



Lucio Gutierrez, O.P. and the Study of the Christianization of the Philippines

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Fr. Lucio Peña Gutierrez, O.P. may be considered as having contributed significantly in the field of studies in the Ecclesiastical History of the Philippines and Philippine history in general. As a dedicated scholar, he campaigned for a more fair and objective view of the Philippine History. His studies tried to dispel a number of myths in the way the Spaniards carried out the evangelization and conquest of the Philippine Islands. He has shown that the experience of the Philippines is unique and the transformation of such scattered group of islands into a Christian nation could be considered one great success story for the Catholic Church. Anyone who would read Philippine history has to keep in mind Christian spirit that imbued the missionaries and secular rulers from Spain. To say, for instance, that the friars were the ones who destroyed the indigenous culture of the Filipinos and prior to their arrival was bliss in these Islands is anachronistic, ideology based and disprovable by evidences and documents. It is actually faith that preserved the Filipino culture and saved its people. His book on the life and works of Domingo de Salazar, the first bishop of the Philippines, is a tell tale of how the Spaniards who came into contact with the natives, labored meticulously to make their affair in the Philippines humane and true to the spirit of the Gospel. The challenge then is to make the many veiled aspects of Philippine Church history popular, and those popularly known, which are close to fictional, be freed from errors.

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A Point Person in Retelling the Philippine History

Fr. Lucio Peña Gutierrez, OP,¹ was born in Caleruega Spain on the 25th of October, 1938. He entered the Dominican Order in July 1955 and made his first profession on July 26, 1956. He had his Philosophy at Avila (Convento de Santo Tomas, 1956-1958) and Madrid (Convento de San Pedro Martir, 1958-1960). He had his Theology at the Dominican House of Studies in Oxford, England (1960-1964) and was ordained priest in Valladolid on June 30, 1963. He finished both his Licentiate (1967) and Doctorate (1974) in History at the Gregorian University in Rome.

He started teaching Ecclesiastical History at Faculty of Theology at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila in 1968. He served the said University for forty-two years, i.e. until 2011.² At UST, he became Dean of Theology (1988-1994) and Editor-in-chief of *Philippiniana Sacra*³ (1973-1990). His other ministries at UST were: Regent of the School of Basic Education, Regent of the Faculty of Arts and Letters, Regent of the Faculty of Architecture and Fine Arts, Regent of the College of Commerce, and Archivist of the University. He also was a professor of the School of Theology of Don Bosco, Manila for thirty years.

A transition came into his life when he was appointed Master of Students of the Province of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary whose Studentate is based in Macau. While being a formator he also taught Church history at the University of St. Joseph in Macau (2009-2010) and continued to teach at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila for two school years (2009 to 2011).⁴ However, his health started to decline and he began to struggle with bouts of apnea. Gradually he lost his mental lucidity, the reason for which the doctors did their best to find the cause and the cure, but nothing was made definite.⁵ He has lost his full consciousness and became bedridden and for more than three years. During those times, he was carefully taken care of by his brethren in the Convent of the Holy Cross in San Juan, Metro Manila and he joined his creator on December 21, 2013.⁶

¹ Details about his life presented here are taken from *Boletín De Información Provincia de Ntra. Sra. del Rosario, Numero 90*, Septiembre–Diciembre 2013, pp. 60-62 and from a web article written by Fr. Fausto Gomez, OP, “Good Fr. Lucio - With Thanks” dated December 27, 2013, at <http://www.dominicansmacau.org/?p=2238> downloaded July 29, 2015.

² In 2009, he was assigned in Macao to be the Master of Students of the Dominican Province of the Most Holy Rosary.

³ It is the official publication of the Ecclesiastical Faculties of the University of Santo Tomas.

