History of Christianity in Mindanao:
Arrival, Challenges, and Development of the Catholic Church in Mindanao During the Spanish Period (1538-1897)

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This paper attempts to provide a historical sketch of early Spanish attempts at the Christianization of Mindanao. It also looks into the challenges that the Spanish missionaries, mainly from the Recollect and Jesuit Orders, experienced in their missionary efforts and their different ways of responding to them. As we celebrate the Quincentennial anniversary of the arrival of the Christian faith in these islands, we look in the direction of Mindanao which continues to beckon as a uniquely complex and challenging mission frontier today.

Three Beginnings of Christianity in Mindanao

Capt. Francisco de Castro in Sarangani in 1538

The Portuguese were the first to announce the Gospel in Mindanao. The earliest recorded sighting of Christians in Mindanao was in 1538, even before the expedition led by the Spanish conquistador Miguel Lopez de Legazpi, who arrived in Samar on 13 February 1565. A ship from the Portuguese colony of Ternate, south of the Philippine Archipelago, under the command of Capt. Francisco de Castro crossed the Celebes Sea and landed in Mindanao. The vessel was supposed to head southwest to Macassar of the Sulawesi Island, but instead,

"strong winds" drew Captain de Castro's ship northwest to where Mindanao is.[1] According to Fr. Miguel A. Bernad, the Portuguese captain disembarked in Sarangani, then moved further around the island to preach and baptize, particularly the dying. No significant resistance was reported during the expedition.

Instead, the captain found the natives and the chiefs hospitable and got their consent to bring their sons for schooling in the Spice Islands.[2] Fr. Horacio V. de la Costa recounts that Castro still lived in the memory of some natives in Butuan when some Spanish Jesuits arrived there five decades later in 1596.[3] It can be inferred that the Portuguese captain might have gone around Mindanao from his disembarkation in Sarangani in the south, reaching and leaving an impression to natives as far as Butuan in the north. However, this claim is significantly challenged by the absence of Christianity when the Jesuits arrived and established a mission station in Butuan in 1596, which may cast doubt over the details about the expedition of Castro.

1 However, Peter Schreurs M.S.C. interprets the "strong winds" as the rivalry between the kingdoms of Spain and Portugal, which at that time were in pursuit of possessing the Spice Islands. Peter Schreurs, M.S.C., Caraga Antigua, 1521-1910: the Hispanization and Christianization of Agusan, Surigao and East Davao (Manila: National Historical Institute, 2000), 38-43.

2 Miguel A. Bernad, S.J., "The Beginnings of Evangelization and the First Church in Mindanao, 1596-1597," in *The Great Island: Studies in the Exploration and Evangelization of Mindanao* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2004), 47.

3 Horacio V. de la Costa, S.J., *The Jesuits in the Philippines 1581-1768* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 165-166. Fr. Rene B. Javellana, S.J. supports De la Costa's finding and informs that the Jesuits arrived in Butuan in 1596; the population was pagan. Javellana also adds that two priests accompanied Captain de Castro. Rene B. Javellana, S.J., *Wood and Stone for God's Greater Glory: Jesuit Art and Architecture in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1991), 232.

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Capt. Esteban Rodriguez de Figueroa in Maguindanao in 1596

Another possible beginning of Christianity in Mindanao occurred in a military expedition by Capt. Esteban Rodriguez de Figueroa.[4] In 1591, Gov. Gen. Gomez Perez Dasmariñas offered the conquest of the island of Mindanao to Rodriguez de Figueroa who accepted the challenge given a handsome remuneration.[5] On 1 April 1596, he led a flotilla of fifty boats filled with 214 Spanish and 1,500 natives and sailed to Mindanao along with two Jesuits. Their company arrived twenty-one days later at the mouth of the Pulangi River, a territory of Rajah Sirongan of Bwayan [or Buayan], lord of the Maguindanao confederacy.[6]

Tragically, despite their potent force along with additional native volunteers, the expedition ended too early. The conqueror himself was instantly killed when an enemy warrior

4 Capt. Esteban Rodriguez de Figueroa was born in North Africa by Portuguese parents. A penniless adventurist, he journeyed and arrived with Miguel Lopez de Legazpi in the Philippines and participated in Brunei's Spanish invasion under Gov. Gen. Francisco Sande in 1578. The governor immediately ordered Rodriguez de Figueroa to proceed to Sulu and have Rajah Pangiran submit as a vassal to the Spanish crown, which he successfully did after winning two battles. Due to these involvements, Captain Rodriguez de Figueroa was rewarded with encomiendas in Camarines and Panay with 4,700 and 4,800 subjects, respectively. He also had investments in Mexico. De la Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, 110 and 151.

5 De la Costa reveals the amount of remuneration: "If successful, he [Rodriguez de Figueroa] would be recognized by the Crown as governor of the conquered territory for life, with the right to designate his successor. He would also have the right to award encomiendas to those taking part in the expedition, retaining for himself as many as would yield an annual revenue of 15,000 pesos." Ibid., 152.

6 In this article, the Pulangi River will also be referred to as the Rio Grande. The two Jesuits were Fr. Juan del Campo, S.J., and Bro. Gaspar Gomez, S.J. Brother Gomez, would bring the embalmed body of the fallen Rodriguez de Figueroa in Manila. At the same time, Father del Campo remained chaplain and died four months later along the Rio Grande. Ibid., 152-154.

struck his head during a pre-battle reconnaissance journey on 25 April, three days after their arrival. Rodriguez de Figueroa perished too early at the hands of the enemies. A series of successions of commands and military bases would follow.[7] However, like the expedition of Rodriguez de Figueroa, these further attempts by Jesuits to establish Christianity in Mindanao also failed.[8]

The Jesuits in Butuan in 1597

Shortly after, another pair of Jesuits, Fr. Valerio de Ledesma, and Fr. Manuel Martinez, made a successful entry to Mindanao, inaugurating a church in Butuan on 8 September 1597.[9] Their arrival was a response to the request by the Spanish *encomienderos* to start a mission in their

7 Those who took over, successively, the place of Rodriguez de Figueroa were Juan de la Jara, Toribio de Miranda, and Juan Ronquillo. After the defeat in Maguindanao, De la Jara moved the forces in Tampakan at the mouth of Rio Grande. Then to La Caldera (now Barangay Recodo, Zamboanga City), De Miranda returned the base to Tampakan, and, finally, Ronquillo attacked Bwayan, which resulted in the submission of Rajah Mura, a leader of the Maguindanao confederacy, to the Spanish Crown. After their victory, Ronquillo asked the governor to recall the forces. Gov. Gen. Francisco Tello de Guzman then "ordered Ronquillo to inflict as much damage as he could on the Magindanaus [Maguindanaos], dismantle the Tampakan camp, leave a small garrison at La Caldera, and come home." Ibid., 279.

8 Miguel Saderra Masó, S.J., *Missiones Jesuíticas de Filipinas 1581-1768 y 1859-1924*, trans. Leo A. Cullum, S.J., *The Philippine Jesuits* 1581-1768 & 1859-1924 (Manila: Typewritten Manuscript, 1974), 7.

9 Fr. Valerio de Ledesma, S.J., was born in Alaejos, Spain, on 23 March 1556. He entered the Jesuits on 16 October 1572, arrived in the Philippines in 1596, and Mindanao in November, professed final vows on 4 January 1604, and died in Manila on 15 May 1639. He became Provincial of the Philippines in 1613.

Fr. Manuel Martinez, S.J., was born in Pedraza, Segovia, Spain, in 1560. He entered the Jesuit province of Castille on 5 October 1577, professed final vows on 13 June 1593, arrived in the Philippines in 1596 and Mindanao in 1597, and died in Palapag, Samar on 12 December 1626.

