want to be forgiven, to be "made clean." How can I obtain your forgiveness? There are innumerable ways for me to ask for your pardon. By calling you by phone, by writing you a letter, by sending you gifts, by paying for the actual and moral damages, by kneeling down before you, by offering to shake your hand, etc., etc.

You, the offended one on the other hand, have also a lot of ways by which you can give me the remission of my sin. You can just pat my shoulder without saying a word, you can send me three beautiful roses to mean "I forgive you," you can wire me collect to say "it's okay," etc., etc.

But, suppose you say that I can obtain forgiveness only if I appear before the barangay captain. Then there is no other way for me to be pardoned and made clean except by appearing before the barangay captain. This is my only way because you determined it.

Now, in John 20:23 God, whom we have offended by our sins, determined the way and the means by which we, the offenders, can achieve the pardon of our sins. Jesus clearly declared to his apostles whose successors our priests are today: "If you forgive people's sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." Period. Jesus did not say: "If you do not forgive them, they are forgiven, *unless they confess directly to me.*"

Finally, do I now have the courage to say: "Lord, if you want to, you can make me clean"? Am I now ready to be cleansed?

I will then "go straight to the priest" in the sacrament of Reconciliation.

The Work of the Devil

MARK 1:12-15

*1st SUNDAY OF LENT,
FEBRUARY 21, 1988*

TODAY'S Gospel tells us about the temptation of Christ. Temptation is a struggle, a strife, a contest, a dispute, an argument. It is a crisis, a physiological, political, psychological, spiritual crisis, in the Church, in the parish, in society, in organizations, in persons, in individuals.

Temptations there will always be, because there are God and the devil who is a little god; body and soul; spirit and flesh; love and perverted sex; good and bad angels; good and evil; virtue and vice; sacred and profane; Christ and Anti-Christ.

The greatest victory of the devil consists in having convinced mankind that he does not exist, and all that we have just mentioned are merely the dichotomies and dualisms of a medieval and antiquated philosophy.

At Baptism we made our baptismal vows. We made them through our parents and godparents. Every year we renew these baptismal vows, at least during the Easter Vigil and the Easter Sunday Mass.

It will be good for us to begin this very First Sunday of Lent by remembering who are the enemies who have declared war against us and against whom we declared war. At Baptism we solemnly rejected Satan, and all his works, and all his empty promises.

Satan means "devil, adversary." St. Thomas said that the work of the devil is to tempt us. "Your opponent the devil is prowling like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour," according to St. Peter. All throughout the Bible the devil appears as the enemy of man. He tempted Eve and through Eve, Adam. Now he tempts Christ. Not all temptations come from the devil, but surely he makes use of them all.

To tempt, the devil makes use also of the bodily and spiritual conditions of the human person. In the Gospel, the devil took advantage of the hunger which at the time Jesus must have felt. And the devil can and will take advantage of the hunger that any person may feel. And who is not hungry for something?

To tempt Christ, the devil questioned His vocation and even His identity. "If you are the Son of God . . ." In like manner, he will question the priest, the nun, the seminarian about their vocation. The devil will indeed question married people, the husband and the wife, the parents, the wedded and the unwed. That is why we have broken marriages and broken homes, the attempt to legalize divorce, to legalize abortion, etc., etc.

Obsession is another way the devil tries to tempt us. Of course, not all obsessions come from the devil. Many times, we enjoy obsessing our own selves. And every obsession is tapped by the devil. There are countless elements to obsess us. We are obsessed by the mass media, political speeches, advertisements, slogans, etc. In general, we are obsessed by propaganda. It creates false needs in us. It injects new ideas, right or wrong ideas which we have not studied, examined and evaluated.

When a girl is obsessed by a boy, do not give her any advice; it is utterly useless. When a married man or woman is obsessed with a "kalokohan," your advice will be useless. When one is obsessed, he becomes deprived of the capacity to think for his own self. So, watch out lest you become obsessed by anyone or anything.

Now, about diabolical possession, which is possible but very, very rare, there is only one thing worth mentioning. Do not be afraid of it. What some consider as diabolical possession, is nothing but hysteria, neurasthenia, etc., something for psychiatrists.

