

Visayan Martyrs in the Marianas, 1668-1672

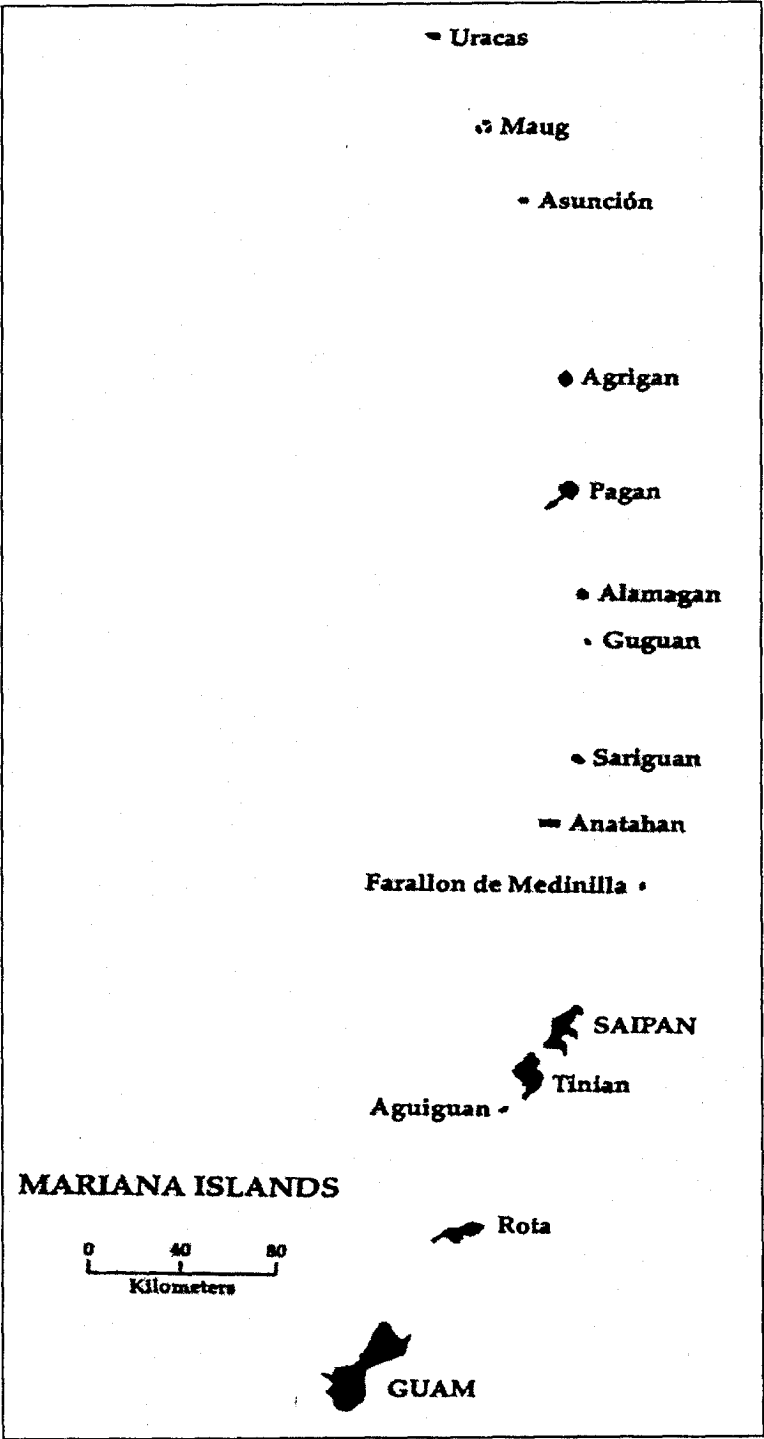
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Introduction: The Establishment of the Spanish Mission in the Marianas

Native people from the Visayan region of the Philippines were among those who helped establish the first Spanish settlement in the Mariana Islands in 1668. After receiving the long-awaited royal permission to begin the mission, a Jesuit missionary named Fr. Diego Luis de Sanvitores left the Philippines for Mexico on August 7, 1667. With him were three Jesuit priests, Fr. Luis de Medina, Fr. Tomas de Cardeñoso and Fr. Pedro de Casanova, and an unordained Jesuit Brother named Luis Bustillo. They were accompanied by thirty one people consisting of twelve Spaniards and nineteen *indios* or natives from the Philippines.