⁴ Fr. Gomez, OP, <http://www.dominicansmacau.org/good-bye-fr-lucio-with-thanks/>, July 29, 2015.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ En noviembre del año 2010 fue trasladado al Hospital de San Martin de Porres, al lado del Convento de la Santa Cruz, Ciudad de San Juan, Metro-Manila, y durante tres años y dos meses

Besides being an excellent Church historian and professor, he is fondly remembered for his dedication, marked with cheerfulness and enthusiasm, to the pastoral work of the Santissimo Rosario Parish of the University of Santo Tomas.⁷ Furthermore, as testified by those whom he lived with and met, he was a very energetic friar, joyful and always smiling, and filled with compassion for the sick, the poor and the needy.⁸

Christianization of the Philippines

Fr. Gutierrez should be considered as a person who significantly campaigned for a more balanced and fair understanding of the history of the Church in the Philippines and Philippine History as a whole. His remarkable scholarly effort, which was the study of Philippine Church History, contributed significantly to the advancement of the said science. Through his works, he tried to correct widely-held misconceptions about Philippine history especially on the history of the Church in the Philippines. What best expressed his philosophy of history was his work which was published in *Philippiniana Sacra* in 1976.⁹ A considerably lengthy discourse, it very well spoke of the understanding of Fr. Gutierrez of the history of the Church in the Philippines. Powerful in tone and strongly apologetic, the Dominican pushed for a deeper study and teaching of history of Christianity in the Philippines to dispel its myths and bring to the fore its realities. For Fr. Gutierrez, the Christianization of the Philippines was a very historic event especially for the Catholic Church. The rapid spread of the Faith and the evangelization of the people of the islands were

permaneció en estado de coma recibiendo buenos cuidados médicos y la visita diaria de los Padres de la Comunidad del Convento, de religiosas y religiosos dominicos y de muchos amigos. *Boletín De Información Provincia de Ntra. Sra.del Rosario*, p. 61.

⁷ He served as assistant parish priest for several years.

“[He] celebrated at least one Mass in a parish every Sunday and day of obligation. He could not say no to invitations to say one more Mass to the point that some Sundays he celebrated five Masses. We told him: “Lucio, that is too much!” He just laughed and continued doing it.” Fr. Gomez, OP, <http://www.dominicansmacau.org/good-bye-fr-lucio-with-thanks/>, July 29, 2015.

⁸ Fray Lucio tuvo también tiempo para dedicarse activamente a la pastoral de la parroquia de la Universidad de Santo Tomas y a la pastoral de los distintos colegios de la Universidad, dando retiros, confesando y predicando. Dio charlas y retirosen muchas ciudades de las Islas Filipinas.

Fue un hombre lleno de entusiasmo dominicano. Su character alegre y sonriente esta balleno de compassion por los enfermos, los pobres y los necesitados. A pesar del mucho trabajo, fray Lucio nunca descuidó el deporte nilas marchas a pie por muchos rincones de las Islas Filipinas. *Boletín De Información Provincia de Ntra. Sra.del Rosario*, p. 61.

⁹ Fr. Lucio Gutierrez, OP, *Christianization of the Philippines: Myth and Reality*. *Philippiniana Sacra* Volume XI, Number 32, May – August, 1976. 203-291. The work mostly a refutation of some of the claims of a Jesuit historian, Miguel Bernad of his book which was published in 1972, “Christianization of the Philippines: Problems and Perspectives”.

unprecedented in the history on this region of the world. It was one of the great success stories of evangelization¹⁰ as the Christianization of the Philippines was achieved in an incredible short span of time.¹¹ Schumacher, in citing the work of a Jesuit missionary priest in the 16th century, Pedro Chirino, once wrote:

Almost from the beginning the missionaries found here and there among their Filipino Christians men and women who wished to share in the work of the Fathers. Some indeed showed themselves not only devoted assistants, but in certain respects were more capable than the missionaries themselves for the effective bringing of their faith to their countrymen.¹²

This does not discount that there were also a number of resistance that are also attributed to the Spaniards themselves. In fact, one of the causes of the setbacks of the Evangelization in the Philippines were the injustices that came about with the conquest of the islands like the abuses by the *encomenderos* and the issue of exacting tributes from the natives.¹³ Even later in history, the development of the local clergy was seen to have happened too late and when developed became also one of the forces of resistance against the Spanish rule.¹⁴ However, it should not be forgotten that it was also the efforts of the friars in defending the rights of the people that contributed to their success.¹⁵

