The Jesuits and Filipino Marian Devotions

Michael P. delos Reyes

St. Ignatius of Loyola, as a Spaniard, was brought up to love the Blessed Virgin Mary. Nevertheless, he started to have a deeper devotion to the Mother of God during his convalescence. As indicated in his autobiography, "he clearly saw the likeness of our Lady with the holy Child Jesus" one night in 1521, and the experience completed his conversion.[1] The succeeding significant events of his life would be made more meaningful by the Virgin Mary's assuring presence.

While on his way to Montserrat, St. Ignatius visited the shrine of Our Lady of Aranzazu in the province of Guipuzcoa, Spain, on February 1522. Together with his priest-brother, Pero Lopez de Loyola, the pilgrim Ignatius made a night vigil. He put his journey to Jerusalem under Our Lady's care and sought heaven for the needed health and strength to fulfill the said pilgrimage. The biographers of St. Ignatius supposed that it was in this Marian shrine where he made his vow of chastity. Inasmuch as he acknowledged in later years that he made the vow during his journey from Loyola to Montserrat, the shrine would have been a suitable place for such a vow.

Moreover, St. Ignatius must have experienced something very profound during his night vigil to the Virgin of Aranzazu. In August 20, 1554, he wrote to St. Francis Borgia and expressed his apparent recollection of that night and the spiritual grace he received in the shrine. On March 24 to

1 Joseph Tylenda, *A Pilgrim's Journey* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1985), 16.

25, 1522, St. Ignatius made the "vigil of arms" before Our Lady of Montserrat, during which he dedicated himself to Our Lady and her Son.[2]

With the example of their founder, the Jesuit missionaries who came to the Philippines introduced the devotion to the Mother of God in the mission areas where they were assigned. Some of the more popular ones are briefly discussed in this opus, which were introduced prior to the expulsion of the Jesuits in the country in 1768.

In the Archdiocese of Manila

Nuestra Señora de Montserrat: San Miguel, Manila

In 1572, a mission was founded along the southwestern banks of the Pasig within the area known today as *Isla de Provisor.* Fr. Felix de Huerta, O.F.M. said that it was then situated next to the *Estero Tripa de Gallina* banks. The Jesuits started the mission in 1591 to gather the Japanese scattered in Dilao and Santiago villages, followed by the Franciscans in 1600 led by Fr. Luis Sotelo. In 1603, it was ceded to the Jesuits, and King Philip III created the community to administer the enclave of Japanese settlers. The Jesuits thought of adopting St. Michael the Archangel, a soldier-saint, as patron of the community to attract the knights among the Japanese migrants. The mission was made a parish in 1611 by the Archbishop of Manila, Msgr. Diego Vasquez de Mercado.[3]

2 Ibid., 20 ff; Ignacio Iparraguirre, and Candido de Dalmases, trans., *San Ignacio de Loyola: Obras Completas* (Madrid, 1982), 932-934.

3 Felix de Huerta, *Estado geográfico*... (Binondo: Imprenta de M. Sanchez y Co., 1863), 62-64; *Novena and Devotion to St. Michael and the Archangels* (Manila: National Shrine of St. Michael and the Archangels, 2016), 13-17.

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NUESTRA SEÑORA DE MONTSERRAT
Iglesia de S. Miguel, Manila.

(La Virgen Maria Venerada, 1904)

Prior to 1620, Fr. Andres Caro, S.J., enshrined an image of the Our Lady of Montserrat in the church of San Miguel. Fr. Caro was a devotee of the Virgin Mary, particularly of this miraculous image. Coming from Italy to Seville, he passed by the shrine of the Virgin in Montserrat. Devotees of the Virgin among the *indios* and Spaniards of Manila frequented San Miguel church in those times. The devotion heightened

when a kind of epidemic pest struck Manila and its suburbs in 1628. The residents of San Miguel, imploring the divine aid and patronage of the Virgin and St. Michael, were saved from the said plague. As a public testimony of their gratitude to God and the Virgin Mary, they went to the church and offered a fervent novena. The novena was frequently used afterward to seek the help and protection of the Virgin in all kinds of needs. The feast of the Virgin was celebrated every September 8.

Since most of San Miguel's village was burned during a fire that raged the area in 1778, the village was transferred upon the order of the Superior Government to its present site in the north bank of the Pasig River in 1783. It was put under the civil administration of Quiapo district. Apparently, this Marian devotion was also brought to the new church since, in 1836, a bell dedicated to Our Lady of Montserrat was donated by Jose Ygnacio Carbajal. The inscriptions on the bell read, "Año Ð 1836 EN EL P.BLO Ð S^{N} Mig^{L} A JOSE YGNASIO CARBAJAL, LIMOSNA A NVESTRA S$^{A.}$ Ð MONCERATE." It is kept at the Archdiocesan Museum of Manila. At present, the church is the National Shrine of St. Michael and the Archangels. However, there is no more trace of this Marian devotion.[4]

La Virgen de la Rosa: Poblacion, Makati

Fr. Juan Jose Delgado, S.J. brought the image of the *Virgen de la Rosa*, with ivory head and hands, to the

4 Año de 1807 – Santa Visita del Pueblo de San Miguel, Archdiocesan Archives of Manila (AAM), 4.A.1., f. 18; Francisco Sanchez, *La Virgen Maria Venerada*... (Manila: Imp. de Santos y Bernal, 1904), 41 ff; Rene B. Javellana, *Wood and Stone for God's Greater Glory* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1991), 198.