The establishment of a permanent mission in the Marianas, then known as the Islas de los Ladrones was the result of Fr. Sanvitores' fervent efforts to save the souls of the native Chamorros who were "although in the path of the galleons, had never enjoyed the blessings of Christianity."¹ His initial request to King Philip IV was rebuffed for reasons such as there were many souls to

¹ Fr. Ruperto C. Santos, Ed. *Anales Ecclesiasticos de Filipinas*, Vol. I. (Manila: The Roman Archbishop of Manila, 1994), p. 206.



Map of the Mariana Islands.

save in the Philippines; that there was no money and that all the ships that sailed from the Philippines to the islands had failed.²

Fr. Sanvitores sought the intervention of Queen Maria Ana and finally received a royal cedula authorizing a mission in the islands. In gratitude Fr. Sanvitores asked that the islands be renamed after his benefactor, the Queen.³

After receiving funds and supplies in Mexico, the *San Diego*, the ship which bore Fr. Sanvitores and his companions, arrived at Hagatña on June 16, 1668. The lay people in the mission were to serve as *donados* or lay assistants of the missionaries. Some of them would teach skills such as farming and carpentry to the Chamorros or natives of the Marianas. Another duty was to serve as soldiers in the garrison which was armed with only two muskets.

Of the nineteen Philippine *indios* only twelve were mentioned in Fr. Sanvitores' letters. Among them was Juan de Santa Cruz who became the mission's first military commander. The others were de Santa Cruz's sister, his wife, a nephew named Pedro Juan de la Cruz, Francisco de Mendoza, Estevan Diaz, Juan de los Reyes, Domingo de la Cruz, Domingo Mindoro, Pascual Francisco, Andres Ysson, Felipe Tocsan and Andres de la Cruz. Other *indios* were mentioned in the letters of other missionaries. They were Damian Bernal, Nicolas Figueroa, Pedro Calungsod, Hipolito de la Cruz, Gabriel de la Cruz, Agustin de la Cruz, Juan de los Reyes and Felipe Sonson. Some of them were quite young such as Andres de la Cruz who was barely twelve years old and served served as boy soprano.⁴

Among the Tagalogs in the mission were Juan de Santa Cruz, Francisco de Mendoza and Estevan Diaz. Felipe Sonson who served

² Ward Barrett, Ed. *Mission in the Marianas: An Account of Diego Luis de Sanvitores and His Companions 1669-1670*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1975), pp. 4-5.

³AGI (Archivo General de Indias) 82-2-29, *Letter of Fr. Sanvitores to the Queen*, July 1667. Listed as Document 1667 in Rodrigue Levesque, Ed. *History of Micronesia*, herein after to be referred to as HM, Vol. 4, (Gatineau: Levesque Publications, 1992-1997), pp. 341-345.

⁴ RAH (Real Academia de Historia, Madrid) 9/2676, No. 5, *Letter of Pedro Casanova to Fr. Gabriel Guillen, San Juan, Mariana*, 17 June 1668 cited as Document 1668J3 in HM 4:444-445.

as carpenter and soldier was a Pampango from Macabebe. The Visayans in the group like Pedro Calungsod and Hipolito de la Cruz appear to have come from Cebu or Bohol where the Jesuits had missions.

The newly established mission was joined by other natives from the Philippines who were already in the Marianas. They were survivors of shipwrecks of Spanish galleons like the *Santa Margarita* in Saipan in 1601 and the *Nuestra Señora de la Concepcion* in 1638. Among them were Francisco Maunahan and Pedro Ximenes. Both became guides and interpreters of the mission.

