

Dela Cruz, Jayson U. *Vidi Aquiam: A History of Catholicism in Pasig (1571-2021)*. Manila: Alteo Digital and Printers Inc., 2021. pp. 300. ISBN 978-971-95418-1-3. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55997/1010pslviii175br3>

In celebration of the 500 years of Christianity of the Philippines, 400 years of Evangelization by Fray Alonso de Alvarado and 450 years of the Establishment of the Convent of Pasig, this book of Dela Cruz is one of those contributed to providing information on the richness of Filipino faith, particularly in the city of Pasig. Here in this work, we are shown that Pasig and Catholicism are two entities connected deeply in history and works side by side until the present times. It is not only a tradition that they are maintaining but a mission to spread the good news and show how salvation came and spread in the city of Pasig.

“*Vidi Aquiam*”, “I saw water,” is very fitting to be the title of this book by Dela Cruz. The Church of Pasig, back then and until the present times, has a river flowing on its right side, if one faces opposite façade, named *Bitukang Manok*. The term is also highlighted in the bible and is sung during the Easter Season as it comes from the vision of the Prophet Ezekiel when the level of water from the temple rose to the point that no man can swim in it. The water became a symbol and source of hope, abundance, and new life. *Vidi Aquiam* is a reminder how water symbolizes purification and salvation from sins as to what is being washed out in the Sacrament of Baptism.

The book begins with a prologue that showed that prior to the coming of the Spaniards, Pasig was converted to the Islamic faith. As told, the Muslims spread in Manila was caused by traders who came from the island of Borneo. Despite the introduction of Islam, Paganism was still a prevalent religion during the time.

Chapters one and two discussed the coming of the Augustinian friars and their efforts in instituting Christianity and converting the natives. It was told, that when Fray Alonso de Alvarado arrived in the area, the Moros received them with a fight. But the former spoke to the latter about peace, with great zeal, the ardor of charity and great assurance. Coming to the coast of the Pasig River, the Pasigueños were not hostile to the arrival of the Spaniards as compared to its neighboring towns. The biographical accounts also presented that Fray Alvarado was able to evangelize under him in 1571 the city of Pasig. However, it is important to note that the foundation of the Church of Pasig only happened in 1573 as it was backed up but the institution of the “*Araw ng Pasig*” and the current logo of the city bears this year of foundation as well. Formalizing the conversion, the Augustinian parish priests started to initiate religious and educational activities in the various barrios in Pasig. It was also considered as one of the high-class towns in Manila, thus great Augustinian teachers and missionaries like Fr. Diego de Herrera and Fr. Manuel Blanco set put in the place. Chapels, convents were also formed.

Chapter 3 presented the brief British interlude in the Philippines. Pasig was one of the few areas in the Philippines that were invaded and desecrated by the British. In a short period of time, they were able to endanger the faith of the natives by burning churches and convents, looting their homes and offices, propagating the Anglican faith.

Chapter 4 gave a glimpse of the convents and churches formed in the city of Pasig. It was stated that the area had a big convent since many priests go to and from the town because it was declared as a mission center. Pasig was even classified as a first-class Augustinian Parish in Manila. This is because there are several *tributos*, quality building and high income of the people from the town. Pasig also had produced several Filipino priests. One of the oldest treasures of Pasig is the 18th century bas-relief image of Our Lady of the Apocalypse, which can still be found in the Pasig Cathedral. The locals as well as those from the nearby towns have a strong devotion to this image of Our Lady. Another one that is the oldest of the venerated images in Pasig is found in Santolan, it is the image of *Santo Tomas de Villanueva de Santolan*. *Capellaniyas* are also found in Pasig which became the steppingstone to promote priestly vocations and to increase the spiritual awareness of town of Pasig. *Beaterios* were also found, which in time became an asylum or place of refuge for the nuns and orphans.