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encomiendas at the delta of the Agusan River.[10] Father de Ledesma arrived in November 1596, and Father Martinez followed in 1597. Although the Diocese of Cebu was erected on 14 August 1595, it had no bishop until 23 May 1598. Accordingly, the Archdiocese of Manila's cathedral chapter approved and ordered that the Jesuits respond to the requesting *encomienderos*.[11] Bernad calls this "establishment of the first stable mission"[12] the "beginning of the systematic evangelization of the island of Mindanao" and characterizes it as the "more realistic" inauguration of Christianity on the island. [13]

The seed of Christianity planted by the two missionaries quickly produced fruits. "By the end of the mission's first year, there were some eight hundred baptized Christians, and a large number of others who were catechumens prepared for baptism."[14] The missionaries utilized a simple and creative tool. Father de Ledesma "cast the prayers, creed, and commandments into Visayan verse adapted to the traditional

10 De la Costa identifies these *encomienderos* in *The Jesuits in the Philippines* (154) as "several of the Cebu colonists who had encomiendas on the island of Bohol and the region of Butuan in northern Mindanao [who] had been urgently requesting missionaries for them." Heidi Gloria and Fr. Pasquale Giordano, S.J. add that there was an *encomienda* in Caraga (not far from Butuan) in 1591 which belonged to Juan Gutierrez del Real and Francisco de la Cruz. Heidi K. Gloria and Pasquale T. Giordano, S.J., "A Social and Religious History of Davao, 1609-1910," Tambara IV (December 1987): 5. Further research would be needed to prove whether the *encomiendas* revealed by De la Costa and Gloria and Giordano are related or equivocal.

11 De la Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines,* 166.

12 Bernad, "The Beginnings of Evangelization," 47. De la Costa in *The Jesuits in the Philippines* (165) defines it as, "the first serious attempt to convert the people of Butuan to Christianity," while Javellana in *Wood and Stone* (232) calls it as "abortive beginning" since the Jesuits would leave Butuan in 1602.

13 Bernad, "The Beginnings of Evangelization," 48.

14 Ibid., 52. In comparison to footnote 6, the population of Butuan in the beginning was "absolutely pagan."

planting, rowing, and weaving chants of the region."[15] They taught these song-prayers to the children who eventually brought these tunes into their homes, subtly attracting and instructing their parents and families to the new religion.

Christian initiation at that time already required a catechumenal program before receiving the Sacrament of Baptism. Fr. Ramon Prat, vice-provincial of the Philippine Jesuits,[16] emphasized this policy and ordered his men, in all their missionary areas, not to baptize those who were not yet ready:

> Let them not put their care in that as many as possible are baptized, but rather that those who are baptized are ready for it and lead Christian lives, and even though few give good examples to their people. Make sure of two things: that those whom you baptize are well instructed in the truths of our holy faith, firmly believe them, and are convinced of the error of idolatry; and that they have formed a real attachment to the Christian way of life, and are resolved in future to avoid their pagan sacrifices, their usurious practices, and their drunken feasts. [17]

The Vice-Provincial's order was dutifully complied in Butuan. Father de Ledesma reported, "We delay their reception

15 De la Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, 165-66. It was decreed in the Synod of Manila in 1582 that the missionaries learn the natives' dialect to hasten their evangelization. Consequently, it must not be of any surprise that the Jesuits then could speak and write the local language. For a detailed discussion of this matter see John N. Schumacher, S.J., "Bishop Domingo de Salazar and the Manila Synod of 1582," in *Growth and Decline: Essays on Philippine Church History* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2009), 1-22.

16 Hispanized as "Raymundo del Prado," Fr. Ramon Prat, S.J., was born in San Cugat, Barcelona, Spain, in 1557. He entered the Jesuits on 18 November 1576, arrived in the Philippines on 26 May 1584, professed final vows on 12 May 1593, and died in Manila on 12 February 1605. He became Vice Provincial of the Philippines in 1596.

17 Ramon Prat, ARSI Philipp. 9,303v in De la Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, 168.

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so that they may realize better the great mercy that God is giving them, and so that they may learn the Christian doctrine better."[18] The baptism of two native chieftains, Elian and Silongan, added authority to the missionaries' catechumenal program since it provided a precedent to be emulated by their subjects.[19] Aside from sacramental works, the Jesuits also defended the natives against abuses by some Spaniards. They also sent some of the former's boys to be educated at the Jesuit College of San Ildefonso in Cebu.[20] The first missionaries' activities were instrumental for the natives to distinguish the Spanish Jesuits from the opportunistic Spanish *encomienderos*.[21]

From the Jesuits to the Secular Clergy and Recollects

The Jesuits Leave Mindanao

The Jesuits, however, could not remain for long in Butuan. Fr. Claudio Acquaviva,[22] superior general of the Society of Jesus in Rome, sent a visitor to the Philippines with the right

18 Bernad, "The Beginnings of Evangelization," 52-53.

19 Javellana, *Wood and Stone*, 232. For a detailed discussion on Elian's conversion see De la Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, 165.

20 For a detailed outline about the College of San Ildefonso in Cebu see Javellana, *Wood and Stone,* 211-212.

21 Bernad, "The Beginnings of Evangelization," 49. The Synod of Manila in 1582 also provided a decree on the proper relationship between *encomienderos* and their native subjects. See Fr. Diego de Herrera's report in "Memoria de los religiosos de las Yslas del Poniente de cosas que el Padre Fray Diego de Herrera ha de tratar con su Magestad o su Real Consejo de Indias," Colleción Pastells, Madrid, Fil., I, 1-5 in John N. Schumacher, S.J., *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 2d ed. (Quezon City: Loyola School of Theology, 1987), 23-24.

22 Fr. Claudio Acquaviva (or Aquaviva), S.J., was born in Atri, Naples, on 14 September 1543. He joined the Jesuits in 1567, became Provincial of Naples, then of Rome, then elected Superior General in 1581 until his death on 31 January 1615 in Rome. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v. "Claudio Acquaviva," accessed 12 March 2016, http://www.britannica.com/biography/Claudio-Aquaviva.

to make decisions on his behalf. Fr. Diego Garcia[23] arrived in the Philippines on 17 June 1599 and immediately turned to his special mandate. During the post-visitation conferences with the Jesuits assigned in the Visayan and Butuan missions, which began on 6 January 1600, Father Garcia "questioned the wisdom of assigning Jesuits in small groups of two or three to isolated mission stations, thus depriving them of the safeguards and incentives of community life."[24] To "safeguard" community life, he ordered to consolidate the Jesuits into more prominent communities, reducing the resident missions in the Visayas and leaving the Butuan mission with the transfer of Father de Ledesma as superior of the Jesuit Residence in Cebu.[25]

The Secular Clergy Replace the Jesuits

By 1602, the Jesuits were no longer in Mindanao, and Bishop Pedro de Agurto of Cebu[26] installed the secular clergy as their replacements in Butuan. Unfortunately, the service by the new group of clerics was short-lived because of the native rebellion "against the tyranny and greed of the Spanish officials and *encomenderos*… killing the priest and the entire Spanish community."[27] The priest was murdered due to his association with the *encomienderos* and his failure to defend the natives from abuses. As a result of the carnage, the Jesuits

23 Fr. Diego Garcia, S.J., was born in Las Berlanas, Avila, Spain, on 2 July 1552. He entered the Jesuits on 31 March 1572, professed final vows on 22 July 1591, and died in Manila on 12 September 1604. After his stint as a visitor, he became vice-provincial of the Philippines in 1601

24 De la Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, 283.

25 For a detailed discussion of Fr. Diego Garcia's visitation see De la Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, 172-191.