The Origins of Chamorro Opposition to the Missionaries

Upon their arrival the missionaries were warmly received by most of the Chamorros. As missionaries they required the natives to abandon their old religious beliefs and traditional practices. The Chamorros venerated their ancestors by keeping the skulls of their dead in their homes or in special houses to pray for wishes, such as rain, a good harvest or a victory in battle. They also believed in the power of native shamans called *makanas* who were believed to be able to communicate with the spirit world. The missionaries ordered the practice of ancestor worship stopped and considered the *makanas* as professional deceivers and allies of the Devil. They ordered that the revered bones and skulls be taken from the homes of the natives and burned.⁵

The missionaries also found other practices incompatible with Christianity. One such practice was that of allowing young and unmarried women to cohabit freely with young men called *urritaos*. The women were rented or sold by their parents for iron hoops or turtle shells and lived in public houses maintained by these young men. The women were returned to their parents after the *urritaos* had grown tired of them. It did not mean that the women's reputation was sullied. Instead, their value increased because of their experience.

⁵ Scott Russell, *Tiempon I Manmoko'na Ancient Chamorro Culture and History of the Northern Mariana Islands* (Saipan: CNMI Division of Historic Preservation, 1998), p. 295.

The missionaries considered this practice as blasphemy and a form of institutionalized prostitution. They ordered the public houses of the *urritaos* burned and the young girls to be taught Christian values. The imposition of Christian practices deprived the *urritaos* their right to change partners whenever they pleased and the parents of the young women lost a source of income. Within two months of their arrival the warm welcome received by the missionaries during the time of their arrival turned into hostility.⁶

Another cause of the rising hostility of the natives was the occurrence of deaths especially among young children and old people. Their demise was attributed to the holy water and oil used by the missionaries during baptism. A Chinese castaway named Choco spread rumors among the Chamorros that the oil and water were poison.⁷

Choco was a crewmember of a sampan which was blown to the Marianas. He murdered one of his shipmates and refused to sail when the sampan was rebuilt fearing that he might be killed in revenge. Choco married a native woman in Saipan and settled in the village of Pa'a in Guam. He acquired considerable influence among the Chamorros because of his ability to work iron. When Fr. Sanvitores and the missionaries arrived in the islands, Choco feared losing his privileged status. He told the natives that he had been to the Philippines and that the missionaries were hated in their own country. He said that the missionaries were deportees from "the larger colony," referring to the Philippines. Choco preached that the missionaries were killers of children and old people who used the poisonous water and oil they used in their ceremonies.⁸ The natives easily believed Choco's words because they witnessed the deaths of young children and old men and women shortly after being baptized or given last rites. It was highly likely that the natives contracted diseases like influenza, measles and small-pox from the Spaniards to which the Chamorros had no natural immunity.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Peter Coomans, *History of the Mission in the Mariana Islands, 1667-1673*, Trans. Rodrigue Levesque. (Saipan: NMI Division of Historic Preservation, 2000), p. 23.

⁸ Alexander Spoehr, *Saipan The Ethnology of a War-Damage Island* (Saipan: NMI Division of Historic Preservation, 1998), p. 10.

Aside from Choco the *makanas* also stirred up the natives. Like Choco the *makanas* were threatened by the prospect of losing their privileged position in Chamorro society. They warned that the natives were incurring the ire of the *aniti* or the ancestral spirits because of their acceptance of Christianity and that the deaths of infants and other misfortunes were caused by the displeasure of the spirits.⁹ The Chamorro families started hiding their babies from the missionaries to prevent them from being baptized. Everywhere the missionaries went they were met by threats and taunts from the natives.

The increasing hostility of the natives resulted in the first deaths in the Spanish mission. On August 19, 1668 while sailing in the sea off Tinian, Chamorros killed two of Fr. Morales' escorts, a seaman named Lorenzo Castellanos and a twelve year old Tagalog boy named Gabriel de la Cruz. The Chamorros accused Castellanos of causing the deaths of children with his holy water. The Chamorros threw him overboard and speared him to death as he tried to swim back to the canoe. The assailants then turned to the boy de la Cruz who knelt on his knees and begged for his life. The Chamorros speared him in the chest and threw his body to the sea. De la Cruz was the first native from the Philippines to be killed in the Mariana mission.¹⁰

The Martyrdom of Fr. Luis de Medina and His Visayan Companion Hipolito de la Cruz

