

THE CHRISTIANIZATION OF THE PROVINCE OF BATAAN

WILFREDO CRISOSTOMO PAGUIO

Whether the Philippines was christianized through the cross or the sword has always been a subject of debate among historians. In this article, we try to look through the process of christianization in the province of Bataan. We try to lay the bare facts and let them speak for themselves.

We divide this article into three main divisions, namely, the arrival of the Spaniards in Bataan, a description of the different races that inhabit this peninsula and the Dominican missions here.

I. THE ARRIVAL OF SPANIARDS

ARRIVAL IN THE PHILIPPINES — With the first mass at Limasawa on 31 March 1521, Magellan solemnly began the long Spanish stay in the Philippines. Divine Providence so arranged history that even after the death of Magellan in Mactan, Charles I of Spain still sent expeditions to the east. There were those of Loaisa, Saavedra and Villalobos. Charles, however, was not successful in this enterprise. It was his successor, Philip II, who had the glory of having this group of islands, which was named after him, among the lists of Spanish dominions. It was during his reign and under his patronage that Legazpi reached Leyte in February 1565.

ARRIVAL IN LUZON — By the year 1571, Raja Matanda and Raja Soliman were already vassals of the Spanish crown. The immediate neighborhood of Manila soon capitulated voluntarily without bloodshed. But further from these, it was necessary for the *conquistadores*, as the Spaniards were called, to use arms. So Legazpi sent Martin de Goiti and Juan de Salcedo to reduce them into submission.

De Goiti was assigned to conquer Pampanga of which Bataan was then a part. In this expedition, he was accompanied by Raja Lacandula. When the native chiefs found that Lacandula was with De Goiti, they did not offer resistance, for the presence of the Tondo king augured well for them. They meekly bowed to the pacification and like him, they accepted the Spanish sovereignty.

ARRIVAL IN PAMPANGA — De Goiti could have reached the peninsula of Bataan had not Lacandula left the group and returned to Tondo¹ or had not the chief of Betis (Pampanga) offered resistance, on their way, against De Goiti himself and his men, although this required only little effort from them to overcome. Tired and weary of journey and of such petty wars, therefore, it can be speculated that immediately after this battle, De Goiti returned to Manila. This, because it is recorded that "some two weeks later", that is, some two weeks after the battle of Betis, De Goiti and his men arrived in Manila.²

ARRIVAL IN BATAAN — After knowing this incident of the early return of De Goiti to Manila, a researcher on Bataan's history will begin to wonder at what precise date Spaniards set foot on the soil of Bataan. And he is wont to be altogether lost in his research if he does not hear from the *Memoria* of Fr. Vicente Fernandez where the following is stated: "A little after Legazpi's arrival in 1565 with the Augustinian friars, and later the Franciscan and the Jesuit fathers, they undertook some expeditions and visits throughout

¹ "In the midst of the expedition, Lacandula returned to Tondo without the express knowledge of De Goiti, presumably on some domestic and family reasons. Incidentally, the chief of Betis did not submit to De Goiti until he was defeated through the force of arms. This was taken by the authorities in Manila as a treasonable act, and at once arraigned Lacandula for that offense. Only the timely arrival of De Goiti some two weeks later saved the Tondo king from prison if not from the gallows." (Alip, Eufonio M., *A History of the Philippines*, (Manila: 1935), p. 143.)

² Loc. cit., Cf. San Agustin, Gaspar de Fr., *Conquistas de las Islas Philipinas: La Temporal, por las Armas del Señor Don Phelipe Segundo el Prudente; la Espiritual, por los Religiosos del Orden de Nuestro Padre San Augustin: Fundacion y Progressos de Su Provincia del Santísimo Nombre de Jesus, Parte Primera*, (Madrid: En la Imprenta de Manuel Ruiz de Murga, 1698), pp. 226-228 & p. 239.

this province (of Bataan) because it is near Manila. It is true, however, that they did not stay permanently; and the honor and glory of cultivating and fertilizing it with their blood and sweat belongs to the Dominican Order. This is very clear from the history of the Dominicans in the Philippines."³

It is equally clear, therefore, that Spaniards and Legazpi himself arrived in Bataan as early as "a little after . . . (his) . . . arrival in 1565".

MISSIONARIES IN BATAAN — However, there is no known record as to when, what part of the province and how long the Augustinians⁴ mentioned above by Fr. Fernandez stayed in Bataan. Regarding the Franciscans,⁵ records only state that the first apostle of the province is V. P. Sebastian de Baeza⁶ and that he "formed the town of Bataan and some others" in the year 1578.⁷ As re-

³ APSR, MSS, Seccion Bataan, Tomo 2, Documento 8, Folio 9. "Memoria de la Provincia de Bataan. Año 1886. Para la Exposicion de Madrid, En 1888", por el P. Vicente Fernandez.

⁴ The Augustinians arrived in the Philippines with Legaspi in 1565. It is probable that they visited Bataan only after capitulation of Manila in 1571, that is, from their convents, which they later built, in Betis and Lubao (Pampanga). Cf. San Agustin, Gaspar de Fr., op. cit. p. 249.

⁵ The Franciscans arrived in Manila on 24 June 1577. (Fernandez, Pablo OP, "The History of the Church in the Philippines", *Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas*, chapter 3.)

⁶ V. Fr. Sebastian de Baeza was most probably born in Baeza because it was the custom in the Province of San Jose to which he belonged and where he professed to attach the name of one's native town to the names of their students. Fr. Baeza was the first apostle of Ilocos Sur and Ilocos Norte, Pangasinan, La Union and Zambales. Together with Fr. Juan Bautista Pisaro, he founded the town of Agoo where he brought a three days dead child back to life. He labored in Bataan for 17 months. His mission was concentrated along the coasts of Mariveles to Cabo Bojeador. Here, he restored the speech of a twenty years old mute. He embarked for China on 29 May 1579. He died in Canton in October of the same year. By December, his cadaver was transferred to Macao where it was venerated. (Platero, Eusebio Gomez, *Catálogo Biográfico de los Religiosos Franciscanos de la Provincia de San Gregorio Magno de Filipinas desde 1577 en que Llegaron los primeros a Manila hasta los de Nuestros Dias*, (Manila: Imprenta del Real Colegio de Santo Tomas, 1880), pp. 24-25.)