26 Bishop Pedro de Agurto, O.S.A., was born in 1544 in Mexico City, appointed the first bishop of Cebu on 30 August 1595, and died at the age of sixty four years on 15 October 1608 in Cebu.

27 Bernad, "The Beginnings of Evangelization," 55.

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were ordered to return to Butuan. Fr. Fabrizio Sarsali[28] was sent and successfully "pacified the natives and brought them back to live in villages."[29] When the mission had been fully stabilized in 1614, the Jesuits left for the second time. Counting the brief interruption, the Jesuits were in Butuan from 1596-1614.[30]

The Recollects in Mindanao

The Recollects, who arrived in the Philippines in 1606, were also in Mindanao.[31] In 1609, a fortification was built in Tandag by the Spaniards "to put a stop to the raids perpetrated by the Moros in the eastern coast of Mindanao."[32] Two years

28 Fr. Fabrizio Sarsali, S.J., was born in Naples, Italy, in April 1568. He entered the Jesuits on 10 December 1586, arrived in the Philippines on 19 May 1601, professed final vows on 19 March 1607, and died in Manila on 1645.

29 Bernad, "The Beginnings of Evangelization," 59.

30 Angel Martinez Cuesta, O.A.R., "A Short History of the Church in Caraga Antigua," in *Augustinian Recollect History of Mindanao (1622-1919): Studies and Documentary Sources,* Angel Martinez Cuesta, O.A.R. and Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos, (Quezon City: Order of Augustinian Recollects, 2007), 28.

31 The Recollects (O.A.R.) is a reformed congregation of the Order of St. Augustine (O.S.A.). Earlier, in 1594, Philip II "ordered to divide the provinces among the religious of the orders for the purpose of conversion and instruction, that where Augustinians are, there shall be no Franciscans, nor religious of the Society where there would be Dominicans." Cedula of 27 Abril 1594, in Francisco de Sta. Ines, *Cronica de la Provincia de San Gregorio Magno de religiosos descalzos de N.S.P. San Francisco en las Islas Filipinas, China, Japon, etc.* (1676) (Manila, 1892), 2:607 in Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 17.

Related to this prior royal arrangement with the religious orders, according to Schumacher, "The Recoletos, who arrived somewhat later, were left out of this division, and consequently were assigned territories belonging to later conquests of Spain in the more outlying areas, such as Zambales, Palawan, the Calamianes, and parts of Mindanao." Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 17.

32 Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos, "The Augustinian Recollects in Mindanao (1622-1919)" in *Augustinian Recollect History of Mindanao (1622-1919): Studies and Documentary Sources,* Angel Martinez Cuesta, O.A.R. and Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos (Quezon City: Order of Augustinian Recollects, 2007), 44.

later, Fr. Francisco Vivante of the Recollect mission in Cebu arrived to open a *visita* or mission station without a residential priest, to serve the Spanish garrison there.[33] However, it took another decade for them to settle fully.

On 1 March 1621, Bishop Pedro de Arce of Cebu[34] formally established the Recollects in some parts of Mindanao, including the former Jesuit mission in Butuan. This last mission had been abandoned due to unknown reasons by Fr. Alonso de Campo, who had taken over after the death of Fr. Lorenzo Perez, both secular priests.[35] This new company of missionaries was of the Order of Augustinian Recollects, formed in 1588 in Toledo, Spain. They arrived in the Philippines in 1606 and formally resided in Mindanao in 1622 to evangelize the *encomiendas* of Butuan, Sampongan, Caraga, Bislig, and Cateel.[36]

Instead of Butuan, where their Jesuit predecessors founded the first church in Mindanao, the Recollects chose to have Tandag as their headquarters. Part of the reason was the existence of a Spanish garrison there. Similar to the Jesuits' missionary strategy, the Recollects first befriended and then converted the *principalia*. Later they implemented a

33 Javellana, *Wood and Stone*, 239.

34 Bishop Pedro de Arce, O.S.A., was born in 1545 in Catadiano, Spain. At the age of sixty-seven, on 17 September 1612, he was appointed Bishop of Cebu and served until his death at age one hundred on 16 October 1645.

35 Javellana, *Wood and Stone*, 232. This detail is supported by Fr. Felipe Redondo y Sendino, *Fiscal Ecclesiastico* of the Diocese of Cebu in 1886, where he also confers on Alonso de Campos the salutation, "archdeacon." Prbro. D. Felipe Redondo y Sendino, *Breve Reseña de lo Que Fue y de lo Que es La Diócesis de Cebú e Las Islas Filipinas*, trans. Azucena L. Pace, *A Brief Survey of What Was And What Is The Diocese of Cebu in The Philippine Islands* (Cebu: University of San Carlos Press, 2014), 47. To access a translated version of this letter of Bishop de Arce on 1 March 1621, see Redondo, *Breve Reseña*, 46-48.

36 Martinez Cuesta, "A Short History," 28. Also, Javellana in *Wood and Stone* (239) included the islands of Dinagat, Siargao, and Nonoc and Romanillos in "The Augustinian Recollects" (44) and provide the names of the first Recollect priests to arrive in 1622: Juan de San Nicolas and Jacinto de San Fulgencio.

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catechumenal program before baptism, protected the natives from the abusive *encomienderos*, and gathered people at established centers that later developed into towns. Emmanuel Romanillos recounts how the missionaries were engaged under "all possible means of sweetness and tenderness to win over their will"[37] and "carried nothing but the breviary and crucifix."[38] Characterized by Bernad as "zealous and effective,"[39] the Recollects contributed to spiritual and civic progress. Fr. Angel Martinez Cuesta describes the life of the first Recollects in Mindanao:

At the outset, with the assistance of the Tandag fort, they worked as roving missionaries, traversing shores, rivers and estuaries, in search of natives scattered in the countryside and fields. They later established some pueblos where they erected in each a simple church made of bamboo, wood and *nipa*, and a parochial house or *kumbento*. They further encouraged a few more natives who had agreed to abandon their fields to build houses. Ordinarily, only from this moment did the minister administer the sacrament of baptism.[40]

37 Romanillos adds, "The missionaries of all the religious orders used this tried-and-tested strategy in the evangelization of the Philippines." Romanillos, "The Augustinian Recollects," 45.

38 Ibid., 45. Perhaps, there are exemptions. Romanillos in "The Augustinian Recollects" (48), reports that when the Recollects and their communities were directly under attack during raids, "the Recollect provincial could not remain deaf and insensitive to the plight of his subjects and the faithful. With the government assistance, costly punitive expeditions were soon organized."