Despite the threats to their lives, the missionaries and their Philippine *indio* assistants continued their work in the islands. The priests instructed their lay catechists to enter the houses of the natives and seek out the children to be baptized. On January 27, 1670 Fr. Luis Medina and two Visayan lay catechists named Hipolito de la Cruz and Agustin de la Cruz arrived in the island of Saipan. Fr. de Medina sent them in many directions and ordered them to go into the houses and explore everything until they found

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ RAH 9/2668 Document No. 17, *Composite Report for 1665-1672 Period Attributed to the Jesuit Provincial Andres de Ledesma*, cited as Document 1670H in HM5:63-82.

the hidden babies. Hipolito and Agustin entered the village of Arayao where they were met by angry natives who called them "fools and poisoner of children."¹¹

The natives then held a council to discuss how to kill them. One of the more daring natives was armed with a sword and held it threateningly over the head of Hipolito. The other natives were armed with spears tipped with human bone. Seeing what was about to happen to Hipolito, his companion, Agustin de la Cruz cried out "Hey! You would kill an innocent person that way?"¹² The native with the sword did not strike the blow. The natives did not attempt to do anything and Hipolito and Agustin left the village with a guide and another companion who was a survivor of the shipwreck of the *Santa Margarita*.¹³

As they walked on the beach they were met by stones flung from slings and some spears thrown by the natives. Hipolito and his companions thought of using the musket which they carried but thought it would be useless against so many enemies who were hidden behind thick vegetation. It began to rain and the four arrived in the house of their Christian guide. They decided to pass the night there. In the following morning they arrived at the village of Agingan where they were peacefully but reluctantly received by the inhabitants. Here they found many children to baptize but they also encountered the same natives who prevented them from baptizing children the day before. These people were stirring up the inhabitants in the village about what the missionaries were doing to their children – causing their deaths. Hipolito and his companions were joined by Fr. de Medina who told them not to waver in their labors. Fr. de Medina knew that they would soon be martyred but he consoled his companions to be patient. He

¹¹ ARSI (Archivium Societatis Iesu) Phil. 13, fol. 100, *Martyrdom of Fr. Luis de Medina and his Visayan Companion Hipolito de la Cruz*, cited as Document 1673L2 in HM 6:103-111.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Francisco Garcia, S.J., *The Life and Martyrdom of the Venerable Father Diego Luis de San Vitores of the Society of Jesus First Apostle of the Mariana Islands and Events of these Islands from the Year Sixteen Hundred and Sixty Eight Through the Year Sixteen Hundred and Eighty-One*. James A. McDonough, S.J. (Guam: Richard Flores Taitano Micronesian Area Research Center, University of Guam, 2004) p. 366.

said that they were doing the work of God and if they placed their lives at stake, it would be for a better cause. The group took the insults of the natives with equanimity and arrived at the village of Raurau where they were received more harshly. They were not able to find appropriate shelter and the house they went turned out to have "faces" staring at them.¹⁴ This was actually a house where the Chamorros kept the skulls of their ancestors.

Fr. de Medina had the skulls taken out of the house and rested there for the night. The next morning, Fr. de Medina and his group baptized the children who gathered at the place. Upon leaving, they were warned by an old woman not to go to the interior hills as a trap was laid for them. They passed through the village of Raurau followed by armed Chamorros who wanted to kill them.

At around eight in the morning Fr. de Medina and his group entered the village of Cao. As they entered the village, the armed natives lined up along the trail. They started attacking Agustin de la Cruz who protected himself from their spears with a shield. Hipolito de la Cruz who held the group's musket was surrounded and spears were hurled at him, one of which piercing his arm. He shouted "Good Jesus, they have killed me!" When Fr. de Medina heard their voices, he turned around and was hit by a javelin through the shoulders. "Jesus! Jesus!" he cried. Hipolito quickly rushed to join him.¹⁵

Agustin, who was also wounded, crawled on his hands and knees and managed to hide in the bushes. The natives then surrounded the two gravely wounded men. When they pulled the spear out of Fr. de Medina's body, the priest regained consciousness and stood up beating his chest. He held the crucifix that was hanging from his neck and with his two hands brought it to his mouth and kissed it tenderly. Then he turned to Hipolito who was asking for absolution for his sins. The Chamorros who saw this spectacle were stunned and started to leave. However with renewed their hatred, they returned. They hit Fr. de Medina with blows and spears. When they ran out of spears they grabbed Hipolito's musket and used it to bludgeon him to death. They dragged the