But there is one kind of diabolical possession worth mentioning. It is when the devil takes possession of an institution or a system or a mass organization where the devil is personified in such a way that it is impossible to fight against it. If you attack it, the group will counterattack by saying that you are a tyrant, a capitalist, or, if it fits them, a communist. Both communism and capitalism are possessed by the devil.

In politics, business and industry, there are good people. But they can do very little, because the reins of the government, of

management are in the hands of the devil, in the hands of immorality and corruption. Who has not heard of massive cheating in elections, in business transactions, even in sports?

It is easy to exorcise a person; but very difficult to exorcise a possessed society.

On our part let us remember that we can always resist temptations, because no amount of temptation can force us into sin. God will always help us if we ask Him. No temptation can do us any harm if we obey the laws of God and keep away from sin. If we resist, temptation will disappear. "Resist the devil, and he will run away from you," says St. James (4:7).

Some remedies against temptation are: 1 — Watchfulness and Prayer. "Keep watch and pray that you will not fall into temptation," says the Lord (Mt. 26:41). 2 — Frequent Confession and Holy Mass with Communion, and 3 — Devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the Holy Guardian Angels.

Priorities for Metamorphosis

MARK 9:2-10

*2nd SUNDAY OF LENT,
FEBRUARY 28, 1988*

TODAY'S Gospel tells us of one episode in the life of Jesus recorded not only by St. Mark but also by Sts. Matthew and Luke and known as the "Transfiguration."

The word "Transfiguration" means "a change in form or appearance." It is the same as the Greek word *metamorphosis*, which is especially familiar to students of biology.

The Jews, especially the disciples of Jesus, held the common view that Jesus whom they accepted as the Messiah, would triumph and thereby bring about a nationalistic political freedom and power. Those fine dreams had to go: the Messiah Jesus shunned recognition and predicted His suffering and violent death.

Then Jesus offered his three closest associates some relief from their depression and discouragement. He gave them a "preview" of his heavenly glory. St. Paul says that in becoming man He had "emptied Himself" of the splendor and glory that belonged to Him as Son of God (Philippians 2:7). This occasion of the Transfiguration is the single exception before the Resurrection in which the divine splendor of His being shone forth.

Now, why does our Mother the Church put this particular Gospel in today's Liturgy?

First of all, to confirm us in our faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ, that Jesus is truly the Son of God. The confidence and certainty of St. Peter in preaching the message of Christ was greatly increased by Transfiguration.

Consider what St. Peter wrote later: "We have not depended on made-up stories in making known to you the mighty coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. With our own eyes we saw his greatness. We were there when he was given honor and glory by God the Father, when the voice came to Him from the Supreme Glory, saying, 'This is my own dear Son, with whom I am pleased!' We ourselves heard this voice coming from heaven, when we were with Him on the holy mountain" (2 Peter 1:16-18).

St. John alluded to the Transfiguration when he wrote in the prologue of his Gospel: "We saw His glory, the glory which He received as the Father's only Son" (1:14).

So, by reflecting on this mystery of the Transfiguration, our faith in the majestic power and glory of Jesus as Son of God is confirmed and strengthened.

Secondly, by making us reflect on today's Gospel, the Church wants us to remember that, if Christ was transfigured, we, His followers, should also strive to be transfigured. In other words,

we Christians should not conform to the world, but should be transfigured, should be metamorphosed, in the newness of our minds and hearts. St. Paul beautifully puts this when he writes: "Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God — what is good and is pleasing to Him and is perfect" (Romans 12: 2).

Our own real transfiguration or metamorphosis is union with Christ in grace and through the Holy Spirit. Grace is a participation in the divine splendor and perfection that was hidden in Jesus until it burst out at the Transfiguration narrated in today's Gospel.

This, our own transfiguration, is what we should pray for. This our own metamorphosis, is what we should labor for.

And how should we accomplish this? Man, whether we like it or not, is a dichotomous unity: matter and spirit, body and soul, time and eternity, beauty and beast. That is why in man there are priorities in his life and in his being.

In the human body itself there are priorities. It is a pity for a man if one of his fingers is cut off, but if his head is cut-off, he is finished.

There are some priorities that we have to bear in mind in order to change, to transfigure ourselves:

1. Priority of the meaning of life. What do we live for? Why do we suffer? Why do we work? Why do we die? Is it worthwhile living, suffering, working and dying?
2. Priority of spirit over matter, of the soul over the body. "Not by bread alone does man live, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."
3. Priority of ethics over technology. We should seek not only what is easy, what is economical, what is expedient, what is efficient, but also, and above all, what is ethical.
4. Priority of the person over things. One laborer is worth more than one machine, than the whole factory. One child, one sick person, one of the aged is more valuable than all the money in the bank.

