



#### STO. NIÑO DE CEBÚ

The oldest Christian relic in the Far East, the Holy Image of the Sto. Niño de Cebú is more than 400 years old and is now in the custody of the Augustinian Fathers in Cebú City. The image is the baptismal gift of Ferdinand Magellan to the wife of Rajah Humabón during his historic voyage in 1521. One of the major phases of the fourth centennial of the Christianization of the Philippines will be the canonical coronation of the Holy Image.

# CEBÚ and The SANTO NIÑO

by Manuel S. Satorre, Jr.

ALTHOUGH CEBÚ'S SKYLINE rises to a face of a modern world, still the ruins that were left of its rich history four centuries ago show an epoch that is never to be born again.

Thus, in the grandeur and glory that was Cebú, one finds the first (perhaps not the best) of everything, what with bumpy roads, dirty market places, stinking mud-holes, low water pressure, beggars and pickpockets. But, at any rate, Cebú is Cebú, and it is the "Felipino's First."

It was here in this small island in the south where the first seeds of Christianity were planted, where the first foreign invader was repulsed by a Filipino, where the first Filipino marriage was celebrated, where the first and oldest street in the Philippines was paved, where the first school was established, where the first and tallest

building in the Visayas and Mindanao was constructed, where the first Filipino church was conferred the title *Basilica Minore*, and where almost everything one sets his foot on is — FIRST.

#### The Oldest Street in the Philippines

During the rule of the first Spanish Governor in Cebú, Guido de Lavezárez sometime in the 17th century, the first Philippine street was paved with forced labor. Its pavement was made of tiles that were often used on rooftops. The street was named Colón.

History has it that the street was supposed to be named Cologne after a town in France where Lavezárez was said to have a kin. He wanted to name the street in honor of that town. However, the Filipinos who were instructed to make the stone engraving of the

street-sign mistook the name for Colón. Thus, the street until now carries that name.

The street was once part of the then Pili-Kanipaán and Sambag districts. Before the war, the city's big business establishments were found in that street like the building housing the Cebú Advertisers, the old Ideal Theater, the Cebú Boxing Stadium including the residence of the late President Sergio Osmeña Sr.

Today, the old house of the late Don Sergio has been replaced by a building housing the *Eden Theater*. Colón Street squats right in the heart of Cebú City where thousands of people mill everyday.

#### Cebú's Historic Fort San Pedro

Quietly, at the entrance of the Cebú Harbor, the old Fort San Pedro rises like a pregnant woman.

It was constructed on May 8, 1566, with Don Miguel López de Legaspi breaking the first ground and dedicating it to the "Most Blessed Name of Jesus." Legaspi had the fort constructed to protect him and his men from the hostility of the natives. In a letter to the King of Spain, Legaspi once wrote: "Their weapons are long and sharp iron lances, throwing sticks, shields, small daggers, wooden corselets, corded breastplates, a few bows and arrows and culverius." Perhaps this made the construction of the fort imperative.

Triangular in shape, two sides face the open sea in a diagonal position. The apex is anchored at a promontory commanding the entrance to the harbor. Small watch-towers or little forts flank it from the other two sides and armed with heavy guns.

At the outbreak of the revolution in Cebu on April 3, 1898, the fort was made more colorful in its participation. The Katipunan army under Gen. León Kilat attacked and drove the Spanish garrison

away from the town. The garrison was commanded by Gen. Adolfo González Montero, the last Spanish Governor of Cebu.

The garrison, together with the entire Spanish community headed by Bishop Martín García Alcocer, was reported to have fled and sought refuge in the "Kotta" to escape the pursuit of the revolutionaries. There, behind its weather-beaten walls, the Spaniards stood and waited for reinforcements from Manila. The Katipunan army, in the meantime, laid siege on the fortress.

The fort had very weak defenses and could have been easily captured by the Filipinos. But Gen. Luis Flores, president of the local Katipunan and second-in-command of the Filipino army, was against the bombardment of the Fort and leveling it completely to the ground. He was afraid the women and children might be massacred. This saved the fort from capture.