⁷ Pastrana, Apolinar, OFM, "Pueblos Fundados o Administrados por los Padres Franciscanos en Filipinas", *Misiones Catolicas En Extremo Oriente*, (Manila: "Cacho Hermanos" Lithographers and printers, 1937), p. 165. Cf. Retana, W.E., *Origenes de la Imprenta Filipina*. (Madrid: Libreria General de Victoriano Suarez, 1911), p. 54.

gards the Jesuits, who came to the islands with the Lord Master Domingo de Salazar, the first bishop of Manila⁸, it is known that they took charge of Maragondon⁹ which was then a part of the district (*corregimiento*) of Mariveles. However although it is possible that from Maragondon the Jesuits could have established a mission in Mariveles, no known document can tell us sufficient historical details as to their stay in the peninsula.

The Dominican Order established its mission house in Abucay in the year 1588, although, of course, even before this date, a Dominican, Fr. Cristopher Salvatierra,¹⁰ already ministered to the natives of Bataan through his own initiative. The secular clergy,¹¹ according to Fr. Gainza, had also been doing missionary work in this province, even before the permanent foundation of the first Dominican house here, though only in a small and temporary scale.¹² And the Recollects¹³ landed in Mariveles in 1607.

⁸ The Jesuits arrived in Manila on 17 September 1581.

⁹ Siguion, Jose M., SJ, "Primera Epoca de la Compañia de Jesus en Filipinas", *Misiones Catolicas in Extremo Oriente*, op. cit., p. 18. Maragondon, at present, belongs to the province of Cavite. It is a mountainous town situated at the coastal part of this province facing Bataan.

¹⁰ Fr. Cristopher was a native of Salvatierra, villa of Extremadura. A son of the Convent of San Esteban de Salamanca, he made his profession here on 27 August 1571. He worked in Bataan and was also a chaplain to an expedition to the Molucas. He died of ashma in the early part of the year 1595. (Ocio, Hilario, *Reseña Biografica de los Religiosos de la Provincia del Santisimo Rosario de Filipinas desde su Fundacion hasta Nuestros Dias, Parte Primera*, (Manila: Establecimiento Tipografico del Real Colegio de Santo Tomas, 1891), pp. 50-52).

¹¹ APSR, MSS, Seccion Bataan, Tomo 2, Documento 5, Folio 21, "Descripcion de la Provincia de Bataan (1854)", por el P. Gainza.

¹² Father Pedro Valderrama was the first secular priest to set foot on the Philippine soil. In 1566, Father Juan de Vivero followed him. And in 1581, Most Rev. Domingo Salazar, brought with him twenty-four other secular priests. Most probably, these are the ones referred to by Fr. Gainza. It may be of interest to mention that Dinalupihan, for one, had always been under the secular priests.

¹³ The Recollects arrived in Cebu in May 1606.

II. A DESCRIPTION OF THE DIFFERENT RACES THAT INHABIT THIS PENINSULA

Fr. Francisco Gainza tells us that there were two main races of people living in Bataan, namely, the inhabitants of the mountains and those of the plains.¹⁴ Fr. Vicente Fernandez elaborates that the mountain people were the Negritos or Aetas and the inhabitants of the plains were the natives, the peninsular Spaniards, the Chinese and the mestizos who were either Spaniards or Chinese born to parents married to native women.¹⁵

NEGRITOES OR AETAS—The Negrito or Aetas, during the time of Fr. Fernandez, that is, about the year 1886, numbered around 1,300 to 1,500 with the tendency to decrease rather than increase.¹⁶ They were described as a miserable race of kinky hair and dark skin. Their origin, descent and language were not too well known although others of their kin lived in Malacca, Sumatra, Java, Formosa, New Guinea and in majority of Philippine islands. Their language was similar to those in the towns and ranches near the mountains where they lived.¹⁷ They had such a low idea of themselves that they did not call themselves men or people but Aetas.¹⁸ In this province, they were scattered in all the towns in small numbers where they served in the felling of lumber, the having of bamboo and rattan and the gathering of pitch, wax and other mountain products.

¹⁴ APSR, MSS, Seccion Bataan, Tomo 2, Documento 5, Folio 7, "Descripcion De La Provincia De Bataan (1854)", por el P. Gainza.

¹⁵ APSR, MSS, Seccion Bataan, Tomo 2, Documento 8, Folios 5v-8v, "Memoria De La Provincia De Bataan, Año 1886. Para La Exposicion De Madrid, En 1888", por el P. Vicente Fernandez.

¹⁶ It may be of interest to note that the number of Negrito in the Province even today decreases as time goes. We believe this fact should seriously concern the government.

¹⁷ The language, for example, of Negrito in Bataan is Tagalog. Fr. Pablo Fernandez, O.P. observes that this fact gives us "good grounds for doubting whether they have a language of their own". (APSR, MSS, Seccion Bataan, Uncatalogued, Documento 5, Folios 41-47, "Dominican Missions in Bataan", tr. by Dr. Antonio Piñon.)

¹⁸ This fact points to the grave responsibility of educators to educate these people. The government should investigate the causes of their diminishing number. For a fact, today, in Bataan, Aetas cannot be seen anymore in town plazas as before. The Church should also not lose hope in working for them.