39 Bernad, "The Beginnings of Evangelization," 56.

40 Martinez Cuesta, "A Short History," 29.

Challenges and Response

Raids and Forts

The unfriendliness of the natives tested the zeal of the Recollects. A year after their arrival, two missionaries were murdered by the inhabitants. Martinez Cuesta relates the social situation at that time to the difficulties endured and the circumstance of the deaths of the two Recollects in Mindanao:

> The work of the missionary was not easy. The region was not yet pacified, and its inhabitants viewed all Spaniards with suspicion. With the exception of the Butuan natives, with whom several Jesuits from Bohol and Cebu worked sporadically from 1596 to 1614, it can be said that the natives knew no other Spaniards but the soldiers who in 1609 had built an intimidating fort at Tandag, as well as the *encomienderos* and tribute collectors. It was hard for them to differentiate the Church and missionaries from the conquest and *encomienderos*. The ministers had to face the obstacles of the psychological and religious sphere, like the polygamous practices of village chiefs, the possession of slaves and inordinate attachment to religious rituals and traditions. The violent death of the first two missionaries tragically gives us an idea of the gravity of these barriers. In 1623 Father Juan de la Madre de Dios ended his earthly life at the hands of Datu Suba upstream in Tago River. The *datu* was irritated by the Recollect minister's insistence on the deliverance of a woman from slavery. He pierced the missionary's body with a lance. In the following year, Brother Juan de San Nicolas perished in a sinking incident by the natives of Gigaquit.[41]

41 Ibid., 28.

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In 1624, to make the evangelization process more efficient, the government in Manila decided to divide Mindanao into two missionary areas. They assigned the Recollects to take charge of the eastern portion of Mindanao's evangelization while the Jesuits were given the west. The boundary was an imaginary line drawn from Sulauan point to Cape San Agustin.[42] Working within the Diocese of Cebu's jurisdiction, these two religious orders, despite the obstacles caused by sporadic local rebellions, invasions by non-Christian raiders, and a constant lack of supply of missionary personnel, became instrumental in spreading Christianity in Mindanao. Because of this decree, the Jesuits returned to Mindanao and opened new missions, Dapitan in 1631 and Zamboanga in 1633.[43]

The Recollects continued to be collateral victims of the natives' resistance to the Spanish rule. Heidi Gloria and Fr. Pasquale Giordano note another rebellion in 1629 when unconfirmed news of a Spanish loss in Jolo reached, stimulated, and provoked the Caragans to rebel against the Spanish military in their area. Another undated revolt was caused by the public flogging of Dumblag, a native chieftain, while in chains by the Spanish captain. The humiliation incurred by their leader moved the inhabitants into a rebellion by three commands of rebels. One uprising, led by Valentos, resulted in the death of five Spaniards, including Fr. Jacinto Cor. Another group, commanded by Mangabo, murdered two more Recollects, Fr. Alonso de San Jose and Fr. Juan de Sto. Tomas. A third group, headed by Zancalan, "attacked the

42 Bernad, "The Beginnings of Evangelization," 56. The decision took place on 6 February 1624. The governor was Alonso Fajardo. On 12 July 1628 Governor Juan Niño de Tabora confirmed the division. Romanillos, "The Augustinian Recollects," 45.

43 Romanillos and Martinez Cuesta confirm the feud between the Jesuits and Recollects in terms of the division of Mindanao in 1624. Cf. Romanillos, "The Augustinian Recollects," 45, 81-88.

visita at Bacoag. After ransacking the convent, they took its priests, F. Lorenzo de San Facundo and F. Francisco de San Fulgencio prisoners."[44]

Also, the threat posed by the Dutch to the archipelago, which started in 1600, caused an uprising resulting in further casualties:

> In 1648, due in part to the Dutch threat, another conscription order for *polistas* for the Cavite shipyards was issued in Manila…. In Tandag, the Alcalde Mayor, Bernardo de la Plaza hid the decree in an effort to abate the massive unrest among the inhabitants…. When news of the call for *polistas* circulated in Linao, Dabao [chief] secretly gathered the other Manobo chiefs and held several meetings with them during which he talked to the other chiefs about the harsh rule of the Spaniards, how they had been forced to accept Christianity, the possibility of a successful uprising due to the preoccupation of the Spanish forces with the Dutch invasions, and finally, the realization of their desire to go back to the old, indigenous worship. Dabao was able to organize a small but determined force, which soon had the Fort at Tandag embattled. In the initial assault both the commanding officer and F. Agustin de Sta. Maria were killed.[45]

On the other side of the imaginary line, the Jesuits commenced their missions in the Zamboanga Peninsula with

44 Gloria and Giordano, "A Social and Religious History," 7.

45 Ibid., 7-8. Aside from these atrocities, Gloria and Giordano in "A Social and Religious History" (6) mention the murder of Fr. Agustin de Sta. Ana, prior of Caraga, by Muslims in 1649 and the poisoning of Fr. Bernardo de la Concepcion by his Muslim servant in 1651. In Zamboanga, "the Dutch tried to land three times at Baliwasan but were prevented by a combined force of Spanish and Zamboangueño soldiers." Hermenegildo P. Malcampo, "A Brief History of Zamboanga 1400-1899," *Ateneo de Zamboanga Journal* Vol. 5 No. 1 (1999): 3.

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the aid of military protection. First, they arrived and settled in Dapitan in the northwest, then in Zamboanga in the southwest. Tactically, these places face the Sulu Sea, where Muslim raiders had to pass to have easier access to the Visayas. The Jesuits were no strangers to these places, particularly Dapitan.[46] They had once frequented its military port since 1596 when some Bohol and Cebu-based missionaries came to spend several days to minister to the Spaniards, and at the same time, instruct the Subanons in the faith.[47]

Located at the tip of the peninsula, Zamboanga was a strategic location. Hermenegildo Malcampo explains why the Spaniards decided to put up a fort, that when "[peace] treaties continued to be violated victimizing residents mainly in the Visayan Islands, the central government decided once and for all to establish a garrison here to check the movements of these pirates."[48] Assured of safety by the Spaniards forces, the Jesuits established a residence in Zamboanga in 1633

46 Fr. Jose S. Arcilla, S.J. provides further information on Dapitan and Zamboanga: "Under the Spanish colonial government, it [Dapitan] grew into a town with its own municipal jurisdiction, a Military Commandancy dependent on Cagayan de Misamis. Zamboanga, at the southern tip of the peninsula, was the seat of the Mindanao military government headed by a Politico-Military Governor of the military rank of Brigadier General." Jose S. Arcilla, S.J. "Western Mindanao in 1896-1899," *Ateneo de Zamboanga Journal* Vol. 5 No. 1 (1999): 11.

47 Saderra Masó, *Missiones Jesuíticas*, 12.

48 Malcampo, "A Brief History of Zamboanga," 2. For a more extensive study on slave raiding in Mindanao and in Southeast Asia, refer to James F. Warren, *Iranun and Balangingi: Globalization, Maritime Raiding and the Birth of Ethnicity*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2002; James F. Warren, *The Sulu Zone: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery and Ethnicity in the Transportation of a Southeast Asia Maritime State, 1768-1898,* 2ed., Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2007; James F. Warren, *Pirates, Prostitutes and Pullers: Explorations in the Ethno and Social History of Southeast Asia*, Crawley: University of Western Australia Press, 2008. In these literatures, Warren writes that slave raiding was not exclusively committed by some Muslims; even some non-Muslim and Visayan tribes also practiced it.

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to secure a mission base for serving the inhabitants of the neighboring places and the Spaniards in the garrison.

In Zamboanga, the Jesuits thought the Spaniards would have a geographic advantage against raiders, aside from its proximity to Jolo, which the Jesuits took an interest in Christianizing. To materialize their stability, Fr. Melchor de Vera,[49] an engineer, and mathematician, initiated the building of a military fortress that apprehended pirate activities while protecting a Spanish community with barracks, hospital, church, and college in 1635.[50]

Meanwhile, the buccaneering incursions perpetrated by the Moros impeded the advance of Christianity. Different approaches were undertaken by the two religious orders to resolve this predicament. The Jesuits prioritized engagement in peace embassies and the construction of fortresses rather than raising concrete churches. On the other hand, the Recollects, amidst dangers, went on establishing Christian communities along the Eastern coastline of Mindanao - and were rewarded with disheartening loss. Because of the raids, "both church and convent of Caraga were reduced to ashes, Siargao and its five *visitas* disappeared from the face of the earth, Tandag lost two *pueblos*, and the *cabecera* and five

49 Fr. Melchor de Vera, S.J. was born in Madrid, Spain on 13 January 1585. He entered the Society of Jesus on 2 April 1603, arrived in the Philippines in 1606, professed final vows 28 August 1623, and died in Cebu on 13 April 1646.