For this reason, Fr. Gutierrez cautioned readers and writers of the history of the Philippines from imposing nationalistic sentiments at the expense of facts and evidences. Leaning onto such feelings and biases, have made some historical narratives anachronistic. He reminded his readers that such distortions in the narratives of the Philippine history were a result of the Propaganda Movement that happened in the 19th century in the Islands. The movement, while seeking for reforms in the Philippines, especially on the aspect of equality between the Spaniards and

¹⁰ Fr. Gutierrez describes for instance what the account of the first contact of the Spaniards to the natives of Cebu and started to evangelize its natives in 1521, a week after celebrating the first mass in an island called Limasawa, the whole population practically became Christian. "Thus began one of the most outstanding and transcendental episodes in the history of Christianity in the East. Ibid., p. 215.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 203.

¹² John N. Schumacher, S.J. *Readings in Philippine Church History* (2nd edition) Loyola School of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University, 1987. P. 52.

¹³ For instance, shortly after Legazpi had conquered the city of Cebu and the neighbouring settlements, he proposed to the native chiefs that they pay a tribute. Probably forced by circumstances, the latter promised to pay it, perhaps even against their will. Pablo Fernandez, OP. *History of the Church in the Philippines, 1521-1898*. Life Today Publications, San Juan, Metro Manila Philippines, 1988, p. 249 citing Blair and Robertson, Vol III, pp 267-268.

¹⁴ Governor Izquierdo's recommendation . . . in 1872 indicate how he regarded the friars – as a means of control of the Indios for the Spanish Government. The Filipino clergy on the other hand were a danger, and should be eliminated in due course. Schumacher, p. 226.

¹⁵ See also Fr. Fernandez, pp. 245-253.

Filipinos, it was strongly anti-friar. A history that has been colored by such biases and ideology are misleading and does not help in the understanding of the Filipino as a people.¹⁶ Hence, for, Fr. Gutierrez, there was still a great challenge to write the history of the Philippines, most especially its christianization:

I am fully convinced that the history of the Christianization of the Philippines is not a twice-told tale. It has not yet been told, neither by a Filipino historian nor by a foreigner. The history of the Christianization has not yet been written and I venture to say that it will not be told in some generations to come. The history of the Christianization of the Philippines should be written by a person who understands the nature of the Spanish nation, the Spirit of the Spanish Friars, the idiosyncrasy of the Filipino people, the customs and morals of the early Filipinos, the Christian spirit of the Filipino nation.¹⁷

Fr. Gutierrez countered the argument that the coming of Spain to the Philippines was the cause of the destruction of the nation. The reverse was true. Spain, the friars in particular, were the builders and even the saviors of the Philippines. Fr. Gutierrez contrasted the Philippine experience under Spain with those lands that were conquered by the Saxons. The natives of the latter were practically eliminated.¹⁸ He wanted to emphasize that despite the shortcomings done by Spain, the enterprise made by the empire could still be considered as incredibly humane. This was because of the Catholic force that it carried. Such claim was neither based on a Catholic nor a Spanish bias but is attested to by history itself. Because of the Spanish conquest, “The islands were brought into the mainstream of world history, that they were made part of a world power.”¹⁹ Borrowing the words of a well-known Filipino writer:

The problem of the Philippine historian is to integrate what’s felt to be a disagreeable first act into the national drama without making either the colonizer or the colonial embarrassingly prominent. And yet with no downgrading of their era; with the intent, in fact of revealing how relevant, how important, that era was to us.²⁰

¹⁶ Fr. Lucio Gutierrez, O.P., *Christianization*, p. 204. To explain the history of a nation from the exclusive nationalistic point of view, revolving as it were, round that nation, which may have developed that the historical sense of nationhood only a few decades ago, is tantamount to national disaster. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p 213-214.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 212.