They were harmful to the public forests and mountains because they burned them to plant rice and corn, without being concerned about the destruction of useful woods for construction. Since they changed abode every year, they caused great damage in the forest areas.¹⁹

Fr. Fernandez reports that until his time, all the efforts to reduce them to life in community have been fruitless. Both threats and blandishments had been used. Houses had been built for them on the site assigned them near the mountain. They had been supported with food. But everything was in vain. They turned back to the mountain the moment they knew they were out of sight and the resources for their upkeep had been used up.²⁰

For example, in 1734, a mission for them was established in Orion under the patronage of Saint Vincent. There were about 65 persons in that mission including "very good Christians", only working for their salvation. But even this did not last.²¹

About the middle of the 19th century, two Dominican missionaries again devised a plan for settling on the plains the two hundred Negrito families that roamed the nearby jungles. Their plan consisted in grouping them together in small settlements at the foot of the hills, where houses would be constructed for them, and they would be taught the arts of farming and the truths of the Gospel. Fr. Benito Rivas²² and Fr. Alberto Planas²³ were the men behind this plan to civilise and christianise a race that had successfully resisted all attempt to bring them to the paths of society and progress. Unfortunately, their efforts failed, as other previous attempts had been — the Negritos ended by going back to the mountains.²⁴

¹⁹ That they cause great damage to forest areas due to caingins is true even today.

²⁰ P. Vicente Fernandez, *Op. cit.*, Fol. 7v.

²¹ APSR, Seccion Miscellanea, "Documentos Varios de la Segunda Mitad del Siglo XVIII," fol. 47.

²² Fr. Benito Rivas was a parish priest of Balanga. It was to his honor that a barrio of this town was named.

²³ Fr. Alberto Planas was a parish of Abucay.

²⁴ Today, little by little, the government is succeeding in making them live in small communities called "bayan-bayanan". Perhaps forced by circumstances since there are practically no more forests to go to, a good number of them stay in such places where they have a school and where they also participate in the election of municipal and even national offi-

Somehow, it is speculated, they knew and saw that the natives were obliged to contribute blood and money, to work on the streets and be subject to the tasks of society. They did not understand that every man must do such things or the like in exchange for the benefits promised by community living. So they thought they would be happier if they lived like care-free and unrestricted savages with neither king nor rook to order and govern them.²⁵

NATIVES — The greatest bulk of the lowlanders were the natives. They belonged to the pure Malay race, were of regular build, oval faced, and with big eyes. However, although of the Malay race, one could observe in their physiognomy some resemblance to the people of Ternate, perhaps, because they have merged with or intermarried with the Mardicas of the opposite coast.²⁶ Most of them spoke Tagalog but a considerable number of the population, specially at the beginning, spoke Pampango which is no surprise because, as we have already observed above, Bataan was a part of Pampanga before. And if we are to believe Franciscan records we can easily conclude, without fear of contradiction, that this peninsula was just a town of the province of Pampanga then.²⁷

PENINSULAR SPANIARDS²⁸ — It is noted that in the second half of the 19th century, the

cials. Since most of them are still illiterate, their elections are conducted by making them choose among pebbles of different colors which represent each candidate. Cf. Ocio, *Compendio de la Reseña Biografica*, (Manila: 1895), p. 684. The *Bulletin Today* (Dec. 12, 1972, p. 1) recently reported the following: "Some 120 Aeta (Negrito) families numbering more than 500 persons, laid yesterday the cornerstone and broke ground to start construction of their housing project in barrio Bángkal, Abucay, Bataan. The new Aeta settlement, a 136-hectare reservation, is now the center of government activities being undertaken by the National Minorities Assistance Council, the Philippine Air Force and provincial agencies of Bataan."

²⁵ P. Fernandez, *Op. cit.*, Fol. 8. This observation can still be seen today among them. They never work for the future. They spend the day playing games like "hole in" with marbles on the ground. And these include adults including fathers of families. It is the wives who look for food in the rivers and in the fields.

²⁶ P. Gainza, *Op. cit.*, Fol. 7.

²⁷ Retana, W.E., *Orígenes de la Imprenta Filipina*, (Madrid: Librería General de Victoriano Suarez, 1911), p. 54.

²⁸ Peninsular Spaniards were those who came from Spain to live here. Those of long stay in the Philippines were called *camagones* at the end of the 19th century.

number of peninsular Spaniards in Bataan was strangely small. And all of them were either employees in civil, economic and military administration or parish priests. And, more, there were nine towns in which the curates were the only peninsular Spaniards.²⁹

It is also noteworthy that in the entire province, there was not a single peninsular Spaniard or foreigner, aside from the Chinese, who was dedicated to agriculture, industry or commerce.³⁰

CHINESE — The Chinese residents of this province were few in number compared to those in the other provinces of the archipelago. They were estimated to have been only about 160 to 180 according to the census taken by the Government and the Administration in the year 1885.

Practically no one was engaged in agriculture. Almost all engaged in commerce. Some were engaged in the alcohol industry and in the drying of fish for shipment to Manila and Pampanga.³¹

There were no rich Chinese. Due to the big number of mestizos who sought to emulate their parents and due to the proximity of the Manila market where they themselves brought their products, the Chinese had never been able to control commerce — not even retail stores.³²

And being thriftier, more active and more industrious, they were not too well accepted by the natives. Frequently, the latter even took revenge on them by assaulting and murdering them on the roads and even inside their own stores in the middle of the towns. One notes the difficulty to uncover

²⁹ P. Fernandez, *Op. cit.*, Fol. 16.

³⁰ *Loc. cit.*

³¹ At present, Bataan no longer has alcohol industry. Even the export of dried fish is almost unheard of. Fishes, while still fresh, are transported to Manila. The few Chinese left in the province just engage in retail stores or groceries. As a matter of fact they have been so identified with this that if a male native starts a retail store or grocery, he is called "intsik" or "bebo" meaning Chinese.