Later, two Spanish ships "Aolus and Viscaya," the battleship "Don Juan de Austria" as escort, arrived in the harbor carrying fresh troops

and supplies. The warships bombarded the town while the transports began unloading the troops. The town went up in smoke, and the Filipinos lost the battle, retreating to the mountains. The siege released the Spaniards trapped inside the fort.

On the same occasion, however, the American gunboat "Petrel" unexpectedly appeared in the harbor and its commander demanded the surrender of the town. Gen. Montero, threatened by a superior enemy, surrendered. Fort San Pedro including the town fell. After the Americans took over, peace ensued in the islands again.

The City High School in 1940 until the outbreak of the Second World War was housed at the fort.

During the war, the fort became the headquarters of the Visayas-Mindanao force of the USAFFE under Brig. Gen. Guy O. Fort. When the enemy occupied Cebu, it was used and was, therefore, a military target. Surprisingly, however, when the hostilities ended, Fort San Pedro came out unscathed.



#### BASILICA MINORE

On the spot in Cebu where a Spanish soldier found the Holy Image of the Santo Niño, the Sto. Niño Church was built. This church to be conferred the title of Basilica Minore by the Holy Father, is primarily undergoing extensive renovation. Photo shows the architects' concept after the proposed alteration.



**MAGELLAN'S CROSS**

The house above shelters the Cross which Magellan put up on the same spot. It was found by Legaspi some forty-four years later and preserved to our day.

Sometime in 1950, the fort became a subject of a running controversy. The City of Cebu wanted it demolished and replaced with a building to house the new post office. But a strong opposition from the Cebu Historical Society and the Cebu Garden Club which was in charge of its beautification blocked the move of the city. The Cebu Post office building was finally constructed near the fort.

Fort San Pedro which has survived several generations, two revolutions and two world wars, now houses the Cebu City Zoo.

#### **The Oldest School in the Philippines**

Even while some Filipinos in 1595 scattered all over the Philippines were still wearing that proverbial G-string, in Cebu, a school was already busy teaching the Filipinos the arts and sciences.

The University of San Carlos of Cebu holds the distinction of being the oldest school in the Philippines, in fact even much older than the University of Santo Tomás in Manila and Harvard of U.S.A.

It traces its origin to a school founded in 1595 by Jesuit Fathers Antonio Sedeño, Pedro Chirifio and

Antonio Pereira under the name "Colegio de San Ildefonso."

San Carlos has a long history and before the S.V.D. took over in 1935, the institution had been directed by four different religious societies. The Jesuit Fathers ran the school for 176 years, the secular clergy for 69 years, the Dominicans for 15 years, while the Vincentian Fathers (C.M.) held the reins of the school for 68 years. The latter were the last of the religious societies to supervise the school before the S.V.D. took over.

The Colegio became a full-fledged university in 1948, the first outside Manila, a landmark in the educational history of "La Ciudad del Santisimo Nombre de Jesús." The present president is Rev. Fr. Rudolf Rahmann, S.V.D., Ph.D.

#### **The First Marriage Celebrated In The Philippines**

Late in the year 1565, Father Diego de Herrera, friend of Fray Urdaneta, baptized King Tupas of Cebu's widowed niece, naming her Isabel in honor of Doña Isabel Garces, Legaspi's wife. In that baptismal rite, three other children were christened.

After King Tupas's widowed niece conversion, she married a certain Andrea Calafate, Greek talker of Legaspi's fleet, with Father Herrera officiating at the solemn nuptial rites. This was the first Christian marriage (1565) on Philippine soil.

#### **The Discovery and Founding of Cebu**

The discovery of these islands was made by Hernando de Magallanes in 1521. The first Mass in this country was celebrated in Limasawa, Leyte, on March 31 of that year. The expedition then proceeded to Cebu.

On April 14, a mass was held, during which Rajah Humabón, his wife, and some 800 of their followers were baptized. After mass, Magellan planted a wooden

cross which exists on its original site until today.

When Queen Juana (Humabón's wife) was baptized, she was shown a very beautiful image of Child Jesus. The queen like the image so much that Magellan gave it to her as a gift.

Then for the first time in Philippine History, Magellan died in the hands of Lapulapu, chief of Mactan. After his death, his fleet sailed back for Spain. Several years later, a number of expeditions were sent by the king of Spain to the Philippines but they were unsuccessful.