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

bodies under nearby trees where a shallow grave was dug. Fr. de Medina was laid on his back with his knees bent and his legs upwards. The Chamorros intended to retrieve the legbones of their victims to be used as spear points after the flesh had rotted away.¹⁶

Meanwhile Agustin lay among the bushes expecting to be discovered. The assailants had gone away and despite his wounds, Agustin managed to stay hidden for two days without food or water. When he finally came out to the open, he expected to receive the same fate as his companions. He staggered into the house of a Chamorro *ma'agas* or native noble who turned out to be friendly and protected him from the other natives who wanted to kill him. Agustin was taken to Tinian where he reported the martyrdom of Fr. de Medina and Hipolito de la Cruz.¹⁷

A punitive expedition led by Captain Juan de Santa Cruz was sent to Saipan in April. They recovered the remains of Fr. de Medina and Hipolito de la Cruz. Only the skulls and a few bones were all that remained as the leg and arm bones were taken away by the natives to be used as spear points.¹⁸ Despite attempts by the Chamorros to appease them, De Santa Cruz's men rounded up the assailants and identified the chief leaders, named Poyo and Daon. While being taken to Guam, Poyo tried to grab the knife of one of the Pampango guards but was stabbed to death. Fearing that Daon would do the same, he was also killed. The two natives were posthumously baptized as Luis Poyo and Vidal Daon. The remains of Fr. de Medina and de la Cruz were buried at the church of San Ignacio in Hagatña while those of Poyo and Daon were buried in Tinian.¹⁹

The hostility towards the Spanish mission continued to seethe as the natives blamed the colonists for their woes. The colonists were blamed for the drought experienced that year and the devastating typhoon that followed. They were also blamed for the

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Garcia, *op. cit.*, p. 370.

¹⁹ *Op. cit.*

introduction of diseases and pests like rats and flies.²⁰ Some Chamorros were killed by the members of the mission during the war in Tinian in 1670 when Fr. Sanvitores allowed the soldiers to fire on the natives.

The Chamorros swore to exterminate the colony which had around 31 soldiers in 1671. The death of a Chamorro *ma'agas* or noble named Guasac at the hands of the men of the garrison incensed the natives. Guasac was suspected of instigating the death of a Mexican catechist named Jose Peralta who was killed while gathering wood to make crosses.²¹ At that time the garrison was



Fr. Diego Luis de Sanvitores, S.J.
depicted with his native assassins.
(History of Micronesia)

²⁰ The accusation that the Spanish settlement was responsible for the prevalence of diseases and pests was attributed to the speeches of Hurao and Aguarin during their separate revolts in 1671 and 1676 respectively and recorded in *The First History of Guam* by Fr. Francisco Garcia, cited as Document 1676D1 in HM 6:450. The speech was likely made by Aguarin in 1676 rather than by Hurao in 1671 because of the year placed by Fr. Garcia.

²¹ RAH 9/2668 Document No. 17, *Composite Report for 1665 to 1672 Attributed to Jesuit Provincial Fr. Andres de Ledesma*, *op. cit.* Cited as Document 1672L in HM: 510-512.

under the command of a Spaniard named Juan Santiago de Bozo who had taken over from Captain de Santa Cruz who had left for the Philippines.