³² Even now, this is a fact. Besides, their small number and, to some extent, their lack of capital, render it impossible to control the whole business.

the perpetrators of such crimes for the natives do not volunteer information or their help to investigate the deeds on behalf of the Chinese.³³

Some of the Chinese were married and have settled permanently in this province to live with their families, but the majority were transients who came to try their fortune and pass from one province to another.³⁴

MESTIZOS — As we have said, there were two main divisions of mestizos in Bataan, namely, the Spanish-native mestizos and the Chinese-native. The Spanish-native mestizos were greater in number than the peninsular Spaniards. However, they were of little influence and importance. Majority of them belonged to the poorer class. But they had always tried to preserve their lineage in census lists due to privileges of exemption from tribute and due to the municipal services which they enjoyed as provided for by the law.³⁵

The Chinese-native mestizos were also of considerable number. As a matter of fact, they ranked second to that of the natives. They were actually more than those who appear in parish lists for the son or daughter of a native father and a Chinese mestiza mother passed to the class of natives. They were very careful of having this noted in their baptismal records in order not to pay the higher rate of tribute imposed on Chinese mestizos according to the ancient laws of the tribute.

This race was astonishingly prolific and it has left permanent traces of its characteristic traits both physical as well as moral.³⁶

They were generally serious, generous, thrifty, clean and shrewd. They dedicated themselves to agriculture, commerce and industry. They were the truly powerful people in the province. They gave money advances to natives with regular

³³ P. Fernandez, *Op. cit.*, Fol. 8.

³⁴ No transient Chinese loiter around the province anymore. Those who live here permanently still engage in commerce as before.

³⁵ P. Fernandez, *Op. cit.*, Fol. 6.

³⁶ This is especially noticeable in the town of Balanga where inhabitants strangely have white complexion and slanted eyes.

interests collectible at harvest time.³⁷ Their women were usually more active than the men and possess great talent to manage their business and to make it grow. However, they had the vice of gambling where they risked their fortune many times.

III. DOMINICAN MISSIONS IN BATAAN

We have seen that there had been Agustinians, Franciscans, Jesuits and even secular priests in this province. But they stayed here only temporarily. For, indeed, the work was hard and there was promise of only little fruit. Hence, they succumbed to the temptation of leaving this place for a more fertile ground for the conversion of souls.³⁸

It was only the Dominicans who persevered in this place to develop and civilise the people. In this article, we treat of the beginnings of this their mission in Bataan.

We discuss this topic in four main divisions, namely, the work of Fr. Cristopher-Salvatierra, the arrival of Dominicans from the Province of the Holy Rosary, the difficulties they encountered, how these difficulties were solved and, lastly, their first efforts towards the organization of this province of Bataan.

THE WORK OF FR. CRISTOPHER SALVATIERRA

Before Archbishop Salazar sailed out for Manila, desiring, out of his fervent zeal to bring workers for his newly established diocese, he obtained a copious number of Religious from his Order.³⁹ He was able to enlist twenty Dominicans from

³⁷ This fact may be connected to what Aduarte mentions as one of the main vices in the province; usury. (Aduarte, Diego, O.P., *Historia de la Provincia del Santo Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores en Filipinas, Japon y China*, (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, Departamento de Misionologia Española, MCMLXII), p. 120. And most probably, this is also the reason for the assaults and murders inflicted by the natives on the Chinese which we have mentioned above.

³⁸ Aduarte, Diego, O.P., *Historia de la Provincia del Santo Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores en Filipinas, Japon y China*, Tomo I, (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, Departamento de Misionologia Española, MCMLXII), p. 115.

³⁹ "The First Bishop and Archbishop of Manila, The Lord Master Fr. Domingo de Salazar", *Philippiniana Sacra*, vol. II, no. 5. (May-August 1967), pp. 460-461.

Spain for missionary work in the Philippines. However, twelve died in a plague before reaching Mexico. Of the remaining eight, only Fathers Cristopher Salvatierra and Geronimo Garcia survived the rigours of the atlantic journey.¹⁰

Father Cristopher Salvatierra after arriving in Manila was appointed Provisor of the Lord Bishop and Vicar General of the diocese.¹¹ When the Archbishop went to Spain in the year 1591, he made him Governor of his diocese.¹²

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 484.

¹¹ "He was a native of Castilla la Vieja (Old Castle), and a Son of the Illustrious Convent of St. Stephen of Salamanca, where he professed, and Studied Arts and Theology, whence he came out a consummate Student." (*Ibid.*, p. 473)

¹² "In the early years of his governance, to these Islands came the Venerable Father Juan Fernandez de Leon, a Presbyter Cleric, a Native of Lisbon, whom the ancient Historians (with loud praise) call the Saint, for such he was, and his life was so extraordinary and prodigious (As Father Chirino, of the Society of Jesus, so writes). And seeing how developed This Republic was, he began to give a thought to establishing a Fund of the STA. MISERICORDIA (HOLY MERCY) (as exists in the Realms of Portugal, whose foundation was due to the Most Serene QUEEN DONA LEONOR, Wife of DON JUAN, the SECOND) and having communicated it to the residents of this City of Manila, his FOUNDATION was given a start with abundant Alms which they gave therefor." (*Loc. cit.*)

"And having made its Ordinances and Statutes, they presented them before the said Rev. Father Fray Cristobal de Salvatierra, Governor of this Archbishopric, and Don Luis Perez de las Mariñas, Governor and Captain General of these Islands; Whose License and FOUNDATION was in the year 1594. Erecting the Church under the Title of The Presentation of Our Lady, and the College under that of Santa Isabel, which remains today: where all the Orphan Maidens of this Republic have been reared and are reared with the education and teaching of Doctrine and good customs, and under the care of its Directress; whence they come out with Abilities proper to their condition, to embrace the State of Married Women or of Religious of Santa Clara (Saint Claire) of this City; and every day it has augmented all the more. These increments in which it finds itself today being owed to this Holy Presbyter."