²⁰ Nick Joaquin, *Culture and History*, Anvil Publishing Inc, 2004, p. 7.

A Disregarded Factor

For one to interpret better the history of the conquest and christianization of the Philippines, one has to be aware of the Theologico-Juridical ideas of the first Spanish conquistadores and missionaries. This, according Fr. Gutierrez, was what many historians in the Philippines tend to ignore.

Goodness or badness does not explain entirely the conquest and christianization of the Philippines... The people who came to the Philippines: Legaspi, Urdaneta, Rada, Herrera, Goiti, Salcedo, more so the Augustinians, belonged to a school of thought that can be traced back to the great Spanish theologians of the XVI century, especially Francisco de Vitoria and Domingo Soto.²¹

One cannot therefore say sweepingly that the conquest of the Philippines was simply a matter of subduing a group of people by another nation for the sake of subduing it. Spain, by that time, was already conscious of the principles (International Law) which were based on the Gospel.²² It was true that there were some blunders, even on a large scale, in the way Spain justified its conquest of the Philippine Islands, especially in the latter part of its colonization, as Fr. Gutierrez himself said:

The first thing that we have to keep in mind is that the Spaniards who came to the Philippines in the last three quarters of the nineteenth century could be called, without much exaggeration, the scum of the nation. In general, these Spaniards were ignorant, rough and with little love for the Philippines... what was perhaps worse was not their ignorance and arrogance but their religious insensibility.²³

Despite the bad things that happened during the Spanish presence, one should not discount the great achievements and developments that came about when Christianity was brought by the same empire. There was the Christian spirit working in their enterprise especially in first three quarters of the Spanish rule. More often, it was more of how the law was carried out in the Philippine Islands that became the problem.²⁴ Suffice it to say that war or violence was never a method but a final recourse once all peaceful means have been exhausted.²⁵

²¹ Fr. Lucio Gutierrez, O.P., *Christianization of the Philippines.*, p. 220.

²² *Ibid.*, p 220-221.

²³ Fr. Lucio Gutierrez, O.P. *Archdiocese of Manila: A Pilgrimage in Time (1565-1999)*, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Manila, 1999, p. 201.

²⁴ Here Fr. Gutierrez the *Requerimiento* which even the Pope supported. For Spain to justifiably conquer or even declare war against a people, requires that the said people should accept first the supreme and religious power of Spain. There was also the *Relecciones de Indis* whose principles Legaspi based his engagement with the chieftain of Cebu, Tupas, and his men. Fr. Gutierrez, *Christianization*, p. 225.

²⁵ *Ibid.*,p. 237.

Note on the Point of Contact

Fr. Gutierrez, had always reminded his audience to note what the situation of the Philippine Islands was at the point when the Spaniards came.²⁶ Their arrival in the sixteenth century should be seen as a start of a radical process that have made the Philippines what it is today. One has to be careful in over-emphasizing the period before the coming of the missionaries and conquistadores as a 'might have been better' version of the Filipino history.²⁷

Fr. Gutierrez clarified Manila was not yet a city²⁸ when it was conquered by Martin de Goiti and Miguel Lopez de Legaspi. The scale of the Chinese activity was not grand. The trade with the Chinese was very small and even negligible. After having defeated the Chinese traders in battle, the Spaniards returned everything that had been taken from them, including cargo. They were not enslaved and their boats were readied to be repaired so they could safely return to China. This was something unthinkable for the Chinese.²⁹ An author who supports this proof says:

Though we trace our relations with the Chinese as far back as the ninth century, the relations were of the most casual kind, because the Chinese formerly did not settle among and had little direct impact on our early culture. This can be observed in a department of our domestic life where Chinese influence should have been aboriginal – the kitchen – and where they should have been our first tutors in cuisine. But somebody else, not they, performed this role.³⁰

Regarding the conquest of Manila, questions still remain regarding their rules, particularly Rajah Suleiman. For Fr. Gutierrez, it is would be awkward to say

²⁶ He further strengthened this area through collaboration with Cantius Kobak, OFM in translating from Spanish to English the work of a Jesuit historian and missionary, Fr. Francisco Alcina *Historia de las Islas e Indios de Bisayas. . . (1668)*". Their translation is published in several issues of *Philippiniana Sacra* and the University of Santo Tomas Publishing House published the monumental work in three volumes.