The Chamorros under a *ma'agas* named Hurao mobilized 2,000 warriors to wipe out the colony. The ensuing revolt was the largest since the establishment of the colony. The natives laid siege to the colony for a month in September 1671 and it was broken with the use of artillery. The garrison suffered two casualties, a Visayan archer named Damian and a Spanish captain named Antonio de San Francisco.²²

Despite the failure to destroy the Spanish mission, attacks on its members continued. Six members of the mission would fall at the hands of angry natives until April 1672. The first victim was the Mexican catechist Diego Bazan who was killed in Chuchugu on March 31, 1672. The following day, the Spaniard named Manuel Rangel was killed near the same village while a Pampango named Nicolas Figueroa was killed in Ipao. The following day a Tagalog named Damian Bernal was killed in the village of Tumon.²³ The killings were instigated by a *ma'agas* named Quipuha whom Fr. Sanvitores chastised for taking another wife. In the northern island of Maug, another Filipino catechist named Ambrosio was killed by the natives.²⁴

On April 2, 1672, the mission suffered its greatest loss with the death in Guam of its leader, Fr. Sanvitores. Like Fr. de Medina, Fr. Sanvitores longed for martyrdom and ventured into the hostile villages. He was often unescorted and accompanied by only one assistant. Fr. Sanvitores left the village of Facfac to look for the Tagalog interpreter Estevan Diaz. For some reason Diaz deserted the mission to live among the natives. Fr. Sanvitores was accompanied by Pedro Calungsod his Visayan assistant.²⁵

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Domingo Abella, *Vignettes in Philippines-Marianas History*. (Manila: 1961), p. 49.

²⁵ Calungsod's name is spelled as Calonsor, Calangsor, Calungsud or Casor in various documents. The surname Calonsor appears in Fr. Garcia's work.

The two men walked toward the village of Tumon which they reached around seven in the morning. When they arrived Fr. Sanvitores learned about a newborn girl, the daughter of a native named Matapang. Fr. Sanvitores begged Matapang to let him baptize his daughter. Matapang, who converted to Christianity, had returned to his pagan ways. Fr. Sanvitores helped him several times in the past, when Matapang was once speared by another native, the missionary drew out the bone tip and through his prayers helped cure him of his poisonous wound. When Fr. Sanvitores asked Matapang the whereabouts of his baby daughter so she could be baptized, Matapang mocked him and offered instead a skull in his house to be baptized.²⁶

Fr. Sanvitores asked that he be allowed to gather children around him so he could teach them Christian doctrines. While teaching, Fr. Sanvitores asked Matapang and another native named Hirao to join them but they refused. Then Matapang spoke to Hirao and proposed to kill Fr. Sanvitores. Hirao admonished Matapang and said that the good priest saved him from death in the past and told him "you do not repay that evilly."²⁷

Matapang taunted his friend and called him a coward. Not wishing to be called such a shameful name, Hirao consented and both men left to get their lances. While the two men were absent Fr. Sanvitores was able to find and baptize Matapang's daughter. When Matapang returned he discovered what had happened and he grew angrier at Fr. Sanvitores. Matapang first attacked Fr. Sanvitores' companion, Pedro Calungsod who was able to dodge the spears thrown at him. He could have easily escaped with his life but he did not wish to leave Fr. Sanvitores alone and helpless. After dodging many spears one finally found its mark in Calungsod's body. Hirao ran to him bearing a machete and struck him down.²⁸

²⁶ Garcia, *op.cit.*, pp. 251-253. Also ARSI Phil. 13 fol. 105-107 cited as Document 1673L2 in HM 6:125-126.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

²⁸ *Ibid.* See also Coomans, *History of the Mariana Island Mission for 1667-1673 Period.*

Fr. Sanvitores then prepared himself to meet a similar end. He held his crucifix that was hanging from his neck and began to preach before his murderers. Matapang pierced him at the chest with a lance. While impaled Fr. Sanvitores addressed Matapang in the Chamorro language, "May God have mercy on you, Matapang." Hirao then struck Fr. Sanvitores' head with his machete. The two men took Fr. Sanvitores' crucifix and cassock. They tied stones to the feet of Fr. Sanvitores and Calonsor and threw their bodies into the sea. They burned the ground where their blood had spilled, fearing that the air might be infected by its foul odor.²⁹

Following the death of Fr. Sanvitores the Spaniards assumed a more aggressive role against the Chamorros. Reinforcements arrived and resulted in the deaths of many Chamorros including Hurao, the leader of the first "Great War." Hostile villages like Chuchugu and Tumon were burned down and the other villages sued for peace. Matapang and other recalcitrants fled to the island of Rota where he was later surrendered by the Rotanese in 1679. The intermittent conflicts also caused deaths among the colonists among whom was Pedro Basijan, a Visayan *indio* from Panay who was killed in 1672. Basijan was described as a young servant and "one of the remarkable ones in the militia," and "that he was better at procuring things than that at being a servant."³⁰