50 Saderra Masó, *Missiones Jesuíticas*, 7. The place is now called Fort Pilar. Malcampo designates 23 June 1635 as "very significant for three reasons: It was the day when the name Nawan was officially changed to Zamboanga; it was the starting period of the construction of the fort; and it was the founding date of the town of Zamboanga." He also provides the number of residents then in Zamboanga pueblo: "300 Spaniards and 1,000 natives, mostly Visayans from Cebu" were involved in the construction and that the initial location of the fort was to be in Sta. Maria, Siocon but they later chose where the fort is presently located. Malcampo, "A Brief History of Zamboanga," 2-3.

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visitas of Butuan were annihilated. Nothing was left of the places mentioned, but 'the memory they had existed' once upon a time."[51]

Martinez Cuesta provides the names of Recollect casualties and explains how such attacks influenced the frequency and direction of human migration and how they reshaped the social and political conditions of the missions:

> These raids were fatal to several religious. Antonio del Santo Cristo de Burgos (Bislig, 1754), Antonio del Santo Cristo del Desamparo (Tandag, 1755), Esteban de San José (Bislig, 1766), and José de Santa Teresa (Surigao, 1770) lost their lives in the Moro raids. José Andrés de la Santísima Trinidad (Gigaquit, 1753), Rodrigo de los Dolores (Surigao, 1755), José de San Joaquín in Butuan (1769) fell into the hands of the Moros. The fate of the Christian faithful was even more tragic. Many were able to flee to Leyte. Others sought refuge in the mountain fastness. However, almost all of them found their harvests and houses gone. A good number of the natives lost their health, freedom, and even their lives. The dispersion of the population multiplied their [Recollects] tasks and decimated their fruits…. Far from the minister and the strict socio-religious set-up of the community, and in constant contact with the non-believers and at times with the Moros, the Christian believer's religious life of the *remontados* was exposed to serious snares. They formed a hybrid mixture of Christian ideas and pagan practices.[52]

51 Romanillos, "The Augustinian Recollects," 47.

52 Martinez Cuesta, "A Short History," 31. In estimating the number of the Recollect casualties during the raids, Romanillos describes, "the litany of Augustinian Recollect victims of Moro raids in the 18th century all over the Philippines is rather long." Romanillos, "The Augustinian Recollects," 48.

To understand further the impact of the crisis wrought by these raids on other parts of the Philippines, Saderra Masó traces the extent of the casualties:

> To give an idea of the frightful levy of blood which the Filipinos paid to the Moros, we shall list some attacks. One in 1612, on the towns of eastern Leyte, they took more than 400 captives; in another, the number of captives and dead was more than 700. Later in 1754, 1755, and 1756 Moro boldness reached its peak. No longer were the Visayas and the Christian towns of north and northeast Mindanao, the only ones exposed to their ravages, but those of southern Luzon and even the provinces of Zambales, Ilocos, and Cagayan. Around 1769, they sacked towns in Manila Bay, on one occasion taking 20 slaves between Malate and Pasay. From March to June of 1754, different towns of Mindoro, Tablas, Calamianes, Panay, Romblon, Leyte, Albay, and Batangas were attacked, and immense booty and innumerable prisoners taken. We hear of whole towns taken into captivity; of 200 prisoners; of 100 prisoners, of 80 and so forth.[53]

Failure to subjugate the Rio Grande and Jolo areas nearly paralyzed the spread of Christianity. At the same time, it strengthened enemy strongholds and promoted their pirate-raiding activities, preying on villages along the coastlines of Visayas, Mindanao, and even Luzon. According to Bernad, for three hundred years, Rio Grande, Sulu, and Lanao were "nest[s] of pirates."[54] The annual raids arrived with the annual southwest monsoon winds that brought the raiders from Southern Mindanao to the coastal villages of Caraga, Surigao,

53 Saderra Masó, *Missiones Jesuíticas*, 36.

54 Miguel A. Bernad, S.J., "The Tamontaca Experiment in Southern Mindanao, 1861-1899," in *The Great Island: Studies in the Exploration and Evangelization of Mindanao* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2004), 110.

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Samar, Leyte, and Southern Tagalog. These obstacles forcibly shaped church architecture, especially those along coastal towns in Luzon and the Visayas, into fortresses of brick and mortar.[55] These church structures are silent witnesses to the efforts made by the missionaries to defend their missions.

Meanwhile, Bernad points to the colonial government's inability to protect the towns in the provinces as it pushed the missionaries to "devise their own means of defending themselves… to serve a double purpose: for worship during ordinary times and for refuge during raids… churches have had to stand a long siege."[56] Due to these attacks through the years, both the Jesuits and the Recollects developed a common pattern by situating their mission bases nearby, if not within, military installations where the fragile seed of Christianity could be protected in its nascent stages. Others were more blatant, like Father de Vera and Father Ducos in the Zamboanga peninsula, who prioritized the building of fortresses rather than places of worship and rectories.[57]

55 Saderra Masó adds, "other Jesuits of the more exposed coasts constructed fortifications, walled and palisaded areas, giving to their churches and conventos the look of real fortresses. Famous among others were those of Carigara, Palompon and Palo in Leyte; Baclayon and Dauis in Bohol; Palapag, Catbalogan, Buad and Guiuan in Samar; Boac in Marinduque; Capul on the island of that name." Saderra Masó, *Philippine Jesuits*, 22-23. For a more extensive study on fortifications during the Spanish period, refer to Rene B. Javellana, S.J., *Fortress of Empire: Spanish Colonial Fortifications of the Philippines, 1565-1898*, Makati City: Bookmark, 1997.

56 Bernad, "The Tamontaca Experiment," 110.

57 Father de Vera engineered the fortifications in La Sabanilla [now called, Pollok in Cotabato] and Zamboanga while Father Ducos built the ones in Iligan and Misamis [now called Ozamis in Misamis Occidental]. Saderra Masó, *Missiones Jesuíticas*, 22. For a detailed discussion about Father Ducos see Miguel A. Bernad, S.J., "Father Ducos and the Muslim Wars, 1752-1759," in *The Great Island: Studies in the Exploration and Evangelization of Mindanao* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2004), 63-106.

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Sultanates and Peace Embassies

Since only in peace can institutions like religion grow, the Jesuits, whose mission areas began in the seventeenth century, including those under the sultanates' jurisdictions, were actively involved in peace embassies. As peace ambassadors for the Spanish government, they helped facilitate peace treaties and the release of Christian prisoners from their captors. The earliest negotiation happened in 1605 when Gov. Gen. Pedro Bravo de Acuña commissioned Fr. Melchor Hurtado to make such representation.[58] Later on, Gov. Gen. Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera would also assign Fr. Pedro Gutierrez[59] to negotiate for peace with Rajah Bungsu of Jolo on his behalf. [60] The same Father Gutierrez likewise helped secure liberty for Fr. Giovanni Domenico Bilanci,[61] who was held captive by the Sulus in Leyte in 1632. In 1640, Father Gutierrez also negotiated with Sultan Kudarat of Maguindanao[62] to release prisoners and reach a peace agreement.

Another ambassador on behalf of Gov. Gen. Sabiano Manrique de Lara was Fr. Alejandro Lopez,[63] who traveled across the Rio Grande, Jolo, and Borneo to secure the

58 Fr. Melchor Hurtado, S.J., was born in 1571 in Toledo, Spain. He entered the Jesuits on 20 April 1591, arrived in the Philippines on 17 June 1599, professed final vows on 15 October 1606, and died in 1607 in Oton, Panay.