"This is the most memorable thing to have happened in the governance of this Excellent Man; and he really was so, being one of the great Pillars that the edifice of this CHURCH had in its Primitive Times; for both in the post of Provisor or of Governor of This Archbishopric, he wrought wonders in the Ecclesiastical State; and he was of a fervent Spirit and rigid in the correction of public Sins.

"One daring and insolvent ventured to try to take away his life in his own Cell; but he paid his effrontery, for by having his hand turn rigid at the time of executing the sacreligious blow GOD manifested the WONDER and confirmed the zeal of his Minister.

Father Salvatierra was a wise and zealous apostle. Although, for his heavy work, one may surmise that he could not absent himself for a long time in Manila, yet he also sometimes managed to find time to leave his office and personally assist to the souls of the people of Bataan. For this reason, he is actually known as the first Dominican minister of this peninsula.⁴³ He prepared the way for the mission of his other brethren from the Province of the Most Holy Rosary. And it was also partly due to his suggestions and advise that the first four Dominicans assigned to this province succeeded in their work.⁴⁴

"He put a check to Lasciviousness, and having created a Fund for retired Women, he mitigated the ardour of their impudences.

"He fixed limits to the Tariffs and alleviated the Natives from costs and dues. He was the Lawyer in their suits.

"He prohibited under grave penalties the public Comedies of the Sangleys.

"He had as his opponent the Governor, most contrary to such Holy Revolution; but with virile hearts he resisted him and setting down Ex-communications, he achieved his purpose. (*Ibid.*, p. 473-475)

⁴³ "He personally visited all the Islands; he went as Chaplain to the Conquest of the province of Cagayan, and was the first to preach therein the Holy Gospel, and found its Church.

"He went to the Moluccas and put to shame the Ecclesiastical government of those Forces; he was the first Minister of the Island of Bataan (which was abundant in Parishioners); and leaving Ministers there, he returned to this city, where he drafted a most useful set of Instructions for the conduct of the Ministries; he decreed that there be therein Books of Baptisms and Weddings, which were not existing.

"He attended to everything with the promptness and charity of an Angel. Many and abundant were the Alms he gave; and tired of so many labors and travels, he fell gravely ill, and in the last moments of his life he wrote to the Governor to put some remedy to an immoral friendship that a Captain had with a Woman, and to send him three Soldiers to arrest an Ecclesiastic who was living in lust; and until he saw one and the other done, he had no repose and said: He died gladly, for having obtained the remedy for these two Souls.

"And with an Angelical Peace, after five years of governance, he commended his Spirit to his CREATOR by the end of the year 1595. The whole Republic, the Clergy, and the Religious Orders mourned him." (*Ibid.*, p. 475)

⁴⁴ APSR, MSS, Seccion Bataan, Tomo 2, Documento 5, Folio 22, "Descripcion de la Provincia de Bataan (1854)", por el P. Gainza.

THE ARRIVAL OF DOMINICANS FROM THE PROVINCE OF THE HOLY ROSARY

It was on the eve of Saint Mary Magdalene that there came to these islands, in the province of Cavite, on 21 July 1587,⁴⁵ fifteen religious from the Order of Saint Dominic with their Vicar General, Fr. Juan de Castro. On the 25th, the feast of Saint James the Apostle, they arrived in Manila.⁴⁶

Having concluded extensions of felicitations and indispensable visits and having celebrated, in the cathedral, the feast of their Father, Saint Dominic, when hardly fifteen days had passed since they arrived in Manila, it appeared to them that their rest had already been long enough, and being impatient to exercise the mission which they had placed on their shoulders, they decided to part ways and go to the places appointed to them by the Vice Patron, who was the Governor General, and by the Archbishop.⁴⁷ Four of them were assigned in Bataan: Fr. Alonso Gimenez,⁴⁸ Fr. Pedro Bolaños,⁴⁹ Fr. Domingo Nieva⁵⁰

⁴⁵Ibid, Folio 23.

⁴⁶"The First Bishop and Archbishop of Manila, The Lord Master Fr. Domingo de Salazar", *Philippiniana Sacra*, Op. cit., p. 45.

⁴⁷Arnaiz, Gregorio, O.P., "Ministerio Espiritual de los Dominicos en el Partido de Bataan", *Misiones Catolicas en Extremo Oriente*, p. 138.

⁴⁸Fr. Alonso Gimenez was a Son of the Convent of San Esteban in Salamanca. Before coming to the Philippines, he worked in Guatemala. In Bataan, he was able to learn Tagalog. Returning to Santo Domingo in Manila for ill health, he was appointed Master of Students and later Prior of the Convent. He was the second Provincial of his Province and during his time, he admitted Cagayan into it. He also went to Cambodia, Cochinchina and Macao. In Macao, he died in December 1598. (Ocio, Ilario, *Reseña Biografica de los Religiosos de la Provincia del Santisimo Rosario de Filipinas desde su Fundacion hasta Nuestros Dias, Parte Primera*, (Manila: Establecimiento Tipografico del Real Colegio de Santo Tomas, 1891), pp. 78-80.)