Aside from the Spanish imposition of Christianity and eradication of native customs, robbery and rape among abusive soldiers were reasons why the Chamorros fought the colonists. The natives were also forced to work on farms managed by the commanders of the garrison. The produce was sold to galleons on the way to the Philippines but the profits never benefitted the natives. These conditions caused the Chamorros to rebel against the Spanish colonizers until the last great battle at Tinian in 1695. The Chamorros were forced to abandon their villages and were reduced to live only on the islands of Guam and Rota where they could be better controlled by the authorities. The other islands of the Marianas like Saipan, Tinian and the northern islands of the archipelago were depopulated.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ ARSI Phil. 13, fol. 100, cited as Document 1673L2 in HM 6: 135-136.

The Visayan Martyrs: Calungsod and de la Cruz Compared

Among the natives of the Philippines who died during the early years of the Spanish settlement of the Marianas, two stand out as martyrs, Pedro Calungsod and Hipolito de la Cruz. Both were identified as Visayans and they died in the company of missionaries while doing evangelical work the Marianas. Of the two, Calungsod received the honor of being beatified by the Catholic Church. According to Rev. Jose Maria Luengo, Calungsod was “an adjunct martyr” because his martyrdom “is inseparably inherent in the martyrdom of his master missionary, Fr. Diego Luis de Sanvitores.”³¹

In his book, Fr. Luengo called him the Visayan protomartyr in Tumhon, Guam. Actually there were those who died ahead of Calungsod while spreading the Christian faith. These were the Malabar Spaniard Lorenzo Castellanos and the Tagalog boy Gabriel de la Cruz who were killed off Tinian in 1668; a certain Lorenzo in 1669; the Spaniard Fr. Luis de Medina and the Visayan Hipolito de la Cruz in 1670; the Mexican Jose Peralta in 1671; the Mexican Manuel de Nava; the Spanish Mexican Diego Bazan; the Spaniard Manuel Rangel; &, Filipino natives – the Pampango Nicolas Figueroa, the Tagalog Damian Bernal, and a certain Ambrosio in 1672.

Though many members of the mission had died before them, only Fr. Sanvitores and Calungsod were beatified by the Church.



Commemorative stamp and envelope honoring Pedro Calungsod following his beatification on November 5, 2000. (Philippine Postal Corporation)

³¹ Rev. Josemaria Salutan Luengo, *Pedro Calungsod The Visayo Protomartyr in Tumhon, Guam*, April 2, 1672, 1st. Ed. (Tubigon, Bohol: Mater Dei Publications, 1997), p. 126.

The former was beatified on October 6, 1985 while Calungsod was beatified on March 5, 2000. Sanvitores was given more attention among the martyrs because he was the official delegate of the mission and the leader of the Spanish mission in the Marianas. During the process of beatification Fr. Sanvitores was singled out leaving out Calungsod.

According to Fr. Luengo, at first glance there is a hint of discrimination which also happened in the beatification of St. Lorenzo Ruiz. He explained why Fr. Sanvitores and Calungsod were beatified separately. In the case of Fr. Sanvitores it behooved the Society of Jesus, to which Fr. Sanvitores belonged, to work for their own martyr. The case of Calungsod being a Visayan *indio*, fell under the jurisdiction of the Philippine hierarchy in general and the Archdiocese of Cebu in particular. Since there was no archdiocesan ad-hoc committee to do the research and *positio* for Calungsod, Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal prompted Fr. Luengo to write the biography of Calungsod.³²

Another controversy about Calungsod is his being claimed by the provinces of Cebu and Bohol. The Cebuanos claimed that he came from the town of Tuburan. The town of Dalaguete in southern Cebu named a street after him. The basis of Cebu's claim lay in the list of martyrs made by the Diocese of Cebu in the *Positio Historica* document which was initiated in the early canonical process in Manila in 1679 under Fr. Pedro Lopez, S.J.³³