5. Priority of God over man. If there is no God, there is no man. Man is a mere creature of God.

Now, just because the head, the heart, the lungs and I do not know what more should be given priority, does not mean that the other parts of our body are of no importance. So let us not think so much of the meaning of life that we forget how to live. Nor should we live so much that we forget the meaning of life. Too much matter might drown the spirit. Too much spirit might kill the matter. Too much earth may make us lose sight of heaven. Too much heaven might destroy the earth.

The Church Building And Your Human Body

JOHN 2:13-25

*3rd SUNDAY OF LENT,
MARCH 6, 1988*

IN a public school class being given religious instruction by one of my volunteer catechists, I noticed the many beautiful answers given by the pupils to the question: "Where does God live?" Here are some of their answers: "In the parish church," "in the tabernacle," "in the whole world," "everywhere." One answered: "Inside of me."

Today's Gospel brings us an incident in the life of Jesus that reminded his disciples of the scriptures that says: "My devotion to your house, O God, burns in me like a fire."

"Your house, O God" means any and all of the places given by the catechism children in answer to the question "where does God live?"

The parish church is a house of God, because in it is the Tabernacle where the body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ live under the appearance of the Sacred Host. If we spare no effort to keep our own house clean and beautiful, there is no reason why we should not do the same to our parish church. Our church is not only the house of God; it is also the assembly place of the Lord's Supper, the venue of the sacrifice of the New Covenant.

Some say that their churches are dirty and grimy. If this is true, then, what have they done to clean them? When you enter your church and find it dirty and untidy, does it make you feel sad or angry? And does your sorrow or anger not make you feel like asking yourself: How much do I contribute to making our church clean?

Our church is the seat of God's Eucharistic Presence. This visible building is like a sign, a memorial of the presence of God in our midst, of the presence of Emmanuel, the God-with-us. And, as everybody knows, our church is a place of prayer and worship.

One important element for good prayer and worship is *silence*. To pray devoutly and worship sincerely we need concentration, a full, exclusive attention; therefore we need silence.

"Stop making my Father's house a marketplace," Jesus said. But, what is wrong with a marketplace? A marketplace is dirty and greasy, filthy and grimy; and it is very *noisy*. It is the noisy atmosphere that Jesus did not want to pervade the house of the Lord. In the church, we pray; at prayer we speak to God and God speaks to us, because prayer is nothing but a conversation with God. And it is when there is silence that God speaks to us the loudest.

Perhaps there are times in church when you do not want to pray. But your not-wanting-to-pray does not give you the option to make noise and break the silence. The one next to you might want to pray, to converse with God. Good manners and right conduct, elementary politeness and decency demand that we do not distract and disturb one who is conversing with another, especially when one of the parties is God, the Supreme Lord.

And when one wilfully distracts the attention of the worshipping congregation, our Code of Criminal Law imposes a penalty on

"Disturbance of Public Worship" bigger than that for simple "Public Disturbance." This shows how important a matter is silence in prayer and worship, and how serious an offense it is to make God's house a marketplace where baseness, dirtiness and noise predominate.

The Gospel says that when the Jewish authorities, reacting to Jesus' display of indignation and anger, asked Him for proof of His right to do what He did Jesus answered, "Tear down this Temple, and in three days I will build it again." And the Gospel goes on to say, "But the temple Jesus was speaking about was His body."

St. Paul declared: "Surely you know that you are God's temple and God's Spirit lives in you! So if anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you yourselves are His temple" (1 Cor. 3:16-17).

At this point, let us call to mind God's Fifth Commandment which says: "You shall not kill." By this Fifth Commandment, we are commanded to take proper care of our own bodily well-being and that of others. We have the obligation to preserve our health and our life. Ours is the obligation to do nothing which tends to injure or destroy our health or life.

My "devotion" to God's house which my body is, implies cleanliness, temperance, regularity, industry, and the use of remedies during sickness.

Suicide is a great sin against God, who is the exclusive arbiter of life and death. He who commits suicide, sins, against himself, by exposing himself to being into hell; and he sins against his family, whom he leaves to bear his shame, and perhaps to live in want for lack of his support.