59 Fr. Pedro Gutierrez, S.J., was born on 24 April 1593 in Colima, Michoacan, Mexico. He entered the Jesuits on 14 May 1611, arrived in the Philippines in 1622, professed final vows on 30 October 1633, and died on 25 July 1651 in Iligan.

60 Saderra Masó, *Missiones Jesuíticas,* 31.

61 Fr. Giovanni Domenico Bilanci, S.J., was born in 1573 in Licii, Naples, Italy. He joined the Jesuits on 27 September 1589, arrived in the Philippines on 1 May 1602, professed final vows on 10 August 1611, and died as a captive of the Sulus in Jolo in 1633.

62 Also known as, Corralat, Cachil Kudrat, or Kudrat. For a detailed article on Kudarat, see J. Kathirithamby-Wells and John Villiers, eds., *The Southeast Asia Port and Polity: Rise and Demise* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, National University of Singapore, 1990).

63 Fr. Alejandro Lopez, S.J., was born in July 1604 in Jaca, Spain. He entered the Jesuits in Manila on 28 August 1631, professed final vows on 2 December 1643, and killed in Buayan on 13 December 1655.

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continuity of former peace treaties. In these embassies, he met with leaders like Kudarat, Bungsu of Jolo and his successors, and Balatamai of Buayan, who later caused his murder in 1655. Known for his sanctity, Father Lopez was able to convert many Moros to the Christian faith during his expeditions. Saderra Masó reports that Father Lopez almost converted Kudarat himself.[64] Jesuit priests Hurtado, Gutierrez, and Lopez were also missionaries who dedicated their lives to peace embassies in order "to arrive at peace and understanding with the Moros and to bring the sanguinary attacks upon the Christian towns to an end."[65]

> The Spaniards enjoyed their strategic installation in Fort Pilar for twenty-eight years. Nonetheless, an archipelagic threat by Koxinga, a Chinese pirate, forced the early demise of the military fortress in Zamboanga and the work of peace being done by the Jesuits. In 1663, Gov. Gen. Diego Salcedo "ordered the abandonment of Zamboanga town due to threats of an attack by Koxinga."[66] The Jesuits were not happy with the decree, for they knew that leaving Zamboanga would enable the Moros to resume their raids. It also meant that the Christianization of Mindanao would be further deferred. Upon their departure, the Jesuits nevertheless left behind 3,000 Christian families in Zamboanga and Basilan. With the mission abandoned, no nearby official mission base would facilitate the promotion of Christianity in those areas for the next fifty-five years.[67]

64 Saderra Masó, *Missiones Jesuíticas*, 32-33.

65 Ibid., 34.

66 Ibid., 44. The pull out of forces from Zamboanga was aimed to contribute to the defense of Manila from Koxinga. Malcampo defines this absence of the missionaries as "the 100-year blackout in the history of Zamboanga." Malcampo, "A Brief History of Zamboanga," 4. Although, the number of years between the departure in 1663 until the return in 1718 only amounted to 55 years, Malcampo's "100-year blackout" is certainly an exaggeration.

67 Saderra Masó, *Missiones Jesuíticas*, 31-34.

After five decades of absence, the Spaniards returned to Zamboanga in 1718 when Gov. Gen. Fernando de Bustamante Bustillo y Rueda heeded the Jesuits' appeal and the locals for the Spanish government to reoccupy it. Malcampo provides an analysis of what the reopening meant sociologically and ethnologically for Zamboanga:

The Spaniards who came this time were of a different breed. Being products of the 18th century, they were influenced by the liberal ideas taking place in Europe. Their policies were more attractive and lenient, and this kind of attitude encouraged many different ethnic tribes to come and reside in Zamboanga. From the south came more Tausugs who settled in Magay; Samals established themselves in Rio Hondo, along the seashore and later in Taluksangay. The Ilongos established themselves in Tugbungan and Manicaan, Boholanos in Caburian and Canelar. Groups from Luzon also came to live in Zamboanga. As a result, the influx of these different tribal groups, each bringing its own culture and language, made intercommunication difficult among the residents of the town. The situation with people of divergent languages living and working together for a common cause but without a common language encouraged the development of a new language. This situation led to the formalization of the pidgin Spanish which had been formed and spoken by the workers during the construction of the fort in 1635. The new residents began to learn this new language. In time, Chavacano became the lingua franca of the residents of the town."[68]

The Jesuits also returned and resumed their peace embassies within the vast territory from the Rio Grande

68 Malcampo, "A Brief History of Zamboanga," 4.

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area to Jolo. It was observed that "the re-establishment of Zamboanga did not appreciably reduce either the number or destructiveness of the Moro raids." Nevertheless, the peace embassies operated as practical tools rescuing the casualties of raids. An example of this was the release of Recollect Fr. Hipolito de San Agustin, who was among those kidnapped in Camiguin Island.[69]

In retrospect, the work of Jesuits on peace embassies through many decades attained calculable progress but fell short in reaching a lasting success. They almost established permanent missions in Rio Grande and Sulu when, in 1744, King Philip V of Spain[70] wrote letters of friendship to the rulers of Tamontaca and Jolo, and with them, permission that the Jesuits would also establish missions there. Despite the warm welcome, both the missionaries and the Spanish civilians did not stay long due to the rulers' treacherous attacks. In Tamontaca, for example, Datu Ameril and Datu Gula seized the Spanish ship. In Jolo, Sultan Alimudin withdrew his support from the Jesuits when his true reasons for joining Christianity were disclosed as dissimulation. Later on, Bantilan, Alimudin's brother, launched an attack against the Spaniards as retaliation for the latter's arrest.[71]

To consolidate, by the middle of the eighteenth century, from the inauguration of the first church in Butuan, the Church

69 Saderra Masó, *Missiones Jesuíticas,* 34.

70 Also known as Philippe Duc d'Anjou, King Philip V was born in Versailles, France, on 19 December 1683. He was the grandson and dauphin of Louis XIV of France. Charles II of Spain was the last Hapsburg to rule Spain. When he died without a successor, he left Spain and the Spanish dominions in America and Netherlands to Philip V, the first Bourbon king of Spain. He died on 9 July 1746 in Madrid, Spain. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v. "Philip V, King of Spain," accessed 12 March 2016, http://www.britannica.com/biography/Philip-V-king-of-Spain.

71 Saderra Masó, *Missiones Jesuíticas*, 34-35.

of Mindanao had grown into numerous mission centers: west, north, and east coasts of the island. Father Redondo lists the following places under the Recollects by 1753:

> Tandag, along with Tago, Marliatac, Liangan, Calgadan and Bayugo; Bislig with the towns of Ginatoan, Cateel, Baganga [,] and Caraga; in the island of Surigao, the towns of Caolo, Cabontog, Sapao, Higaquit, Pahuntunga and Surigao; - the island of Dinagat; - Butuan. – Talacogon, Hibon, Linao, Tubay Habongan, Mainit and Hingoot. – In the island of Camiguin, Catarman, Guinsiliban and Balinguan. – Cagayan with the towns of Hiponan, Agusan, Tagoloan, Gompot, Tagulanao and the mission of Pinaganiab.[72]

De la Costa adds to the list those parishes under the Jesuits by the time of their suppression from Spain and her dominions in 1768: Zamboanga, Dapitan, Bayog, Lubungan, Dipolog, Iligan, Initao, Ilaya, and Misamis.[73]

Aftermath of the Expulsion of the Jesuits

The sudden expulsion of the Jesuits in 1768 assigned the Recollects almost to full command of a struggling Christianity in Mindanao.[74] The untimely abandonment by the Jesuits caught the Recollects off-guard, whose ministries in the eastern seaboard of Mindanao were already on the "verge of collapse" due to pounding raids. Unable to receive ample military protection from the central government, the Recollects proactively "erected bulwarks, organized volunteer groups and devoted a good part

72 Redondo, *Breve Reseña*, 55-56.
73 De la Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, 606-607.
74 For a summary on the expulsion of the Jesuits in the Philippines see Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 200-201.