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Philippines together with the image of the *Nuestra Señora de Borongan*. He came from Cadiz, Spain, and remained in Acapulco, Mexico for about seven years from 1711, before leaving for Manila. Apparently, he was aboard the galleon *Nuestra Señora de Begonia* that left Acapulco on March 31, 1718, reached Borongan on July 2, 1718, and finally arrived in Cavite on the 27th.[5] He mentioned in his work, *Historia general sacro-profana, política y natural de las islas del poniente llamadas Filipinas* (1751), that he attributed the safety of their voyage to Our Lady. He confessed that having her was a greater treasure than all that Ophir and the treasure of Tarshish can encompass. He also referred to a unique relic contained in the chest of the two images—a strand of hair of the Virgin Mary.

5 "1717-1718 – Manila Galeon," https://todoavante.es/index.php?title=1717-1718_-_Galeon_de_Manila (accessed February 4, 2021).



Virgen de la Rosa with original ivory heads and hands
(Pictorial Records, 1938)

The image of the *Virgen de la Rosa* was enthroned in the church of San Pedro Macati. The said church and the novitiate building were completed in 1620, on the portion of land donated to the Jesuits by Capitan Pedro de Brito and his wife, Doña Ana de Herrera. Capitan de Brito was the aide to the army chief-of-staff. The donation of some 2,000 hectares of marshland and ranch was given to the Jesuits for the building and support of a parish church, a retreat and villa

house, and a novitiate. Upon Capitan de Brito's death in 1610, a funeral tablet of two-ton granite was dedicated to him and remained for 400 years on the floor at the church entrance. In 1992, the parish donated it to Sacred Heart Novitiate of the Jesuits in Novaliches and is now found at the entrance of the Cemetery there. The church was dedicated to St. Peter, the donor's name patron. It was burned during the Chinese revolt of 1639, together with the residence. Later, these were repaired, and Fr. Francisco Diez, S.J., had the *retablo* of San Pedro made while he was Rector there. He also had the church painted and decorated.[6]

Fr. Pedro Murillo Velarde, S.J., who also served as a chaplain in San Pedro Macati, dedicated his work, *Historia de la Provincia de Filipinas de la Compania de Jesus* (1749), to the *Virgen de la Rosa* and the *Nuestra Señora de la Paz y Buen Viaje*. Both appeared in the frontispiece of the book. He also wrote about the precious relic in the image: "Your most holy image *de la Rosa* has on her breast a most precious treasure, greater than those which Tarshish had in its opulence, or Ophir with the most valuable metals it can offer. This is the strand of hair of your most holy head, whose authenticity I read with great admiration. In the vast extent of the Indies that I know of, there exists no similar relic."[7]

6 Sanchez, *Venerada,* 74 ff.
7 Pedro Murillo Velarde, *Historia de la Provincia de Philipinas* (Manila: Imprenta de la Compañia de Jesus, 1749).



Frontispiece of Historia (1749)

The said reliquary is now gone. The ivory head and hands of the Virgin were lost during the 1899 revolution (said to be in Calulut, Pampanga, according to Fr. Repetti) and were later replaced with wood.[8] Nevertheless, the Jesuits' legacy to Makati—the devotion to the *Virgen de la Rosa*—continued

8 W.C. Repetti, *Pictorial Records and Traces of the Society of Jesus* (Manila: Manila Observatory, 1938), 82-87.

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to thrive and grow. The feast day of the Virgin is celebrated every 30th of the month of June, after the titulars of the parish: Sts. Peter and Paul the Apostles.

In 2018, the parish celebrated the Tricentennial Jubilee of the arrival of the Virgin's image in the Philippines. A petition was made for the Pontifical Coronation of the venerated image, which was endorsed to the Holy See by Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle, Archbishop of Manila, through his letter of October 24, 2018. A few days after, the *Congregatio de Cultu Divino et Disciplina Sacramentorum* issued a decree granting the petition on October 29, 2018, the shortest so far in the history of Marian pontifical coronations in the country. The crowning of the image was held on March 16, 2019.