²⁷ It is worth noting again what Joaquin said to strengthen our point: "Rejected or not, recognized or not, the 16th and 17th centuries remain the epoch, meaning turning point, in our history because then started the process of the making of the Filipino – with his Westernizing, if you like, but also with his Asianizing; and the fusion of two movements is now too established for us to say that both went into the making of the Filipino, and so effectively that we wear our Asian rue with a difference." *Joaquin, Culture and History*, p. 52.

²⁸ One has to note that the perspective here is on how European cities were characterized.

Such perspective has also brought problems with the Spaniards because this led them to a system called '*reducciones*' or the gathering of the people to concentrate them in towns in order to administer to them more efficiently. This has encountered a lot of resistance from the natives. Fr. Gutierrez, *Archdiocese of Manila*, pp. 90-92.

²⁹ Fr. Gutierrez, *Christianization*, p. 240.

³⁰ Joaquin, p. 42.

that Rajah Suleiman was a hero. He was not a native of Manila but was a Moslem slave trader from Borneo and a tyrannical ruler.³¹ “It is actually observed that the principal rulers of Manila Bay area seem to have been not only Muslims but probably were themselves from the ruling family of Brunei.”³² That is why when the Spanish fleet together with a number of Visayans arrived in Manila, the natives welcomed them with the thought that someone more powerful would liberate them from the clutches of Suleiman.³³ Summing up what Fr. Gutierrez says regarding Islam in the Philippines:

There also was no Islamic consciousness to speak of and the reason why there were no missionaries in Mindanao was because the Spanish empire focused on Luzon and the Visayas as the efforts were mainly directed to China. It could also have been the lack of will and foresight on the part of Spain that is why Mindanao has been Islamized today.³⁴

Regarding the early Filipino beliefs and practices, Fr. Gutierrez, pointed out that it was because of the missionaries that such have been kept alive. The Dominican explained:

If Christianity meant the destruction of the social fabric, the obliteration of Filipino culture and civilization, the annihilation of cities and towns, the enslavement of the people, the loss of personal dignity, then I hold that Christianity is a curse. And as a curse it should be spat upon and rejected. Strange that so much effort, so much work would be expended by men who spent their lives for Christ, exiled in a foreign land, *peregrine pro Christo*, only for a priest to come and now tell them: what you did meant for the destruction of my people.³⁵

For Fr. Gutierrez, it was religion, “The Christian religion, the inhabitants of the Philippine islands became Filipinos.”³⁶ Citing various documents, he mentioned of the fragmentation of the islands, frequent wars and absence of security. The sense of nationhood and its understanding of the Filipino was a result of the Spanish colonization and Christianization of the Islands. For Fr. Gutierrez, it was like saying, “Just look at the map and it will tell you a lot of what this region was and what the people believed in were before it was Christianized.” He however believed

³¹ *Ibid.*, p 244. The author believes that supporting documents still need to be cited to affirm this. However, this statement came from Fr. Gutierrez in his article.

³² Schumacher, p. 16.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 244-245.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 248.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

that it was not a perfect enterprise as evidenced by what happened in the move for independence. However, Fr. Lucio affirmed that the “the key to understand Filipino-Spanish history is religion.”³⁷

Fr. Gutierrez cautioned that his audience against being misled to believe that the missionaries destroyed the culture of the Filipinos when they were actually the defenders of the people. Sometimes the missionaries went overboard. Yet he also gave the challenge that if we removed or erased totally what Spain did to the Philippines it would also mean going back to animism, superstition and paganism. The friars were not hated by the ordinary people of the Philippines.