⁴⁹Fr. Pedro Bolaños was a Master of Novices in the Convent of Nuestra Señora de la Peña de Francia of Salamanca. He was 60 years of age when he went to Bataan. He was especially attracted to children teaching them how to write, read, pray and sing. However, in less than one year, he died of stomach ache at the infirmary of the Franciscans. He was buried in the Franciscan Church. (Ocio, Op. cit., pp. 95-97)

⁵⁰While still a young deacon, Fr. Domingo de Nieva came to the Philippines. He was from Villoria, a son of the Convent of San Pablo de Valladolid. Being young, he learned Tagalog fast. He ministered to the people of Bataan even as a deacon baptizing, catechizing, preaching and acting as an interpreter during confessions. He translated and pub-

who was just a deacon, and Fr. Juan de Santo Tomas Ormaza,⁵¹ their Vicar and Prelate. They were accompanied for sometime by Fr. Cristopher Salvatierra who was then already knowledgeable of the place and its language. They arrived in Bataan in September 1587.⁵²

DIFFICULTIES THE MISSIONARIES ENCOUNTERED

Aside from the difficulties afforded by the elements, the climate and the place which was very mountainous criss-crossed by streams and rivers, the missionaries encountered four main problems in this province which hindered their work of evangelization. These were: superstitions and idolatry, usury and slavery, drunkenness or alcoholism and confusion of religions.

SUPERSTITIONS AND IDOLATRY — Pagan Bataan also had its forms of worship. The people also had their priestesses in the person of old women called *catalonas*. These presided over some ceremonies which were performed with certain instruments in the more hidden spots. It has been recorded that even at the beginning of the spread of Christianity in this province, these priestesses continued to do their functions "for the profit they received from them". And it was also said that the people, at first, even hid these idolatrous old women from the missionaries.⁵³

lished the *Memorial of Christian Life* of V.P. Fr. Luis de Granada. He ministered to the Chinese. And in the Chinese language, he published prayers, meditations, preparations for confession and Holy Communion and, at least, two Chinese grammar books. He also became a Prior of Santo Domingo. And, after 19 years in the Philippines, he died while on his way to Mexico around the year 1606 to 1607. (*Ibid.*, p. 108-110.)

⁵¹ Fr. Juan de Santo Tomas Ormaza was born in September 1548 in Medina del Campo, Valladolid. He was of noble blood and well educated. He studied his Latin and Rhetoric in the Universidad de Salamanca. He was conferred the degree of Lectorate in Philosophy in San Pedro de las Dueñas, Segovia. He received his Doctorate in Navarra. Having been invested of his habit in San Pablo de Valladolid, he became Master of Students there. In Bataan, he erected the towns of Ahucay and Samal. Being the fourth Provincial of the Order (elected 12 June 1600) in the Philippines, he was later also Vice-Provincial (1610-1612) and Provincial of Japan, in the Vicariate of Saint Dominic in Nagasaki. Returning to Manila (1614), he was assigned to the Vicariate of the Parian (1619). He was also one year in San Gabriel de Binondoc. He died on 7 September 1638 at the age of 90 years.

⁵² Aduarte. *Op. cit.*, p. 115.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 120-121.

And, as was common in many other underdeveloped places, Bataan also had its experiences with evil spirits. Fr. Domingo Navarrete⁵⁴ narrates to us his encounter with these beings in this province.⁵⁵ Indeed, similar occurrences in China are also recorded by Santa Cruz in his book.⁵⁶

Beliefs in these superstitions and idolatry had to be combated by the ministers of this province.

USURY AND SLAVERY—Usury resulting from loans, or debts, which were oftentimes justly contracted, and the maltreatment of slaves were also problems which had to be confronted by the missionaries. The authorities found themselves helpless in the face of these problems. The rich took advantage of the poor. The powerful took advantage of the weak. And the creditors took advantage

⁵⁴ Fr. Domingo Navarrete, a Dominican missionary, travelled round the world and spent the best of his life (1658-69) in China where he became a determined opponent of the evangelical methods of the "Jesuit mandarins". He also came to the Philippines where he stayed for a while in Bataan.

⁵⁵ "From Manila, where I stayed a few days, I went to Bataan (in Luzon); and there, I was much troubled and disturbed by Witches or Fairies, what it was we knew not, but the effect showed it to be a contrivance of the Devil. No considerable hurt was done any man, but we heard much Noise and Clatter, and saw Stones fly; at one moment the House was all foul, and the next as suddenly clean; and the Chairs hurried about without perceiving who moved them, and the like. We saw it ourselves and we passed two Nights without closing our Eyes.

"One Night when I and another were gone to Rest, and the Noise was abated, there came into the place where we lay the Governor, Judge, and some Indians, to see whether they could discover anything. They went on courageously, threatening those that durst disturb the House. The moment they came in they were thrown down Stairs, a World of Stones, Sand and dirt tumbling after them, and they were so frightened, that they never inquired further into the Matter. I was called away to Manila, and by that means delivered from this Vexation, which continued some Months and others had enough suffering and punishment from it." (Commins, J.S. (ed.), *The Travels and Controversies of Friar Domingo Navarrete (1618-1686)*, vol. I, Cambridge University Press, London: 1962), p. 88.) Similar occurrences are narrated to have happened in the province of Samar. In Bataan, even today, people generally still believe in Witches. In the town of Pilar actually there is a district which is said to be inhabited by these witches called "kulam".

⁵⁶ Sta. Cruz, Baltazar de, *De la Provincia del Santo Rosario de Filipinas. Japon y China del Sagrado Orden de Predicadores*, Tomo II, (Zaragoza, Pasqual Bueno, Impressor del Rey. 1693), pp. 126-7, 312-13.

tage of their debtors.⁵⁷ And this unjust way of life had taken flesh in their very bones. This had long served the life-blood of society's existence. Hence, it was not easy to pull this flesh from their very bones and bleed it out of society's very existence.⁵⁸

DRUNKENNESS OR ALCOHOLISM — Drunkenness was another vice that was so widespread and common in this province that it seemed impossible to remove it from the people's practices.⁵⁹ Generally, all the natives had this defect which caused much disorder. And, in this aspect, the province surpassed "any other place on earth". It was because of this that this province was famous among the neighboring provinces. And it really seemed impossible to uproot it because it was inherited from fathers and grandfathers and was almost connatural to the people.⁶⁰

CONFUSION OF RELIGIONS — Another major difficulty and obstacle that the missionaries met on their arrival in this province was the confusion of religions among the natives on the part of the missionaries which was due to the defective methods of spreading the Gospel followed till then.