Archbishop Caccia crowning the Virgen de la Rosa
(Lorenzo Atienza)

Cardinal Tagle presided at the Mass with the Rite of Crowning, held at Plaza Cristo Rey, just outside the parish church. During the crowning rite, Gaudencio Cardinal

Rosales, Archbishop Emeritus of Manila, placed the Rose in the right hand of the Virgin. Cardinal Tagle crowned the Infant Jesus while Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines Archbishop Gabriele Giordano Caccia crowned the Virgin Mary.[9]

Nuestra Señora del Pilar: Santa Cruz, Manila

Around 1571, a settlement was founded, probably by the secular clergy, on the northern banks of the Pasig. The Jesuits received there an estate for the College of Manila in Mayhaligue and Santa Cruz. It was rented out to Chinese truck (vegetable) gardeners. The main inhabitants of this mission village were described as Christian Chinese, who numbered 500 tributes. There were also about 100 Indians and Negroes, and the Jesuits assigned in the mission knew the Chinese language. Bishop Pedro de Arce of Cebu, who was the administrator of the Archdiocese of Manila at that time, deemed it convenient to entrust this village's spiritual administration to the Jesuits because they spoke Chinese. Hence, Santa Cruz was made a parish on June 20, 1619, and the documents were signed by Fr. Gregorio Cateña, parish priest of Quiapo. Fray Miguel Garcia Serrano, the new Archbishop of Manila, confirmed the transfer on October 20, 1620. The parish's full administration was given to the Jesuits on August 8, 1625, with Fr. Pedro Parado, S.J., the first assigned priest. It was also reported in the Annual Letter of 1627-1628 that a wooden church in Chinese style was built. It was the first church of Santa Cruz.

A stone church was constructed in Santa Cruz after 1688. While it is certain that there was an earlier church, as can be gleaned from a report about a horrible earthquake that

9 Michael P. delos Reyes, "La Virgen de la Rosa," *The Windhover* [WH], Year XX, Vol. 2 (June 2018): 38-40; and delos Reyes, "Virgen de la Rosa de Macati: Celebrating More Than 300 Years of Devotion," *WH* Year XXI, Vol. 4 (December 2019): 22-29.

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almost destroyed Santa Cruz church, it is not clear if it was of stone or the wooden one as reported in 1627-1628. Later on, around 1715, it was reported that a church was completed. It is not clear, though, if this was a completely new church or the church of 1688 that was renovated and expanded. The church had St. Stanislaus Kostka as the titular. Attached to the parish was the College of San Ildefonso, founded by Gov. Alfonso Fajardo de la Tenza on January 9, 1624.



NUESTRA SEÑORA DEL PILAR
Iglesia de Santa Cruz, Manila.

(La Virgen Maria Venerada, 1904)

While it is certain that the revered wooden image of the *Nuestra Señora del Pilar* was brought to Santa Cruz from Spain by the Jesuits, the exact date of its arrival could not

be determined. However, it can be surmised that, given the pontifical establishment of the Confraternity of the *Nuestra Señora del Pilar* in 1743, the devotion to the Virgin of the Pillar was already existing at that time, or even earlier. This was indicated in the historical marker bestowed on the church by the Historical Research and Markers Committee in 1937. Such confraternities are usually established to preserve, promote and cultivate an already existing devotion. As attested by the records in the archives of the College of San Ildefonso, the image of the Virgin was according to the one venerated in Zaragoza, Spain, and the same one brought by the Jesuits, since they were not allowed to carry anything with them except their breviary during their expulsion.[10] The parish's care was entrusted to the Seculars until 1879 when the Augustinian Recollects took over, and St. Ezekiel Moreno, O.A.R., served as parish priest in 1881. It was returned to the Seculars in 1898 and entrusted to the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament or *Sacramentinos* in 1957.[11]

Presently, the venerated images of the Virgin of the Pillar and the Child Jesus have heads and hands of ivory. It is not certain if these date back to the Jesuit times, inasmuch as these are the parts that in every sculpture deteriorate more quickly, and thus, more accessible to changes and innovations. Moreover, in the desire to preserve the image over time, it was deemed necessary to cover it with silver plates that were so deeply engraved and set that it has not lost its finest details. The work was found to be carefully done and very extensive.[12]

10 Sanchez, *Venerada,* 80 ff.; *Javellana, Wood and Stone*, 196-197.
11 Joseph Matitu, *Sta. Cruz Parish: Steadfast in Faith, Unwavering in Commitment*, Manila: Sta. Cruz Parish, 2011.
12 J.O.B., "Recuerdos del Pasado: Nuestra Señora del Pilar," *Cultura Social* (Año XII, Octubre 1924, Num. 142): 547-550.

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Cardinal Tagle and Archbishop Caccia crowning
the Our Lady of the Pillar (Lorenzo Atienza)

In recognition of the antiquity of the image of the Virgin of the Pillar, and the widespread devotion around it, the Holy See granted the petition of the parish and devotees of the Virgin. The crowning of the image received an endorsement from Cardinal Tagle of Manila and authority from Pope Francis on May 11, 2017. The decree was issued by the *Congregatio* on June 27, 2017 while the Pontifical Coronation was held on December 7, 2017. The image of the Child Jesus was crowned by the Parish Priest, Fr. Rudsend Paragas, S.S.S., and the Virgin was crowned by Cardinal Tagle and Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Caccia.[13]

13 M. delos Reyes, "The Nuestra Señora del Pilar of Santa Cruz: A 275-year Jesuit Legacy," *WH*, Year XXI, Vol. 2 (June 2019): 16-21.