Then as now, the *common tao*, the ordinary man did not reject the Spanish friars. The Filipino people behaved in a very human way towards the Spanish Friars of the Provinces during the revolutionary years. They can feel proud for their fair dealings with the Friars during those terrible time... there was odium against them, but that was among the *ilustrados*, the intellectual elite who lived separated and segregated from the people, from the masses.³⁸

Fr. Gutierrez, truly campaigned for a continuous rectification of the narrative of Philippine history, also for the sake of being honest and even the possibility of its healing as a nation. While there have been many and are still a good number of historians who continuously work to write and re-write the Filipino narrative, the late Fr. Lucio Gutierrez is worth mentioning.

Domingo de Salazar, OP: First Bishop of the Philippines

The work of Fr. Gutierrez on Domingo de Salazar, OP, the first bishop of the Philippines, is a very important contribution to understanding the beginnings of the history of the evangelization of the Philippine Islands. Besides uncovering the work of the life and works of Salazar, Fr. Lucio was able to provide salient information on the prevailing issues that affected the Christianization of the Philippines and those of nearby nations. Such information and issues have been rarely touched and even explored in-depth by many Philippine Church historians. This masterpiece by Fr. Gutierrez was a result of his success in accessing numerous historical documents in the Philippines and abroad.³⁹ Looking at the life of Salazar one would get an insider’s

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 266.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

³⁹ Fr. Gutierrez would fondly tell his students of the story of how he was able to get a lot of documents even from the United States

view of the intricacies and complexities of the Spanish endeavour, which in the end would prove to be more interesting than the rash generalizations and ideological biases that taint a number of Philippine history books.

Domingo de Salazar was indeed proven to be a very suitable person to occupy the position as first bishop of Manila. He represented well the mind of the Church and that of the Spanish monarchy on the propagation of faith, considering the unique situation of the Philippines and the subtleties of Church-State relations. Salazar was intellectually capable and of good repute.⁴⁰ He worked first in the New World, particularly Florida and Mexico.⁴¹ His experiences in the New World gave him some lessons which would impact him in his ministry in the Philippines later on.

Salazar worked in the Philippines from 1581-1591. Just a month after his arrival he convoked the Synod of Manila, which composed of chosen laymen and ecclesiastics to discuss a number of issues affecting the Spaniards and natives of the islands.⁴² There were indeed a number of serious problems that needed to be addressed both for pastoral sake and even the survival of the Spaniards in the Philippines. Fr. Gutierrez, by discussing Salazar considerably and his Synod in his published work, made a very historic moment in the Philippines available to readers of Philippine Church history. For here, one would discover most especially how the Spanish presence in the islands fared with Christianity. Moreover, the process was really a search for a just and human way of putting the Philippine Islands under the domain of Spain. This even meant condemnation of the abuses made by the Spaniards.⁴³ Salazar in the end was proven to have always been imbued with the spirit of Bartolome de Las Casas⁴⁴ and guided by the wisdom of Francis de Vitoria.⁴⁵

The Mission to China

Fr. Gutierrez had provided an inside look into the involvement of the Church and the Spain in the grand dream of preaching the Gospel to China and even

⁴⁰ Fr. Lucio Gutierrez, *Domingo de Salazar, OP, First Bishop of the Philippines: 1512-1594*, UST Publishing House, 2001, p. 42.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

⁴⁴ Bartolome de Las Casas was known to be a defender of the rights of the Indians when the Spaniards came into contact with them in the New World. *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia* (CD-ROM), 2009.