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of their stipends to the acquisition of the most indispensable weapons ... their resistance, however, did not turn out to be effective."[75]

Sharing with the Recollects in the administration of the areas left by the Jesuits were the secular clergy from the Diocese of Cebu. However, the quality of secular clerics obstructed Christianity's growth that even "the archbishop himself had to denounce these secular priests." Romanillos attributes the primary cause to the "seminary [which] was established for the crash formation of the secular clergy who turned out to be incompetent men of the cloth, of deficient moral character, who conducted scandalous lives."[76] This situation was aggravated when the number of Recollects in Mindanao steadily declined.[77] Gradually, the secular clergy of the Diocese of Cebu, to which the entire Mindanao belonged, replaced them.[78] In 1833, the Recollects returned to Mindanao upon the request of Bishop Santos Gomez Marañon of Cebu[79] and the colonial government "to take charge of the administration of the parishes once more"[80] while the secular priests remained in Mindanao as assistants to the friars.[81]

75 Martinez Cuesta, "A Short History," 31.
76 Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos, "The Augustinian Recollects," 50.
77 Martinez Cuesta explains the decline: "during the entire 18th century more than half of the missionaries died before the age of forty-five; very few reached sixty. There was quite a number of shipwrecks, illnesses and violent deaths." Angel Martinez Cuesta, O.A.R., *The Order of Augustinian Recollects: Its Charismatic Evolution* (Manila: Order of Augustinian Recollects, 1994), 55.
78 Martinez Cuesta, "A Short History," 34.
79 Bishop Santos Gomez Marañon, O.S.A., was born on 1 November 1763 in Valladolid, Spain. At the age of sixty-five, he was selected Bishop of Cebu and served until his death at seventy-six years old on 23 October 1840.
80 Martinez Cuesta, "A Short History," 34.
81 As an example, Martinez Cuesta identifies "Juan Felipe, Mariano Nepomuceno and Gregorio Enriquez, assistant parish priests of Butuan, Surigao and Bislig respectively, in 1840." Ibid., 34.

This period saw a promising path towards a revitalized Christianity through the return of the Recollects. The nineteenth-century also witnessed the end of raids by the Moros. Here, Bernad uses military history to explain the end of piratical activities: "Two things combined to put an end, finally, to this terrible and recurrent scourge. One was the steam gunboats coming that could sail faster than the sailboats and whose guns could blast an entire flotilla of pirates from the sea. The other was the permanent occupation and the establishment of fortified garrisons in Lanao, Jolo, and the Rio Grande."[82] Concerning the growth of Christianity in Mindanao, the end of the raids meant less disruption in rebuilding the missions, reinforced by the Recollects' continuous arrival. In 1848, the Recollects would begin missions in Davao, Cacub, and Gigaquit in 1850, Mainit, and Talacogon-Bunawan in 1851, Dinagat in 1855, and Cabuntog in 1861.[83]

Return of the Jesuits

The Bishop of Cebu Requests for the Jesuits

Though early nineteenth century Mindanao saw an increase in the number of Recollects assigned there, many parts of the island, especially the interior, remained unexplored. Bishop Romualdo Jimeno Ballesteros of Cebu himself "bemoaned the spiritual abandonment of the Manobos and the Mandayas in the interior of the island."[84] In November 1857, he wrote to

82 Bernad, "The Tamontaca Experiment," 110.
83 Martinez Cuesta, "A Short History," 35.
84 Ibid. Bishop Romualdo Jimeno Ballesteros, O.P., was born on 7 February 1808 in Epila, Spain, appointed coadjutor vicar apostolic of Eastern Tonking, Vietnam, on 2 August 1839, appointed coadjutor bishop of Manila on 20 June 1845, and became the sixteenth bishop

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Queen Isabella II of Spain[85] that the members of the Society of Jesus be particularly assigned to the "spiritual direction, civilization and catechization of the part of the island of Mindanao that comprises the districts of Bislig, Davao, Pollok, the province of Zamboanga, Basilan Island and others located east and south of that island." At the same time, Surigao and Misamis continued under the administration of the Recollects.[86]

Three years later, on 5 August 1860, two organic decrees by Queen Isabella II of Spain issued on 30 July 1860, were published in Madrid. The second decree was on establishing an official government in Mindanao to be divided according to the districts of Zamboanga, North Mindanao, East Mindanao, Davao, Central Mindanao, and Basilan. In the thirteenth article of the said decree, her Majesty missioned the Jesuits to replace the Recollects: "The mission of the Company of Jesus, which is already sent to Mindanao, will engage in the spiritual care of the island and will replace the present parish priests with missionaries of its own in accordance with the increase in available personnel and conform to the way it deems convenient."[87]

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of Cebu on 19 January 1846. He died on 17 March 1872 at age sixty-four years old in Cebu.

85 Maria Isabel Luisa de Borbon y Borbon-Dos Sicillias, also known as, Isabella II was born in Madrid, Spain, on 10 October 1830. Succeeding her father, King Ferdinand VII, she reigned from 1833 until her exile in 1868 due to the Glorious Revolution in Spain. Isabella II died at age seventy-three years on 10 April 1904 in Paris. Hers was a troubled reign right from the beginning. At three years old, in her first year of reign, but with her mother and General Baldomero Espartero as regents, the First Carlist war also has begun. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v. "Isabella II, Queen of Spain," accessed 12 March 2016, http://www.britannica.com/biography/Isabella-II-queen-of-Spain.

86 Martinez Cuesta, "A Short History," 35.

87 Peter Schreurs, M.S.C., *Mission to Mindanao (1859-1900)*, vol. 1, (Cebu: San Carlos Publications, 1994), 19. Romanillos in "The Augustinian Recollects" (52) names it as "the pro-Jesuit royal order."

The Jesuits Re-enter Mindanao and Gradually Replace the Recollects

Fr. José Fernandez Cuevas, superior of the restored Society of Jesus in the Philippines, traveled dutifully from Manila to reconnoiter the island.[88] On his return, he "recommended that the Society begin not in the south, but in the north where there were Christians, and from there gradually penetrate the non-Christian interior …" And so it happened that "from the Christian base in Butuan, they moved southward along the Agusan River Valley, creating settlements that are today Christian municipalities."[89] However, the government ordered otherwise, i.e., the Jesuits were to begin in the Rio Grande's non-Christian area. Thus, after almost ninety-four years of absence, the Jesuits were again in Mindanao.

The Jesuits arrived in 1861 after the culmination of a large scale battle in Tumbao along the Rio Grande, which killed some two hundred Maguindanaos and thirty Europeans. Priority in the missionaries' list was learning the local dialects to Christianize the native Tirurays, including the Maguindanaos.[90] Searching for a place to commence, Fr. Jose Ignacio Guerrico traveled from the mouth of the Rio Grande on a schooner.[91] Upon reaching Tamontaca, Father Guerrico

88 Fr. José Fernandez Cuevas, S.J., was born on 24 April 1816 in Oviedo, Spain. He joined the Jesuits in Castilla on 2 October 1833, professed final vows on 2 February 1851, arrived in the Philippines on 13 June 1859 as superior of the pioneer group after the Jesuits were restored in 1814. He died on 30 April 1864 in Manila. Before his assignment to the Philippines, he taught philosophy at Alost and Namur in Belgium and theology at Salamanca.