In the beginning, seeing the docility of the people and inexperienced in the missionary apostolate, the very first missionaries to this province did not realise the seriousness of the fault that neutralized their efforts. Of those who had gone to convert the people of Bataan, for example, Aduarte mentions one who was so full of zeal in fulfilling his office that, without teaching the people what they ought to believe, he baptized them by force, gathering together all men and women, though already of adult age, and gave them their Christian names. In this manner, he also baptized those who escaped him the previous times that he administered baptism, who were not at all few, because as baptism was not voluntary, but by force, there were those who hid from it. And the priest went on contented, putting into writing the names of those he baptized thinking that he had done a great service to the Lord and administering

⁵⁷ Arnaiz, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-141.

⁵⁸ Aduarte, *op. cit.*, p. 121

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

⁶⁰ *Loc. cit.*

other such baptisms or sacrileges in other towns.⁶¹ Because of this practice, there were also those who assumed Christian names in order to avoid baptism. And those who were baptized, believing that baptism was a malediction, immediately took a bath as soon as they free themselves from the hands of the minister. And they washed with great care and diligence the chrism and holy oils in which, it appeared to them, consisted the malediction of baptism. And they returned to their idolatries and superstitions as if they had never been baptized.

Even those who were presumably properly baptized, as those baptized by Fr. Cristopher Salvatierra,⁶² since no priest remained with them to direct and guide them in their Christian way of life, became merely half-Christians, who, mixing with the heathens, were distinguished from them only in name, but practicing the same superstitions and performing actions no different from them.⁶³ They themselves even protected and hid *catalonas* from the missionaries.⁶⁴

These practices led to the slow progress of Christianity in this province and to the great difficulty of the Dominicans in setting aside the Christian from the non-baptized because many denied their baptism in order to free themselves of their obligations,⁶⁵ while others claimed having been baptized in order not to receive the sacrament behaving like Christians — confessing, receiving Holy Communion and the other sacraments as the rest of the Christians. And since the missionaries did not know their language, it was easy to deceive them.⁶⁶ There were even those who having been known as non-Christians just promised the Religious to come back the next day for baptism but never appeared at all afterwards.⁶⁷

Indeed, in those first days, baptism was shunned. The people did everything to avoid it.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

⁶² P. Gainza, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

⁶³ APSR, MSS, Seccion Bataan, Tomo 2, Documento 8, Folio 10, "Memoria de la Provincia De Bataan. Año 1886. Para la Exposicion de Madrid, En 1888", por el P. Vicente Fernandez.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Folios 11-11v.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Folio 16.

⁶⁶ Aduarte, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

⁶⁷ *Loc. cit.*

SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS MET

Having understood the above mentioned problems, the missionaries started to work out remedies on them.

SUPERSTITIONS AND IDOLATRY — At first, the *catalonas*, who were the instruments of superstitions and idolatry in this province, were unknown to the missionaries. Their worship was occult. These priestesses, as we have said, were hidden even by Christians. And these *catalonas* themselves, being hypocrites, frequently go to church with "great piety."⁶⁸

However, this was not for long.

Once, Fr. Juan de Santo Tomas, Ormaza, the Provincial Vicar of the Dominicans in this province, visited a sick woman. This woman told the priest that her sickness is the effect of the revenge of one of the two witches in that town. The Vicar after having done the necessary investigation, discovered that those two women were really witches having contracted a pact with the devil and as such they had caused great harm to the people.⁶⁹

Upon knowing this, the faithful decided to punish them and throw them out of their town. The instruments of their witchcraft were given to Christians school boys to play with around the town and, finally, to burn.⁷⁰

From then on, although from time to time there were still some manifestations of their relics, superstitions and idolatry in this province ended.

USURY AND SLAVERY — With the help of God, Christian doctrines on justice penetrated the hearts of those afflicted by this vice of usury and maltreatment of slaves.

It all began one day when a good Christian, by the name of Pablo Taclanmanoc, asked the Vicar Provincial if he had knowledge of debts, usury and other maltreatments in town. The priests responded that of those he knew from confession he could not tell but that it is a must to pay one's debt everyone

⁶⁸ Arnaiz, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

⁶⁹ *Loc. cit.*

⁷⁰ Aduarte, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-121.

knew. Enlightened by this answer, Don Pablo resolved to restore to their proper owners all his ill-gotten goods.

The good example reached those other people who practiced usury and maltreated their slaves.⁷¹ Soon, many gave liberty to their slaves who had been deprived of their freedom unjustly. They restored money taken from usury and took only gains as suggested by the priest. There were even some who had given away everything because they found out that all were unjustly taken by them. And this without any force. And when others did not know to whom to restitute, they gave the property to the community for common needs and the needs of the poor. The same was done when some did not want to receive the satisfaction due to them.⁷²

In all these, the disinterestedness of the Religious also helped. They would not even ask to apply these things for the benefits of the Church. They never gave any occasion for suspicion on the part of the faithful.⁷³

Thus, this happy situation continued. Everyone was just to his neighbor, paying what should be paid and sometimes more than what was just. Hence, conflicts were avoided and there was peace.⁷⁴

DRUNKENNESS OR ALCOHOLISM — Against drunkenness or alcoholism, the Father Vicar Provincial also found an efficacious means without recourse to violence. This father arranged that nobody should visit a drunkard's house, nor admit him in their own, nor communicate with them, nor deal on anything with them. Besides this, he ordered that the names of those who were slaves to this vice be published so that all may avoid them as enemies of God, as scorers of doctrine and of the teachings of the Fathers. Through this form of ostracism, the guilty ones realized their evil condition, embarrassed that the more respectable members of their community were ashamed of them, and they rid themselves of a vice that made them so despicable. Besides, with the preaching and exhortation of the priests, the whole province conceived an abhorrence for such a brutalizing vice

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 123-124.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 121.