Chapter 5 presented a glimpse of the state of Pasig during the 1896 revolution and the role of Pasig in these trying times. It was told that the *Katipunan* founded by Bonifacio, held a meeting behind the church of Pasig, in the house of Valentin Cruz. At the height of the war, the *Katipuneros* respected the beaterio and spared it from destructions. After the revolution against Spain, it was told, that the people of Ugong found the image of *Nuestra Señora del Rosario de Ugong* among the ruins of a certain Jesuit convent. However, when the Americans came to the place, they occupied the church, rectory, and cemetery. They desecrated the hallowed grounds of the church, cemetery, and convent. Catholic families were purged and imposed death.

Chapter 6 presented the coming of new religions, such as the Iglesia Ni Cristo, Aglipayans, and Protestantism, particularly Presbyterianism, which was popular in Pasig. Despite this, Catholicism remains in Pasig. Beaterios were converted into a public school and parochial schools were initiated as well. Here we see people contributing to continuing the tradition such as “Flores de Mayo,” town fiestas and most especially, rebuilding of the churches.

Chapter 7 presented the Japanese Period Pasig. The traditional procession for the feast of saints were halted because of the invasion. This also brought the usual repression of human rights, press censorship and brainwashing. The Japanese would sometimes raid the supply of food, from the citizens of Pasig. Despite being occupied, the Japanese allowed the reopening of Colegio del Buen Consejo and Pasig Catholic School to cater to a few students. They also allowed Masses during Sundays and then on weekdays as the people continuously pray for their loved ones.

Chapters 8 and 9 discussed the proliferation of parishes and religious congregations at the end of the Japanese occupation, until the present times. Processions flourished and the traditions of the Pasiguenos continued to prosper. Pasig was given the honor of being the seat and namesake of a new diocese, being the oldest among the three areas of its jurisdiction: Pasig, Taguig, and Pateros. For 400 years, Pasig was under the Archdiocese of Manila with some of its territories under the Diocese of Antipolo.

Today, as history is continuously being written, no doubt that the Catholicism in Pasig had gone a very long way. The challenges that the early Augustinians faced and the colonizations that threatened the faith of the natives were just among the few of the living proof of how strong the religiosity of the Pasigueños are.

This book is a good source material in understanding that historical facts and oral traditions intertwined with regard to the rich history of Catholicism in Pasig. It is important to note that we cannot simply do away with devotion or belief regardless of whether there is a solid historical framework that backs it up. With this, the book included sources in its footnote section to allow the readers to have access on the source of the claim or any additional information. This time, the discussion transcended not just about the geography or the topography of the location or setting of the story, but it digs deeper on the religiosity of the people. It also provided us information how the early Filipinos adopted Christianity and how the Church has been affected by other societal matters such as government, social condition of the area, and war.

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**Jahanbegloo, Ramin. *Albert Camus: The Unheroic Hero of Our Time*. London: Routledge, 2020. pp. 80. ISBN: 978-0-367-33492-5.
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Albert Camus is considered the most widely-read French writer of the twentieth century; however, he is also commonly misunderstood, resulting in controversies and criticisms surrounding his name. Ramin Jahanbegloo, an Iranian-Canadian philosopher known for his extensive academic work on dialogue and an advocate for non-violence, writes *Albert Camus: The Unheroic Hero of Our Time*. This book corrects usual misconceptions regarding Camus' philosophy, focusing on the "compassionate humanism" that is achievable through the practice of measuredness and thinking at the meridian. With seminal concepts like rebellion, solidarity, and honesty permeating the vast array of Camus' writings, it becomes possible to see a consistent trajectory of his ideas and life as a resistance against violence, suicide, and murder. In merely eighty pages, Ramin Jahanbegloo establishes Camus' sharp analysis of his times' excesses and enchantment toward ideologies. Each chapter deals with specific themes in Camus' philosophy, leading to the following titles: (1) A Meridian philosopher, (2) Thermodynamics of death and solidarity towards life, (3) A soul in rebellion, (4) From solitude to hope, and (5) Camus the outsider: facing the past and the present.

Chapter one grounds the constant dynamics of Camus' philosophy, meridian. This concept is attributed to the Greeks' aspiration toward moderation and measuredness and the distinct Camusian vision of Mediterranean solar thought that dispels the shadows