Direct sterilization, by vasectomy for men or tubal ligation for women, is a degradation of human life. It impairs health, especially mental health.

Drunkenness is a sin because it injures our health. It is a form of slow suicide; drunkards do not live long. By habitual drunkenness, a person neglects the support of his family, and not unlikely also fails in his just obligations. When committed publicly, drunkenness occasions bad example and scandal, and has often promoted fights and even murder. It leads to other sins, including the wanton destruction of life, limb and property.

Much worse and more grievous than drunkenness is the loss of reason and serious injury to bodily well-being and mental health brought about by drug *addiction*.

Some women and girls are gravely responsible for not eating adequate food out of a desire to keep thin, to stay slim and thus be more pleasing to the eyes of others, to the injury of their health.

Another considerable violation of God's temple which our body is, is *sexual immorality*. St. Paul says: "Do not fool yourselves: people who are immoral . . . are adulterers or homosexual perverts . . . or are drunkards — none of these will possess God's Kingdom . . . Avoid immorality . . . the man, who is guilty of sexual immorality, sins against his body. Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you? . . . You do not belong to yourselves but to God . . . So use your bodies for God's glory." (1 Cor. 6:9-10. 18-20). "I warn you now as I did before: those who do these things (immoral, filthy, and indecent actions; get drunk) will not possess the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21).


One more point from today's Gospel is Decency in Attire in our churches and especially during Church services. The popularly known as "Sunday Dress" is now getting out of vogue. A few are now seen in church dressed in what seems to be bathing apparel or sports outfit. The sanctity of God's house and the sacredness of our human body demand that we dress up properly and decently to attend Church functions.

Even as we customarily clean our churches during this Lenten Season, especially for the Holy Week activities, let us first and foremost look after the cleansing of our own selves, temples of God that we are, not only for the Lenten Season, but for the rest of our lives.

Not Silver or Gold, But the Blood of Christ

JOHN 3:14-21

*4th SUNDAY OF LENT,
MARCH 13, 1988*

NE of the most frequently quoted text of the Holy Bible is this one from today's Gospel: "For God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not die but have eternal life."

As the holy mysteries of the Passion and Death of our Lord draw near, the Sacred Liturgy puts forth for our consideration texts that introduce us little by little into the knowledge of the highest truths of our Redemption.

If we consider well the readings of this Fourth Sunday of Lent we will see that our Redemption was perfect Redemption, in the full sense of justice. Who was our Redeemer? "God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son," says St. John. Our Redeemer was not an angel from heaven, not a cherubim, not a seraphim; but Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, true man and true God. So, therefore, when we see Jesus in agony in Gethsemane, scourged at the pillar, crowned with thorns, laden with the cross, crucified and dead on Calvary, we must realize that the one who suffers and dies, is not a mere man, but a man-God and that the sufferings and death of God have more than sufficient value to make complete satisfaction for all the sins of the world.

For this reason, in the hymn composed in honor of the tree of the cross, the Church says: "O Cross of Christ, immortal tree on which our Savior died, the world is sheltered by your arms that bore the Crucified. From bitter death and barren wood the tree of life is made; its branches bear unfailing fruit and leaves that never fade."

And this Redemption, from the beginning to the end, is in the most complete meaning of the word, an act of love. "For God loved the world so much." St. Paul says: "But God's mercy is so abundant, and His love for us is so great, that while we were spiritually dead in our disobedience He brought us to life with Christ . . . It is not the result of our own efforts, but God's gift" (Eph. 2:4.8-9).

The truth of the matter is that the most insignificant act of Christ, a faint request, a teardrop would have been enough to redeem all of us. But from Bethlehem where He was born up to Calvary where He died He lived a life of the cross and martyrdom, not precisely to save us, but to show the riches of His infinite love for men. Just as a spark of fire disappears upon falling on the surface of the sea, so our sins disappear upon falling on the deep and immense ocean of the blood of Christ.

Christ's Redemption is universal in time. All those who lived before His coming into this world, were saved by their faith in the Redeemer who was to come. Those who have lived and are living after His coming, are saved by their faith in the Redeemer who has come.