⁷³ *Loc. cit.*

⁷⁴ *Loc. cit.*

and became one of the most abstemious provinces in the Islands.⁷⁵

And when, sometimes, out of necessity, or out of desire they drank, it was only a cup and a half at most, in order to be far from the old disorder. This is why the province not only erased its former bad name and reputation but also earned a good one.⁷⁶

CONFUSION OF RELIGIONS — When little by little, the Fathers became familiar with the people and began to learn their customs as well as their language, they also took notice of this problem of confusion of religions. Hence, they applied the convenient remedy, exposing, in their frequent sermons and individual conversations, the evil deeds of those who, without being Christians, try to appear as Christians and of those who were Christians but tried to hide the fact and lived as non-Christians. And to them, they offered to set their consciences aright without any punishment, without feeling any shame and without any fear of losing their good reputation, to procure the remedy of their souls with all secrecy.⁷⁷

Secret baptisms were performed. And confessions helped much in this regard. And the knowledge of Tagalog which was easily learned by the deacon Fr. Domingo de Nieva, aided much, not only in being interpreter during confessions but also in preaching to the people which gained for him the affection of both his Religious elders and the people.⁷⁸

The selflessness of the missionaries, their sufferings and sincere labor for the welfare of the people preaching the Word of God from town to town, day and night, in storms and rain, in lightnings and thunders, across the Bay and rivers, also helped much in convincing the people of the truth and goodness of the Christian religion. Hence, not long after, many began to ask for baptism and there were more who approached the confessional whether healthy or sick.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ P. V. Fernandez, *op. cit.*, folio 11.

⁷⁶ *Loc. cit.*, Cf. Aduarte, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

⁷⁷ Aduarte, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-117

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

⁷⁹ *Loc. cit.*

ORGANIZATION OF THE MISSIONS

Once the weeds had been uprooted, the sowing of the good seed presented less trouble. From the very beginning, the missionaries were convinced that it was necessary to bring the scattered inhabitants together and to organize them into towns.⁸⁰ This highly civilizing procedure was intended to incorporate these people into civilized society and Christianity. Thus, before the close of the XVI century, in the year 1587, the town of Abucay was founded. Samal came into existence in the year 1956.⁸¹ These were placed under the protection of Saint Dominic and Saint Catherine of Siena respectively.

From the second half of the XVII century onwards, the following towns were founded. Orion, for a long time a visit of Abucay, was separated from it in 1667 under the patronage of St. Michael.

In 1714, the Dominicans officially accepted the town of Orani. Our Lady of the Holy Rosary was its heavenly protectress. Balanga was the third town founded by the missionaries in the XVIII century. Having been accepted as a visit of Abucay in 1714, it was made a vicariate in 1739. The Dominicans also accepted in 1757 the town of Llana-Hermosa separating it from Orani. Its patron saint was St. Peter Martyr.⁸²

And, finally, mention can also be made of the town of Pilar, under the patronage of Our Lady of the Pillar, which, though founded by the secular clergy in 1801, was, however, placed under the ministry of the Dominicans in 1833.⁸³

This was how this province was evangelized. The result was described by Aduarte in the following paragraph: *Por lo cual, cuando los jueces ecclesiasticos quieren meter en regla a algunas personas de otros partidos, que andan muy fuera de ella, suelen enriarlas a Bataan, como a partido de gente reformada, no porque no haya en el faltas (que basta ser hombres*

⁸⁰ DA, p. 114, col. 2.

⁸¹ APSR, MSS, Seccion Bataan, Tomo 1, Documento 8, Folio 55, "Parroquia de Samal", por el Fr. Miguel Portell. Cf. Fernandez, Pablo OP, "Dominican Apostolate in the Philippines" Boletin Ecclesiastico de Filipinas, vol. XXXIX, no. 435, January-February 195), p. 152.

⁸² APSR, MSS, Seccion Bataan, Uncatalogued, Documento 5, Folios 41-47, "Dominican Missions in Bataan", by Fr. Pablo Fernandez.

⁸³ APSR, MSS, Seccion Bataan, Tomo 1, Documento 19, Folio 64. "Con-

*para tenerlas), sino porque tienen tanto cuidado de acudir a los Sacramentos, cuando se ven necesitados, y se llegan a ellos con tanto sentimiento de sus culpas y proposito de la enmienda, que, con mucha razon, muchos y muy buenos ministros que han tenido muy gran concepto de su virtud, han vivido entre ellos con gran consuelo, viendo, que si se trabaja, no es en vano, sino con mucho fruto. Y por experiencia han visto que mira el Señor a estos indios como muy Padre, acudiendoles como tal con muy particular y amorosa provincia en muchos casos particulares, con tales y tantas circunstancias, que no se puede dudar de que son obras suyas, con que los sacó prodigiosamente de la carrera de perdicion, dando grandes esperanzas de llevarlos al cielo."*⁸⁴

vento de Pilar, Respuesta al Cuestionario de N.P. Provincial de 4 de Agosto de 1888", por el P. Fermin de San Julian.

⁸⁴ Aduarte, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

THE CLERGY AND THE BOLETIN

"...Commendamus:...2—Ut assidue legant Commentarium interdioecesanum Boletin Ecclesiastico de Filipinas, singulis mensibus ab Universitate Sancti Thomae editum; in quo praecipua Sanctae Sedis decreta atque acta recentiora evulgantur, quaestiones practicae in utilitatem parochorum solvuntur, etc.

...Obligatoria erit subscripto omnibus et singulis sacerdotibus cleri saecularis et religiosi curam animarum habentibus; et ipsa Curia ecclesiastica de pretio subscriptionum solvendo invigilabit." (Acta et Dec. Primi Con. Plenarii Phil., no. 29)