⁴⁵ Francis de Vitoria was a Dominican and is said to be the founder of International Law. His conscientious implementation of justice in the newfound lands of the Spaniards made him come up with the so called *Relecciones de Indis*. Fr. Gutierrez, *Domingo de Salazar*, pp. 7-9.

conquering it by arms. Once again it is important to know the details and intricacies involved, as the Church and the Spanish government pondered on how to best deal with China given that it was still closed to any work of Evangelization. It was even shut from having commercial relations with Spain.⁴⁶ An influential Jesuit, Alonzo Sanchez, who was very close to Salazar, favoured the conquest of China militarily. His talent and convincing power made Salazar and other missionaries side with him. The presentation made by the Bishop, though unthinkable is an evidence, of how important the relationship with China was. In the end however, after having been debated in various fora in the New World and in Spain, Salazar recanted his position on the armed conquest of China citing that he was deceived⁴⁷ by the Jesuit Alonzo Sanchez and the false reports by the Portuguese.⁴⁸ Salazar returned to his former ideas. He rejected all types of military protection in the preaching of the Gospel, even when there was a serious danger of death for the missionaries, and when the Gospel was not given a hearing.⁴⁹ He went beyond Vitoria and sided with Las Casas, the only valid method is the apostolic one.⁵⁰

Salazar was to be attributed the first Arancel in the Philippines. For Fr. Gutierrez, this document was a gem for it gave a glimpse of the religious status of Manila in 1588. Dealing with the question about the tributes, Fr. Gutierrez explained that Salazar remained firm in implementing justice, despite very grave opposition from some officials.⁵¹

History of the Archdiocese of Manila (1565-1850)

When Fr. Gutierrez launched his campaign in his article in *Philippiniana Sacra* in 1976, he acknowledged the contributions of the Philippine Church historians during that time. He however viewed that the history of the Church of the Philippines was yet to be told and at that time he only knew one person capable of such a task. He considered Horacio dela Costa, S.J. as competent to tell about the history of the Christianization of the Philippines.⁵²

⁴⁶ Fr. Gutierrez, *Domingo de Salazar*, p. 182.

⁴⁷ From the signatories of the *memorial*, there were false information being sent to Spain, adventurous missionaries abandoned their post and had strange love for the exotic and the unknown. *Ibid.*, p.192-193.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.150.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

⁵¹ Salazar and Dasmariñas, the governor-general of the Philippines at that time, had very heated exchange of letters regarding the collection of tributes from the natives.

⁵² See *Philippiniana Sacra* Volume XI, Number 32, May – August, 1976, p. 204.

Looking at his accomplishment, after years of teaching and research, one could say that Fr. Gutierrez has also become the person he was looking for to tell about the history of the christianization of the Philippines. This was because of his contribution to the two-volume work on the 400 year-history of the Archdiocese of Manila. The first volume, consisting of the Church in the Philippines in the first 300 year is a brilliant work on Church history. The work further reflects on how the Church, especially the friars laboured tirelessly and unselfishly in the work of evangelization and the building of the Philippines as a nation. This was for Fr. Gutierrez what should be always recognized. There were indeed a lot of shortcomings. However, Fr. Gutierrez pointed to the fact that many of the abuses came in the last quarter of the Spanish occupation, when the *Peninsulares*⁵³ who came to the Philippines were proud ignorant and irreligious.⁵⁴ One could perceive in the way Fr. Gutierrez ended his book, that as a historian of the Philippine Church, his hope was that terrible wounds in the relationship of the Friars and the Filipinos would in due time be healed.⁵⁵

While there were other Church history books that came before Fr. Gutierrez's *Archdiocese of Manila*, what is noticeably different is his lengthy discussion on the Evangelization of the other countries in the Far East. Fr. Gutierrez, therefore gave a more detailed and updated context on how the Evangelization of Asia was carried out and the role of the Church in the Philippines in it.

An Interpreter to Filipinos

An important contribution by Fr. Gutierrez which should not be forgotten was his contribution to the history and culture of the Visayan people. He was among those who collaborated to make the work of a Jesuit missionary in the 17th century, Ignacio Francisco Alcina available to English-speaking people. The so-called, *Historia de las Islas e indios de Bisayas... 1668*, after a long and painstaking process was published in three volumes by the University of Santo Tomas Publishing House in Manila in 2002. Besides being monumental, it is a very valuable work in the study of Philippine history for it presents the situation of the Visayas, the culture and even the flora and fauna at the point of the Spanish contact. Together with Fr. Gutierrez, the completed work is also credited to two important friars. First, is as fellow Dominican, Fr. Pablo Fernandez, who died June 1989. Second, is a Polish Franciscan, Cantius Kobak,

⁵³ A term for Spaniards staying in the Philippines but originated in Spain (referring to Iberian Peninsula). Another group of Spaniards in the Philippines were the *Insulares*. They were Spanish by blood but already born and raised in the Islands.