In the Diocese of Antipolo

Nuestra Señora de la Paz y Buen Viaje: Antipolo City, Rizal

Antipolo is located at the foot of the Sierra Madre mountain range east of Manila and was founded by the Franciscans in 1578. At that time, it was a *visita* of Taytay, which the Franciscans administered from Santa Ana de Sapa. Upon the decision of Bishop Domingo Salazar, O.P., Antipolo, together with Taytay, was ceded to the Jesuits in 1591. It was one of the *residencias* of the Jesuits in the Tagalog region. Tradition has it that the town's first location was supposedly 1 kilometer away from the east of the present location. In 1596, Fr. Raymundo Prat, S.J., vice-provincial, decided to transfer the center of the mission from Taytay to Antipolo since the climate there was more conducive for the Europeans. Under the supervision of Fr. Diego Garcia, S.J., a wooden church was constructed. In 1630, Fr. Juan de Salazar, S.J. initiated the construction of a stone church which was completed in 1633. Among the major benefactors of this project was Don Juan Niño de Tabora.

When Don Juan Niño de Tabora was about to set sail for the Philippines to become Governor-General, he was captivated by the Virgin Mary's image at a parish in Acapulco, Mexico. He did all he can to acquire it, to serve as Patroness of his voyage. Bringing the image with him, he enthusiastically set sail on March 25, 1626, and safely reached Manila on June 29, 1626. For a long time, the galleon that Governor Tabora boarded has been known as *El Almirante*, based on Fr. Murillo Velarde's account in his *Historia*.[14] However, this author

14 M. delos Reyes, *Morena Graciosa* (Quezon City: Claretian

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discovered in his research that the voyage of the Governor was composed not only of one galleon but four. These were the *San Luis* designated as *Capitana*, *San Raimundo* designated as *Almiranta, San Ignacio,* and *San Jacinto*. Governor Tabora boarded the *San Raimundo*, and it was the designation of this vessel, *Almiranta* or *El Almirante,* that has become known for a long time.[15]

Before Governor Tabora passed away on July 22, 1632, he entrusted his treasured image to the Jesuits. They brought it to Antipolo and enshrined it in the chapel in Barrio Santa Cruz, where the church was being constructed. According to tradition, the Virgin was often seen missing in her shrine and would always be found in a *Tipolo* tree or Breadfruit (*Artocarpus incisa*). Thus, the Rector of the church decided to erect the church on the site where the Virgin was always recovered. The *Tipolo* tree was cut down, and its trunk was made into a pedestal for the Virgin.

Communications Foundation, 2016), 9; delos Reyes, "The Jesuits and Antipolo," *WH*, Year XIII, Vol. 1 (March-May 2011): 2-3.

15 "1625-1626 Galeon de Manila," https://todoavante.es/index.php?title=1625-1626_-_Galeon_de_Manila; https://sites.google.com/site/manilagalleonlisting/1626-through-1650 (accessed February 4, 2021).



Our Lady of Antipolo (Jun Figueroa)

Fearing that the *Santo Cristo* (crucified Christ), the image of the Virgin, and the other treasures of the church would be desecrated, the Rector of the church, Fr. Alonso de Arroyo, S.J., had them hidden in the forest in Guinapao during the Chinese uprising in 1639. However, the rebels still found them. After removing a substantial number of jewels adorning the image, the rebels piled straw and wood around the Virgin and the Santo Cristo images and set them on fire. The images did not burn, even if the cross, made of

hardwood, was burned. Because of this, the Chinese attacked the Virgin's image with spears and threw it again into the flames. Again, it did not burn. The Spanish troops pursuing the rebels found the images two yards away from the burning mound and reportedly noticed a new kind of brilliance coming from the Virgin's face and clothing. The event was documented in the *Anales Ecclesiasticos de Philipinas, 1574-1682*, dated 1681.[16] The Virgin's face sustained marks from being speared, and despite all efforts before to cover them, the marks would always reappear. Even the Jesuit painter, Bro. Manuel Rodriquez, did not attempt to cover the said marks with varnish. Fr. Murillo Velarde wrote that perhaps the Virgin would like the marks to remain a mysterious sign that can help strengthen her devotees' faith and gratitude.

The desecration of the Virgin and the miraculous events in Antipolo came to the knowledge of Governor Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, who ordered the immediate transfer of the miraculous images to Manila. Later, the Virgin was made Patroness of voyages from the Philippines to *Nueva España* or Mexico and back, and was brought aboard different galleons from 1641 to 1653 (*San Luis, Encarnacion, San Diego, San Francisco Javier*) and from 1659-1662, 1746-1748 (*San Jose, Nuestra Señora del Pilar*). On September 8, 1653, Governor Sabiniano Manrique de Lara bestowed on Our Lady through a decree the title *Nuestra Señora de la Paz y Buen Viaje* (Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage).

16 "A chronicle of the activities and pertinent information and documentation of the bishops and archbishops of Manila, was an ordinary journal of its time. It was a dutiful, even at times painstaking, recording of events and personages of the time." Ruperto C. Santos, trans., *Anales Ecclesiasticos de Philipinas*, 1574-1682, Vol. 1 (Manila: Roman Catholic Archbishop of Manila, 1994), xviii.