Christ's Redemption is universal in space. There is not one single privileged people that can claim to be qualified as the People of God, to the exclusion of the rest. St. Paul says: "There is no longer any distinction between Gentiles and Jews, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarians, savages, slaves, and free men, but Christ is all, Christ is in all" (Col. 3:11). Before Christ the Redeemer, all peoples are equal. "Everyone who believes in Him may not die but have eternal life," says St. John.

Now, let us consider the following: Do you really know how much you are worth? There are two persons who know how to appraise you, know what is your value. One is the Devil. To own one soul the Devil did not hesitate to offer Christ all the riches and the splendor of the world; he knows that, even so, he was making a profit. The other is Christ: to gain one man it did not matter to Him to give all His blood. The universe costs Him only a word of command; man costs Him His life.

What was paid for our Redemption, says St. Peter, was not corruptible things, such as gold or silver; "it was the costly sacri-

fice of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18-19). Because of the great price paid for us by Christ, we, therefore, are His, we belong to Him. And we belong to Christ not only as individuals but as a people. "Ask and I will give you all the nations; all the earth will be yours," says the Psalmist (Psalm 2:8).

Christ redeemed us gratuitously, with no merit on our part. And He gave a million times more than what was necessary. So much so that St. Augustine says: "Oh man, understand how much you are worth, but acknowledge all that you owe."

Just as the sun, even though it shines on the whole world, does not give you less light and heat that if it were to shine on you alone, Jesus Christ has died for all and for each one of us. In the very same manner He has died for all and for each one.

But take care and watch out, lest we become like the proverbial corked bottles that float empty in the midst of the ocean. A medicine capable of restoring health by its curative powers does not restore their health except to those who take the medicine. It is indeed necessary to believe in Jesus Christ and obtain His grace through the holy sacraments.

Freedom, Basis for Merit

JOHN 12:20-33

*5th SUNDAY OF LENT,
MARCH 20, 1988*

HOLY WEEK is now seven days away. The Gospel of this Fifth Sunday of Lent speaks to us now in full gear of the mysteries of our Redeemer. It is St. John who brings us the voice of Jesus who tells us: "I am telling you the truth:

a grain of wheat remains no more than a single grain unless it is dropped into the ground and dies. If it does die, then it produces many grains."

With a comparison taken from life in the fields, Jesus explains the condition, the state of affairs, and fruit of the life and death of the Messiah. As the grain dies to bear fruit, so will the Messiah die, but His death will be the beginning of the infinite fruits of His Redemption.

Christ died freely; He offered Himself to death because He wanted to. Now, a free act of the will is meritorious; it merits a reward if the act of the will is good; it merits a punishment if the act of the will is bad. When Adam sinned freely, the act of his will was bad, which caused his own ruin and that of the whole of mankind.

So, if Adam with his willful disobedience was able to cause the ruin of the whole of mankind, what must we say of the freedom with which Christ gave His life and accepted death? "If the grain dies, it produces much fruit." What was the reward which Jesus merited with His death?

With His death, Jesus merited His own personal exaltation. He said: "The hour has now come for the Son of Man to receive great glory." St. Paul says: "Christ Jesus always had the nature of God . . . of his own free will He gave up all He had . . . became man . . . and walked the path of obedience all the way to death — His death on the cross. For this reason God raised Him to the highest place above and gave Him the name that is greater than any other name. And so, in honor of the name of Jesus all beings in heaven on earth, and in the world below will fall on their knees, and all will proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:6-11).

In other words, we can say:

1. Christ, who ought not to die, merited the resurrection as a reward of His death.
2. Not heeding to be buried since He did not have to die, He rose from the depths of His chosen sepulcher to the highest heavens.

3. Having been condemned to death by an earthly tribunal, He was raised up to sit at the right hand of the Father, from where He will come to judge the living and the dead.
4. Having given up His life amid outrageous affronts, abuse and insults, He was glorified with a "name that is greater than any other name" and with a glory that eclipse all glory on earth and in the heavens.

And Jesus goes on to say: "Father, bring glory to your name." With His death Jesus reconciled us with God. Before Christ, God and man lived separated and at a distance from one another due to discord and enmity; now the blood of Christ unites us. Christ crucified merited for us the remission of sin, the cause of our enmity with God. "This is the cup of my blood . . . it will be shed for you and for all men so that sins may be forgiven," Jesus says at this and at every Mass.