89 Bernad, "The Tamontaca Experiment," 109.

90 Samuel Tan, "Preface" in *Jesuit Missionary Letters from Mindanao*, vol. 1, ed. José S. Arcilla (Manila: The UP Press, 2000), xiii.

91 Fr. José Ignacio Guerrico, S.J., was born on 30 July 1806 in Cerain, Guipuzcoa, Spain. He entered the Jesuits on 6 August 1827, professed final vows on 2 February 1840, and arrived in the Philippines with Father Fernandez Cuevas on 13 June 1859. He was assigned to Escuela

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disembarked, bent, and kissed its soil to signal that he had finally found a location for their mission.[92]

For eight years, the number of converts was disappointing. Since the arrival of the missionaries until 1870, there were only six hundred Christians in Tamontaca.[93] But a smallpox epidemic in 1872 turned the Rio Grande into an extraordinary mission. The outbreak paralyzed the locality's produce, affecting the overall food supply. The Maguindanaos were forced to sell their Tiruray slaves in the market in exchange for food. With the Jesuits' initiative and financial support from a commission headed by Archbishop Gregorio Meliton Martinez Santa Cruz of Manila,[94] the missionaries grabbed this opportunity by ransoming the slaves. When the Tirurays were turned over to the custody of the missionaries, the process towards their Christianization began.[95] This idea was first conceptualized by Father Fernandez Cuevas when, during his reconnaissance around his men's future missions in Pollok in 1860, he saw humans, mostly children, being sold along with vegetables and animals in the market. The Jesuit superior "wondered whether it might not be a better act of charity to ransom the slaves, instruct them in the Faith, and set them free."[96] As a result, the Jesuits started in Tamontaca a work that took care of the ransomed slaves. The females were

Municipal in 1859, Tamontaka, in 1862, Manila, in 1868, Tamontaka, in 1876, and Manila in 1882, where he died on 23 December 1883.

92 Schreurs, *Mission to Mindanao* vol. 1, 30.

93 Saderra Masó, *Missiones Jesuíticas*, 81.

94 Archbishop Gregorio Meliton Martinez Santa Cruz was born on 10 March 1815 in Pradoluengo, Spain. At forty-six, he was selected Archbishop of Manila on 23 March 1862, where he served until his resignation on 30 September 1875. He died at seventy-years old on 10 October 1885. He was the archbishop of the martyred priests José Burgos, Mariano Gomez, and Jacinto Zamora.

95 Saderra Masó, *Missiones Jesuíticas*, 82.

96 Bernad, "The Tamontaca Experiment," 117.

sent to live under the custody of the members of the Beaterio Sisters.[97] There, they were provided education, especially on agriculture. When they married, later on, the missionaries rewarded them with a piece of land to till. By 1880, around a hundred and fifty slave children had been ransomed by the Jesuits.[98]

By this time, the Jesuits had already replaced the Recollects in the following missions: Davao (1868), Surigao (1871), Gigaquit (1873), Bislig (1873), Butuan (1875), Talacogon-Bunawan (1875), Mainit (1875), Dinagat (1877) and Cantilan (1879),[99] and opened new residences with subsidiary stations in Tamontaca (1861), Tetuan (1862), Zamboanga (1865), Dapitan (1870), Lubungan / Dipolog (1870), and Balingasag (1878).[100] In his letter to the Recollect prior provincial on 6 February 1862, Gov. Gen. Jose Lemery ordered the Recollects to transfer their reinforcements to some parishes in the Archdiocese of Manila, particularly in Cavite.[101] The Recollects were not happy with this decision; Martinez Cuesta reveals that the Recollects "felt unjustly dispossessed of some missions they loved as the 'apple of their eyes.'"[102]

97 The Beatas or the Beaterio de la Compania de Jesus was founded by Ignacia del Espiritu Santo, a Filipina, in 1684 in Manila. During the Spanish Period, they were collaborators of the Jesuits in giving the Spiritual Exercises and running schools for girls. At present, they are the Religious of the Virgin Mary, the largest female religious congregation in the Philippines. On 7 May 1875, three Beatas embarked for Tamontaca. Bernad, "The Tamontaca Experiment," 119.

98 Saderra Masó, *Missiones Jesuíticas*, 82.

99 Martinez Cuesta, "A Short History," 36. However, Arcilla, referring to the Jesuit catalogue, registers the Jesuit take-over of Gigaquit in 1874 and Bislig in 1874. Jose S. Arcilla, S.J., "The Jesuit Missions in Mindanao, 1861-1916," *Kinaadman* X (1988): 124-127.

100 Arcilla, "The Jesuit Missions in Mindanao," 124-127. See map on Jesuit mission stations in Mindanao in nineteenth century based on the said article in appendix B.3.

101 See letter of Governor José Lemery to the Recollect prior provincial on 6 February 1862 in Romanillos, "The Augustinian Recollects," 53.

102 Martinez Cuesta, "A Short History," 35-36.

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On 9 September 1887, the "pro-Jesuit" Royal Order was suspended when the government "mandated that the vacated curacies in the District of Misamis "be provided with ministers of the Order of the Recollects of Saint Augustine."[103] This explains why Cagayan remained under the curacy of the Recollects until the end of the 19th century. The Jesuits continued to run a residence overseeing six stations in the said district until the outbreak of the Philippine Revolution. Along with Tagoloan, to which Misamis belonged, eight other residences were erected: Zamboanga, Jolo, Tamontaca, Davao, Mati, Surigao, Butuan, and Dapitan. By the time of the Philippine Revolution, sixty priests and forty-six lay-brothers were assigned in Mindanao, a total of 106 Jesuits in Mindanao, or two-thirds of the Jesuits then working in the Philippines.[104]

The Benedictine Monks Arrive

A third religious order disembarked in Mindanao at the dawn of a national revolution. On 12 September 1895, thirteen monks from Montserrat, Spain, reached Manila. Eight months after, they were sent to Mindanao and immediately given jurisdiction over the following parishes: Tagana-an, Gigaquit, Cabuntog, and Numancia. In 1896, their number increased to twenty-five.[105] The Benedictines were the last religious

103 Romanillos, "The Augustinian Recollects," 56.

104 Arcilla, "The Jesuit Missions in Mindanao," 128.

105 Benigno Benabarre Vigo, O.S.B, *Glimpses of the Lives of The First Four Abbots of Our Lady of Montserrat Abbey (San Beda College)* (Manila: Rex Publishing, 2012), 5-6. Fr. Vigo provides an explanation about the arrival of Benedictines priests and brothers in Surigao: "the founding of the Spanish Benedictine missions in Surigao was ultimately due to an unfortunate fact: the long and ferocious persecution of the Spanish Catholic Church in the nineteenth century." For a more detailed account of the religious persecution in Spain see Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church*, 231-233.

order to arrive in Mindanao during the Spanish period. Fleeing religious persecutions by nationalists in Spain in the nineteenth century, these Benedictine monks were forced to do something alien to their monastic charism, i.e., missionary work in Surigao. Their unfortunate experiences would culminate in their imprisonment together with the Jesuits and the Recollects by Filipino nationalists just two years after their arrival.

Conclusion

From the time of the earliest attempts to Christianize the island of Mindanao, many challenges have made the evangelizing work of the missionaries particularly difficult, including their damaging association with the colonizers and their abusive ways, which alienated them from the natives, as well as the Moro raids that threatened their security and stability. Add to that also the countless and inevitable vagaries and upheavals of history and human society. Nonetheless, many of the missionaries were quick to turn adversity into opportunity as we saw in some luminous examples of pastoral dedication and creativity. May their legacy inspire us as we strive to imagine new ways of living and sharing the Christian faith today in Mindanao and beyond.