The initial request for a pontifical coronation of the image was made by the Executive Committee on *Festejos Populares en honor de la Inmaculada Concepcion* for the 50th anniversary of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, headed by Dr. Maximino Paterno. In a letter to Archbishop Jeremiah James Harty of Manila, dated December 15, 1904, the committee requested him to petition to the Holy See the following: the solemn and liturgical coronation of the Virgin of Antipolo, the concession of a proper Office and Mass for her title, and the confirmation of the Immaculate Conception as the Principal Patroness of the archipelago. The committee sent another letter dated July 10, 1906, addressed to the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Ambrose Agius, O.S.B., the Archbishop of Manila, and the Bishops of Jaro, Nueva Segovia, Cebu, and Nueva Caceres, petitioning for the pontifical coronation of the Virgin of Antipolo. In December 1906, Archbishop Harty replied to Dr. Paterno that he received the documents and hastened to file them with the Congregation in Rome responsible for such petitions.[17] Apparently, nothing turned out of these petitions until 19 years later.

At this point, an interesting anecdote is worth sharing. There has been an old joke about a supposed fight between the Dominicans and the Jesuits. In a way, this was captured by Josephine Craig, who visited the Philippines three times, each for a considerable length. She was a letter writer who drew letters from others, such as family members, friends of her youth, social associates, and acquaintances made in her travels. She visited Antipolo and related it in her letter of 1907, which was contained in the book *Farthest Westing.* In the said book, a piece of interesting information was given in the footnote:

17 Archivo de la Universidad de Santo Tomas [AUST], *Varios Seccion de Folletos*, Tomo 10: 28-29, 30-34; delos Reyes, Morena, 49.

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> Philippine history under Spain was largely the rivalry of two images of Our Lady, of the Rosary, fostered by the Order of the Preachers or Dominicans, and of Antipolo, the cult of the Jesuits. The Antipolo image was brought from America (Acapulco, Mexico) by an early Spanish governor as protection on his long voyage, and after several fortunate crossings and re-crossings of the Pacific was given this mountain shrine under the protection of the Jesuits until the suppression of their Society by the Pope, when Filipino priests took charge. With the restoration of the Society about a century ago, the Filipinos lost this and many other rich parishes, which was one of their grievances as they claimed that the Council of Trent had forbidden the employment of friars as parish priests except in missionary lands, while the Philippines was a self-supporting old Christian land. The adherents of the rival images sought to have their respective choices made Patronesses of the Philippines. Of the three requisites, an American Catholic governor-general unwarily signed an Antipolo petition to the Pope, and this was represented as the request of the ruler of the country. The Dominicans retaliated by cabling for an expensive crown and staging an impressive coronation with prelates present from all over Asia. Both of the images had had miracles ascribed to them, so either possesses two of the three requirements, and there is a stalemate.[18]

Nevertheless, this dispute was documented, and one such example was the "*Otro Memorial Pidiendo la Coronacion de la Virgen de Antipolo. Relacion Detallada de la Controversias sobre Patronato del Rosario y de la Inmaculada en Filipinas* (Another Memorial Requesting the Coronation of the Virgin of Antipolo. Detailed Accounts of the Controversies between

18 Josephine and Austin Craig, *Farthest Westing: a Philippine Footnote* (Philadelphia: Dorrance, 1940), 63.

the Patronage of the Rosary and the Immaculate in the Philippines) by Fr. Donato Berriozabalgoitia, O.P.[19]

In 1925, most probably in view of the Tercentenary of the arrival of the image the following year, Archbishop Michael O'Doherty of Manila made a petition for a pontifical coronation of the image. On June 19, 1925, the papal decree authorizing the coronation of the Virgin was issued by Cardinal Merry del Val, and immediately the exciting news sent through cable reached Manila and became widespread. The coronation preparations took more than a year, and a series of articles by Manuel Ravago (aka Juan de Saavedra) was published in *Cultura Social*, from September 1925 to January 1927. Various articles about the coronation appeared in other periodicals, such as *Boletin Eclesiastico de Filipinas* and *Boletin de la Iglesia de San Ignacio*. Indeed, the event was very much publicized. The crown was made in Manila by Filipino craftsmen, supervised by the French artisan who designed it, at the *La Estrella del Norte*.[20]

The coronation rite was held at the Luneta in Manila and conducted by Archbishop O'Doherty, as delegated by the Vatican Chapter, on November 28, 1926, in the presence of Archbishop Guglielmo Piani, S.D.B., Apostolic Delegate. Prior to this day, a three-day Marian Congress was held from November 24-26. On the 27th, after a farewell Mass, the Virgin left Antipolo for Pasig and passing through Taytay and Cainta. On the 28th, the Virgin left Pasig after the Pontifical Mass by Archbishop Piani, going to Paco and stopping at San Pedro Macati. From Paco, the Virgin was brought in procession to Luneta for the coronation rite. The much-awaited historical event was attended by around 100,000