When Jesus died on the cross, not only was the curtain hanging in the Temple torn in two from top to bottom, not only did the earth shake, the rocks split apart and the graves break open (Mat. 27:51-52), but also the portals of Heaven were unlocked. The prince of darkness and death "the ruler of this world," was overthrown, dethroned and expelled, because God "decreed that man should be saved through the wood of the cross. The tree of man's defeat became his tree of victory; where life was lost, there life has been restored through Christ our Lord" (Preface 46).

And now, what are we waiting for? The beckoning opened gates of Heaven are waiting for us, because Christ Jesus said: "Whoever wants to serve Me must follow Me, so that My servant will be with Me where I am. And my Father will honor anyone who serves Me."

With all frankness and seriousness let us reflect on the holy mysteries of our Redemption as we prepare ourselves for the solemn celebration of the Holy Week.

The Fickleness of People

MARK 14:1-15:47 (or 15:1-39)

*PALM SUNDAY OF
THE LORD'S PASSION,
MARCH 27, 1988*

REJOICE, rejoice, people of Zion! Shout for joy, you people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you! He comes triumphant and victorious, but humble and riding on a donkey — on a colt, the foal of a donkey! ” (Zachariah 9:9) So cried the prophet Zachariah, hundreds of years before the day when Jesus came riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. Word that He was coming had gone before Him, word that excited the people, some of whom knew and some of whom sensed who He was. They ran to the road along which He would enter. Those with cloaks threw them into the dusty road in honor of the Man they thought was the Messiah. Others cut branches from the trees and strewed them on the road. And the people shouted: “Hosanna to the Son of David, the King of Israel. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest! ” This is the fulfillment of Zachariah’s prophecy, the triumphal and royal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem days before His Passion and Death, which we now celebrate, calling it “Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion.”

Now, we have just read the Passion of Jesus as reported in the Gospel of St. Mark. One might think it premature, out of time, too soon to read the Passion now, for our Saviour Jesus Christ did not commence it today, but on Maundy or Holy Thursday. Today is a day of rejoicing, a day of victory celebration for Christ, because on this day He made His triumphal entry into the Holy City of Jerusalem.

Though the event of Jesus’ joyous entry into Jerusalem was uneventful and unimpressive, having taken place in a humble and

peaceful way, yet for all intents and purposes it was a royal victory parade. "I tell you that if they keep quiet, the stones themselves will start shouting," Jesus said (Luke 19:40). And today's Gospel tells us that "Pilate questioned Him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered, 'So you say'." It was an occasion where He was acclaimed the "Lord and King" that He really was.

But, how then does it happen that the Passion is read today? Mother Church has an important reason for it. She intends to place vividly before our eyes popular fickleness. These people, full of enthusiasm, do honor and homage to Christ today, but after a few days they will clamor for His death. The Church knows this fickleness; and thus the procession of the palms, which symbolizes the triumphant entry into Jerusalem, is followed by the reading of the history of the Passion, as if the Church would say: Behold, how fickle and inconstant people are! Today they shout "Hosannas" to Him and with loud acclamations of joy receive Him into their Holy City; and five days later they prefer the murdered Barabas and nail Christ to the Cross.

For the past five weeks, we have considered how good and loving our Lord Jesus is, how merciful and forgiving He is. We have reflected on how evil and ugly sin is. By it we offend God. Today the Gospel once again brings to us the terrible sufferings and cruel death which Jesus underwent to pay for our sins and break wide open the floodgates of His divine goodness and heavenly graces.

Many of you have made the Holy Retreat; and at it all were given great opportunities to approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation, to make their confessions. Let us thank God for that, for once again He showed us His mercy and His love.

Yet, take care and watch out lest we resemble and become like the fickle people at the time of Jesus! Let us fervently ask our Lord for the grace that not one of us may dare, after a good confession and communion, to return to a sinful life. Let us take to heart the words of the Prince of the Apostles: "If people have escaped from the corrupting forces of the world through their knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and then are again caught and conquered by them, such people are in worse condition at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have

been much better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than to know it and then turn away from the sacred command that was given them. What happened to them shows that the proverbs are true: "A dog goes back to what it has vomited" and "A pig that has been washed goes back to roll in the mud" (II Peter 2:20-22). Let us today make a firm resolution during this Holy Week to devote great attention to the worthy reception of the Holy Sacraments, and perseveringly lead a penitential life.

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