The circumstances of Calungsod's birth and place of birth needs to be firmly established. Fr. Luengo placed his birth on June 9, 1654.³⁴ He arrived at this date without any documentation and wrote that this was an approximate date. The correct spelling of Calungsod's surname also presented a problem. His surname was spelled as Calangsor in the Jesuit Journal while the author Fr. Jose Luis Saborido de Cursach wrote it as Calonsor. Another historian, Fr. Antonio Astrain had no surname for him except the words "El Bisaya."³⁵

³² *Ibid.*, p. 76.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

Fr. Luengo alleged that Calungsod was from the town of Loboc in Bohol. He said the Jesuit college at Loboc supplied young catechists and singers. The Colegio de Loboc was the institution of paraliturgical ministry formation. It had a *Schola Cantorum* or a school of singers which produced excellent choir singers.³⁶ Perhaps one evidence of this legacy is the old church and convent at Loboc which still exists and where choir singers are still being trained. The town is also well known for its singers.

Though there is no written evidence about Calungsod's age, Fr. Luengo speculates that Calungsod must have been a young man of around 14 to 19 years of age.³⁷ Many of Fr. Sanvitores' *indio* companions were boys as young as twelve. There were a few older ones such as the Pampango Felipe Sonson who was estimated to be around sixty at the time of the establishment of the Spanish mission.

Another evidence offered by Fr. Luengo was that most of the Calungsods were from Bohol. There were people named Calungsod in Leyte but they originally came from Bohol. The Boholano Calungsods were mostly musicians, again boosting his theory that their ancestors trained at the *Schola Cantorum* ran by the Jesuits and other missionaries.³⁸

According to Fr. Luengo, in Loboc there were many people with surnames beginning with "Cal." Among the surnames he mentioned were Calipayan, Calimutan, Calceta, Calsada, Calumbre, Caliao, Calinawan and Calimbayan. The Calungsod surname was one of those prevalent in Loboc. Other towns in Bohol like Panglao surnames starting with "Ar" are more prevalent. Among these are Arboleda, Arcay, Arcayos, Arca, Arcamo, etc. In the town of Valencia, many surnames begin with "Sal" like Sale, Saba, Salise, Salodsod, Saligumba, etc. while in Tubigon many indigenous surnames starts with "Ba" like Balo, Balaga, Batula, Batangon, etc.³⁹

This occurrence of similar family names however could be a latter development especially after the adoption of the *Catalogo de Apellidos* under Governor General Narciso Claveria in 1849.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

The occurrence of the names in Loboc which begins with "Cal" needs to be thoroughly proven.

Calungsod's first name deserves looking into. According to Fr. Luengo the patron saint of Loboc is St. Peter or San Pedro. He asserts that Calungsod's occupation was that of catechist because Loboc was the center of catechism under the Jesuits and that Pedro Calungsod was trained in the Colegio-Seminario de Loboc. Finally Fr. Luengo compared Bohol as the "Ireland of the Philippines," and that the Boholanos were "more Catholic" than the Cebuanos since the province produced more bishops and priests than Cebu. He said that Bohol has two dioceses while Cebu has only one.⁴⁰ These evidences, Fr. Luengo admits, are "only historical probabilities."⁴¹ Until the present the exact origin and circumstances of Calungsod's life still needs to be fully established.

The Cebuanos for their part contend that Calungsod was Cebuano and Cebuano historians are doing their part to come up with enough basis to claim Calungsod as their own. The research about Calungsod is still open ended as there are other claims that Calungsod came from Baybay, Leyte, Dumangas, Iloilo and Tinagon, Samar.⁴²

Conclusion

One thing however is certain: Calungsod was from the Visayas and he was an *indio* from the Philippines. He died as a martyr for the Christian faith in the Marianas. It actually does not matter which province he came from. (One nasty habit among Filipino historians is their tendency to fight among themselves over where exactly a historic event happened or where a hero or martyr was born or died.) However, proving Calungsod's place of birth or origin gives pride to the locality.

Though accuracy is desired in writing history the final outcome of a historical event is that which matters first and details like Calungsod's origin is only secondary. The final outcome of

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 166-167.