⁵⁴ Fr. Gutierrez, Archdiocese of Manila, p. 286.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

who worked for thirty years in the Philippines before being assigned to Milwaukee, Wisconsin in September 1989.⁵⁶

Conclusion

A Filipino Dominican once related his experience of staying in a convent run by Spanish Dominicans. In one of their community gathering, he was causally and cordially asked to teach them some Filipino words. Having some knowledge of the Spanish language, taking the offer in a fraternal way and with a bit of funniness, he pointed to some objects he saw. Pointing to the spoon he said it is 'kutsara' (*cuchara* in Spanish). Then the fork is 'tinidor' (*tenedor* in Spanish). Then the knife 'kutsilyo' (*cuchillo* in Spanish). Holding the chair, he said 'silya' (*silla* in Spanish) and followed by the table which is 'lamesa' (*la mesa* in Spanish). There are more Filipino words borrowed from what one considers to be Filipino and Spanish for that matter very much part of Filipino culture. Many of these things have become common to most Filipinos that they were thought to be old and original. It has been generally forgotten that many of what is called Filipino is part of wave of new things that were introduced in the 15th century when the country became part of the Spanish Empire. When one looks for an original Filipino identity and asserts that one has to go back and uphold it would most likely end up frustrated. When one starts peeling off all the Spanish and Christian elements that have been added through the course of the centuries, one might not really like what he would discover. This was precisely the point that was strengthened by Fr. Gutierrez. Remove the Faith and Spanish in the Filipino, then you also get rid of the Santo Niño, Nazareno, Dinagyang, Pistang Bayan, Pasko, Cuaresma, Undas, EDSA Revolution, and even many of our educational institutions.

Yet there is another case which might be of interest. When one ministers to some of the poorest places in Metro Manila and asks the people to pray their basic Christian prayers, these people would most likely pray in English, e.g. Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be etc., being cosmopolitan. Most people would say that know more the English than the Filipino or Tagalog. What are the Filipino basic Christian prayers, *Ama Namin*, *Aba Ginoo*, *Luwalhati*, *Sumasampalataya*? They are mostly indigenous and not Spanish words. This bespeaks a lot about what really happened when the christianization of the islands was carried out. As early as 1582, it is said that as a result of the Synod of Manila, a Tagalog Catechism (later known as *Doctrina Cristiana*) was commissioned to be made by a Franciscan expert in the Tagalog

⁵⁶ *Historia de las Islas e indios de Bisayas . . . 1668 por Ignacio Francisco Alcina, S.J.*

Translated, Edited and Annotated by Cantius Kobak, OFM and Lucio Gutierrez, OP, Part 1, Book 1 Volume 1, UST Publishing House 2002, p. xiii.

grammar and vocabulary, Juan de Plasencia.⁵⁷ The Dominicans in 1593, published the *Doctrina Cristiana* in Tagalog-Spanish and Chinese and was the Catechism used in the Philippines hence.⁵⁸ The basic Christian prayers in Filipino mostly used indigenous vocabulary and grammar.⁵⁹ Why? It was a pastoral decision and neither a way of depriving the natives of education nor a statement of inequality. Hence, Fr. Gutierrez, having contributed significantly to study in Philippine Church history has also become an upholder of the Filipino and his identity. ■

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⁵⁷ Fr. Gutierrez, *Archdiocese of Manila*, p. 53-54.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁵⁹ When the missionaries could not find an equivalent term in the indigenous language, they just retained the Spanish or in some cases used the Latin term.

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