On November 21, 1564, a fleet commanded by Miguel López de Legaspi sailed from Natividad, Mexico for the Philippines. In a letter to the King of Spain on November 18, 1564, Legaspi announces that "he has taken over two large ships and two pataches, and one small brigantine, in which are one hundred and fifty seamen, two hundred soldiers, and six religious men of the order of St. Augustine, chief of whom is Father Fray Andrés de Urdaneta."

The fleet reached Cebu on February 13, 1565, but because of Cebuano resistance, Legaspi sailed away to explore the islands of Bohol, Leyte and Samar. And finally on April 27, 1565, Legaspi went back to Cebu. He wrote: "We were guided by a Moro who acted in the capacity of interpreter. He knew the language of the natives. The Moro accompanied Fray Urdaneta to negotiate an amicable relations with King Tupas."

#### **The Finding of The Holy Image**

Father Urdaneta failed to secure a truce with King Tupas. Legaspi, angered and desperate, routed the Cebuano King and his men and drove him away to the hills.

During the battle, about one hundred houses were burned, the fire having started from an accidental shot from the artillery or having been lit purposely by the

natives. The soldiers were quartered in the houses remaining after the fire.

The following day, on April 28, 1565, one of Legaspi's soldiers by the name of Juan de Camús, discovered the image of the Child Jesus in an unburned Cebuano house that he was looting. It was believed that the same image was given to the wife of Ilumabon by Magellan.

Writes Legaspi: "There was found a marvelous thing, namely, a Child Jesus like those of Flanders, in its pine cradle and its little loose shirt, such as come and all so well preserved that only the little cross, which is generally upon the globe that he holds in his hands was missing."

Historians, also commenting on the finding of the holy image, declared: "As was right, the general had this prize, and when he saw it, he fell with great devotion. He took it in his hands and kissed its feet, and raising his eyes to heaven, he said: 'Lord, Thou art powerful to punish the offenses committed in this island against Thy majesty, and to found herein Thy house, and holy church, where Thy most glorious name shall be praised and magnified. I supplicate Thee that then enlighten and guide me, so that all that we do here may be to Thy glory and honor, and the exaltation of Thy Holy Catholic Faith.'"

At this instance, Legaspi ordered that this sacred image be placed with all reverence in the first church that should be founded, and that the church be called Nombre de Jesús (Name of Jesus). It gave great happiness and inspiration to all to see, such an auspicious beginning for a truth it seemed a work of God to have preserved so completely this image among the infidels for such a long time, and an auspicious augury in the part where the settlement was to be made, the historians wrote.

#### The First Filipino Church and a Basilica Minore

On May 8, 1565, the sites for the Spanish quarters and the church

were chosen, and the town was called San Miguel, because it was founded on the day of this Saint's apparition.

It was said that that night, the natives returned, setting fire to the remaining houses, so that the whole town was in danger of being burnt, with all the goods brought ashore from the ships. The site of the house wherein had been found the sacred image was selected as the site of the Monastery of the Name of Jesus. . . . a shrine to venerate the image, and from this point Christianity radiated to the different regions of the country.

In a recent interview Father Casimiro Garcia, an Augustinian priest and prior of the San Agustin Church, said that the church and convent erected by the Augustinian fathers under Fray Urdaneta in 1565 were the first established in the Philippines. However, both were burned on November 1, 1566.

Father Garcia recounting how the San Augustine church acquired its name, said: "The Child Jesus was brought to the church in solemn procession, and with the great devotion, and with great rejoicing and gladness of all men. Arriving at the church, they all adored it, and placed it on the principal altar, and all vowed to observe, sanctify, and celebrate solemnly as a feast day each year, the day on which it had been found, April 28. And in addition a brotherhood of the most blessed name of Jesus was established in the same manner under the conditions of that of San Agustin of México, the majority of the people entering as members and brothers."

The Augustinian priest said that the San Agustin Church took after that brotherhood established in Mexico.

He also said that in that procession of the Holy Child a number of natives took part and two chiefs who professed friendship to the Spaniards. Finally, peace and friendship were made between Legaspi and the greatest chief of the island, Tupas and it was ar-

ranged that tributes should be paid. This started the conversion of the islands, Father Garcia said.