19 AUST, *Varios Seccion de Folletos*, Tomo 10: 375-407.
20 delos Reyes, *Morena*, 4-6, 49, 53-54.

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people, based on a conservative estimate. Afterward, the image was brought to the Manila Cathedral for the novena in the following days. The Virgin was returned to Antipolo through a motorcade on December 6, in time for the feast of the Immaculate Conception. The image left the cathedral at around 8:00 p.m., but the motorcade took much longer than expected because of the many people who joined and walked all the way to Antipolo. Instead of reaching Antipolo by 11:00 p.m., the image arrived at 5:00 a.m. of the following day.[21]

On January 14, 1954, being the first Marian Year in the Universal Church, the Antipolo church was declared a National Shrine by the Philippine Bishops, the first in the country. When the Diocese of Antipolo was created in 1983, the Virgin was made titular of the diocese, and the shrine as its seat. On January 14, 1995, the official replica of the Virgin of Antipolo was enthroned during the Youth Vigil with St. John Paul II at the Rizal Park in Manila, on the occasion of the Tenth World Youth Day in the Philippines.[22]

21 Ibid., 53-55; see also M. Saderra Mata y Miguel Saderra Maso, *Coronacion Pontificia y Tercer Centenario de la Venida a Filipinas de la Virgen de Antipolo,,,*(Manila: s.n., 1925); M. delos Reyes, *Salve Regina: On Crowning Images of the Virgin Mary* (Quezon City: Claretian Communications Foundation, 2015), 70-75. For a full account of the coronation, see delos Reyes, *Morena*, 49-62.

22 Jesselynn dela Cruz and Peachy Yamsuan, *John Paul II, We Love You* (Manila: Asian Catholic Publishers, 1995), 118.



The Virgen de la Rosa and Virgin of Antipolo (Jun Figueroa)

In 2019, a momentous event happened involving the images of the Virgen de la Rosa of Makati, and the Virgin of Antipolo. As mentioned earlier, these two images were featured in the famous book *Historia* of Fr. Murillo Velarde published in 1749, where they appeared in its frontispiece and one of the chapters. After 270 years, on July 13, 2019, the original image of the Virgen de la Rosa was brought to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage in Antipolo for a rare pictorial opportunity together with the image of the Virgin of Antipolo, bringing to life the frontispiece of 1749. This was made possible by the arrangement made by Msgr. Gerardo Santos, Parish Priest of Sts. Peter and Paul, and Fr. Reynante Tolentino, Rector of the National Shrine, and captured by the lens of Mr. Jun Figueroa, Official Photographer of the Virgin of Antipolo.

Nuestra Señora de Aranzazu: San Mateo, Rizal

The shrine of *Nuestra Señora de Aranzazu* in the province of Guipuzcoa, Spain, was built on the site where Rodrigo de Balzategui, a Basque shepherd boy, found a statue of the Virgin Mary nestled in a thorny bush with a cowbell in 1469. In the Philippines, the cradle of the devotion of this Marian title is in San Mateo, the only town in the Rizal Province named after a saint.

San Mateo was founded by the Augustinians in 1572. The friars had a thriving brick industry there at that time. Fray Gaspar de San Agustin, O.S.A., wrote of the town in his work *Conquistas de las Islas Filipinas 1565-1615* (1698), which was described as normally annexed to Pasig, four leagues inland, and very much exposed to invasions by the highland natives. Furthermore, he said that "it is a very difficult ministry and only good for young, robust ministers because they travel on horseback, catching the natives to administer the sacraments to them since the people belong to mountain tribes, albeit friendly and peaceful. The weather is healthy because they are in the highlands and purified by the winds … the road is very beautiful and pleasant because it is level and populated with houses and tobacco plantations with both *Sangleys* and mestizos since the earth is most fertile for this plant." The town's river is one of the two mighty and most destructive rivers during the rainy season, formed due to the continuous overflow of a large lagoon in the center of the island of Manila.[23]

In 1603, San Mateo was ceded to the Jesuits and later became involved in a jurisdictional conflict that affected

23 Luis Antonio Mañeru, trans., *Conquest of the Philippine Islands 1565-1615* (Manila, 1998), 75, 607, 973, 975.

Cainta and Jesus de la Peña. Therefore, it was restored to the Augustinians on August 29, 1659, and was made a parish on the said date, but was again ceded to the Jesuits on December 6, 1696. Fr. Murillo Velarde, S.J. wrote in his *Historia*, "In the year 1696, not only did the very reverend Augustinian fathers surrender these posts [Cainta and Jesus de la Peña], with politeness and courtesy but in token of mutual affection and friendly relations an exchange was made of the ministry of San Matheo (which is near Mariquina), the fathers of St. Augustine ceding it to us for that of Binangonan (which is called "de los Perros" [i.e., "of the dogs"]), on the lake of Bay, which belonged to the Society."[24] He further wrote that the Jesuits gladly accepted San Mateo "in order to bring in the Aetas who are in the mountains of that region, to live as a Christian community in the village; for, Christians and heathens being mingled in those woods and little hamlets, there was little difference between them in their customs." Fr. Murillo Velarde narrated further in his *Historia*:

> In the year 1705, Father Juan Echazabal began to promote, in the village of San Matheo, the devotion to Our Lady of Aranzazu; and the devotion to and adoration of that Lady steadily increased, with the encouragement of the Vizcayans, and especially of Don Juan Antonio Cortes. This incited the minister to undertake the building of a stone church in order to provide a more suitable abode for the Blessed Sacrament and for the sovereign Queen. Through the persistence and energy of the father and the contributions of the faithful, a beautiful, substantial, and spacious church was completed, with its transept and handsome gilded reredos. The new church

24 Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, ed. [BR], *The Philippine Islands*, 1493-1803, (Cleveland, 1905-1909): vol. 44, 105.