Father Garcia also disclosed that the second church built was destroyed by fire in March of 1628, but rebuilt soon after (1628-1629) under the administration of historian Juan de Medina, O.S.A.

Miraculously, in the fires that gutted San Agustin church several times, the Santo Niño always was saved.

The present massive church was designed and constructed during the priorship of Father Juan Albamuro, O.S.A., (1735-1737).

Today, San Agustin church is undergoing reconstruction in preparation for the fourth centenary of the Christianization of the Philippines. It was recently conferred the title *Basilica Minore*.

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#### HISTORIC URDANETA-LEGASPI VOYAGE

In 1565, upon orders of King Philip II of Spain, Miguel López de Legaspi and Fray Andrés de Urdaneta set sail for the Philippines. This expedition led to the start of the formal Christianization of the country and her unification into a single political unit. The expedition arrived in Cebu on April 27, 1565 or forty-four years after the ill-fated Magellan expedition.



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## Cebu and Other Towns and The Centennial Celebration

Surprisingly, the city and other towns of Cebu suddenly become aware of the magnanimity of the Fourth Centennial of the Christianization of the Philippines that everybody seems to have something to prepare for such occasion.

Buildings and cleverly-designed edifices have suddenly sprang up like mushrooms in the city. The people have started to construct hotels, motels and lodging houses and office buildings to cope with an impending problem of housing pilgrims during the occasion.

One such building worthy of notice is the Lu Ym building. It is the tallest building in the Visayas and Mindanao and owned by the Lu Do brothers in Cebu. It was formerly the Lu Do building which was burned some years ago in a downtown fire.

The newly-constructed hotels in Cebu are Ramirez hotel, International Hotel, Palm Lodge, Impala Village and several others.

In the meantime, the Lapulapu City which is just across the channel is also busy expanding for the celebration.

Danao City has assured its cooperation for the celebration including Toledo City.

Everybody is preparing for the celebration. But what for is the occasion? Here are its objectives: 1) make the people aware and appreciative of the fact that the Philippines has been 400 years a Christian nation; 2) inspire the people to know their faith more fully and, to know to live their faith better; 3) encourage full participation by the laity in the religious celebration of the Fourth Centennial; and 4) to share the faith with non-Catholic countries through the Philippine Foreign Mission Society.

Let us hope that we will all be worthy of the chance of being the host to this occasion (Cebu, I mean). And hope further that Cebu will keep up its reputation of always being the FIRST.

# A Quadricentennial Challenge For Catholic Philippines

By Corazón Ramirez Santos

THE PHILIPPINES will celebrate the Fourth centenary of its Christianization on April 28, 1965. As we look back across the centuries and reflect on what we might have been spiritually, we can not help but feel deeply grateful to Divine Providence for bestowing on us the gift of Faith and to Spain, whose Catholic fervor was the instrument which made our Christianization possible. Why did the Spanish missionaries brave the perils of a long and hazardous voyage to an unknown land that could be possible peopled with hostile natives? Obviously it was in obedience to Christ's parting command to His disciples: "Go, ye, therefore and preach ye the Gospel to all nations..."

For four centuries, we have thus been enjoying the blessings of the Catholic Faith. Yet, up to the present, we still remain the only Catholic country in the Far East. From an evangelical point of view, it is not something for us, Filipino Catholics, to be proud of at all. It seems to faintly imply that we have not been living our faith as deeply as we should... that we have not taken our responsibilities serious-

ly... that we have not done all we could to share this precious gift of Faith with our brother Orientals.

We could offhandedly attribute this omission on our part to circumstances existing under the Spanish and American regimes over which we had no control. But can we continue to justify our spiritual apathy and sluggish evangelical spirit, now that we are our own masters? There should be nothing to stop us now. All we need is something to push us "but hard!" on the way to conquering souls for Christ. Most of us wait for momentous or inspiring occasions on which to launch out important undertakings or face new challenges. What better start is there than on this occasion of the quadricentennial of our Christianization, when not only a sense of duty but also a sense of gratitude should impel us to act? Of course there is always the vital, everyday challenge of living a good and holy life, a better life, which we should not overlook. But special occasions require special offerings. In this instance, the offering of ourselves on a national scale, for the Christianization of our brother Orientals could