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> was dedicated in the year 1716, the minister being Father Juan Pedro Confalonier. There was a very large concourse of people, and the devotees of the Blessed Virgin of Aranzazu made extraordinary demonstrations of joy and devotion in celebrating her feast; and great was the satisfaction of those who with their contributions had aided [to provide for] the costly building and adorn it with ornaments and rich furnishings of silver – especially the illustrious benefactor of that church and village, General Don Juan Antonio Cortes. And the Society, with the pleasure of dedicating to God and to His blessed mother this new temple, forgot the great sorrows that they suffered at that time from *various defamatory libels*, in which malignity repeated what had so many times been condemned, and was anew condemned, as calumny – their author being, most deservedly but impiously, his own executioner, at seeing that the arrows discharged by audacity against the Society were changed into crowns of triumph.[25]

Upon the suppression of the Jesuits in 1768, the Secular priests took over the administration of San Mateo. Later, it was given to the Recollects, then back to the Seculars. The parish church of Our Lady of Aranzazu was raised to the status of a diocesan shrine in June 2004. The feast of Our Lady is celebrated in San Mateo every September 9.

In the ardent desire of the devotees that their Patroness be granted a coronation, the *Cofradia de Nuestra Señora de Aranzazu*, with the help and support of the late Fr. Lawrence Paz, Parish Priest, and Rector, petitioned for the Episcopal Coronation of the Virgin to Bishop Gabriel Reyes, D.D. in

25 BR, vol. 44, 117-118; M. delos Reyes, *Nuestra Senora de Aranzazu: Pamana ng mga Heswita sa San Mateo* (San Mateo: Shrine and Parish of Nuestra Señora de Aranzazu, 2017), 21-23; delos Reyes, "Our Lady of Aranzazu and the Jesuits of San Mateo," *WH,* Year XV, Vol. 3 (September 2013): 12-15.

2013. The said petition was granted through a decree issued on August 17, 2013. The coronation was conducted by the then Auxiliary Bishop of Antipolo, Bishop Francisco de Leon, D.D., on November 9, 2013.[26]



Cardinal Quevedo crowning the Our Lady of Aranzazu
(Fr. Lawrence Paz)

26 delos Reyes, Salve Regina, 144-145.

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On the occasion of the Tercentenary of the dedication of the stone church of San Mateo and enthronement of the Virgin as its Patroness in 1716, a petition was made for the Pontifical Coronation of the Virgin. Bishop Reyes endorsed the said petition to the Holy See through his letter of April 25, 2016. Robert Cardinal Sarah issued the decree authorizing the coronation on June 17, 2016. To prepare well for this momentous event, the coronation was set the year after, on May 31, 2017. Bishop de Leon of Antipolo presided at the Mass, while Orlando Cardinal Quevedo, O.M.I., preached the Homily. The Child Jesus was crowned by Fr. Paz, and the Virgin by Cardinal Quevedo.[27]

Nuestra Señora de la Anunciata: Boso-boso, Antipolo City, Rizal

Boso-boso is a village in a valley amidst the *Sierra Madre*, located northeast of Antipolo. Fr. Murillo Velarde reported in his *Historia*, that in 1669, there was a church and *visita* there. He also said that there were churches in the neighboring villages of Paynaan (1672) and San Isidro (1678). Before 1750, Paynaan was aggregated with Boso-boso. A village called San Isidro is also located today northwest of Boso-boso, near Rodriguez (Montalban), Rizal. It is not certain if this is the same San Isidro referred to by Fr. Murillo Velarde.[28]

Tradition has it that the church of Boso-boso dates back to the Jesuits. Fr. Rene Javellana, S.J. described the ruined church as "single-naved and ends in a semicircular apse. Its façade follows the commonplace 2-story-and-triangular-pediment elevation. The pediment has partially collapsed. And in what remains, one can see a circular window as the

27 delos Reyes, Aranzazu, 27-38.
28 Velarde, *Historia*, f. 278.

only articulation for the austere façade. A bell tower partially collapsed, stands to the left of the façade. It is quadrilateral, and 2 of its stories remain. There are three side entrances, two on the epistle side of which one leads to the sanctuary. Some years back, the arch of the principal portal fell but did not bring down with it the whole façade. The keystone bearing the papal tiara has been preserved."[29]

The secular priests took over the care of the parish in 1768. In the *Visitas Diocesanas* or *Santa Visitas* (pastoral visit records), Boso-boso has been called *pueblo* (1786), *zitio o mision* (1790), and *mission* (1831). They also showed the presence of Jesuit images in the church, such as the statues of San Ignacio de Loyola and San Francisco Javier and a framed picture of San Luis Gonzaga. Interestingly, there is also a silver reliquary of Santa Ines, and a wooden image in the round of *Nuestra Senora de Granada*, among others. It is also worth noting that these reports did not indicate the name of the titular or Patroness of the church, although it has been held that it was the *Nuestra Señora de la Anunciata* (Our Lady of the Annunciation).[30]

29 Javellana, *Wood and Stone*, 200-201.

30 Visita Diocesana, 20 de Febrero de 1786; Santa Visita de Boso-boso, 23 de Julio de 1790; Santa Visita de Boso-boso; 31 de Diciembre de de 1831 in AAM 4.A.3, f5; 4.B.5, f7.

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(NS Anunciata Parish)

On a related note, there is a popular miniature image of the Virgin of *Anunciata* in an *urna* (small altar) that belongs to the oldest Catholic group in Antipolo, the *Cofradia de la Anunciata*. It is not confirmed if this confraternity is related to the "*Congregación de la Anunciata*" which Fr. Pedro Chirino, S.J. mentioned in his *Relación de las Islas Filipinas* (1604) that was set up by students in Manila in the 1600's. The group grew rapidly and attracted laymen from various life stations, forming two groups (students and seculars).[31] It is also worth noting that an image of *La Anunciata* was enshrined in one of the side altars of Antipolo Church as recorded in the *Santa Visita* of 1790.[32]

31 Chirino, Pedro. Relacion de las Islas Filipinas: *The Philippines in 1600*. Translated by Ramón Echevarria. Manila, Historical Conservation Society, 1969.

32 AAM 4.B.5 f. 7.

The church of Boso-boso sustained damages during the earthquake of July 18, 1880, which were not repaired due to the dwindling population. The village was abandoned in 1911 when it was evacuated to give way to a waterworks project by the Americans for the Marikina Watershed Reservation. Since a major river crossed the village, the government thought of building a dam and flooding the valley where Boso-boso stood. The people moved to a new site on the higher ground called New Boso-boso in Antipolo and brought with them all the church furniture and whatever else was portable, including the image of the *Anunciata*. When the waterworks project did not materialize because a geological fault running through the valley would render it unsafe, the people returned to Old Boso-boso. The church was burned during World War II, and the image of Our Lady disappeared, although it was rumored to have been brought somewhere in Bulacan for safety during the war and never returned since then.

The Camillian Fathers started to minister in Boso-boso in 1986. In 1995, the church's reconstruction, started in 1993, was completed, and the Parish of the *Nuestra Señora de la Anunciata* was canonically erected in January 2004. The feast of Our Lady is observed every March 25, and a new image of the Patroness was commissioned from Justino "Paloy" Cagayat, Jr. of Paete, Laguna.[33]

Mahal na Ina ng Kaliwanagan: Cainta, Rizal

Fr. Giovanni Antonio Genovesi, S.J. was a missionary in Sicily who wanted to have a special picture of the Virgin Mary that he could carry with him in his missions. He sought the help of a pious woman, known to have visions of Our Lady. On November 21, 1722, the Virgin Mary appeared to the

33 M. delos Reyes, "The Jesuits in Boso-boso," *WH*, Year XX, Vol. 3 (September 2018): 30-34.

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woman at the sanctuary of *S. Stanislao Kostka al Noviziato* in Palermo, Sicily, and told the woman that she wanted to be called "*Madre Santissima del Lume*" (Most Holy Mother of Light). However, since neither the priest nor the woman was able to guide the painter commissioned to do the painting, the Virgin Mary did not give any sign of approval on the work done. After some time, Our Lady appeared again to the woman, this time at the painter's studio. Although it was only the woman who could see the Virgin, the latter guided the hand of the painter. Hence, the completed painting was faithful to the vision, and the Virgin Mary blessed it.



1801 estampa of Our Lady of Light (Author's collection)

In the Philippines, the cradle of this new Marian devotion was in Cainta, which Captain Juan de Salcedo conquered on

August 21, 1571. The Christianization of Cainta followed, and the first Mass was held on November 30, 1571. Hence, St. Andrew the Apostle became the *Patron Principal,* and this mission was called before as "*San Andres Apostol de Cainta*."[34] The *primer Ministro proprio de Cainta*, or first resident priest, was Fr. Gaspar Marco, S.J., assigned in 1707 since there was growth in Cainta's population of *indios, criollos* and *negros* or *morenos* (those who came from India).[35] He did much to advance the construction of a stone church, which was completed in 1716, while Fr. Joaquin Sanchez, S.J. was minister. In 1727, while Fr. Bartolommeo Cavanti (al Gavanti), S.J. (from Ferrara, Italy) was the minister, the devotion to Our Lady of Light was introduced. Here, the Virgin came to be more known as *Nuestra Señora or Madre de la Lumen* (instead of the Spanish *Luz*), an indication that the devotion came directly from Italy (from *Lume* to *Lumen*). This is attested to by the *Santa Visita de Cainta* of July 28, 1790; the 1801 *estampa* or print of the *verdadero retrato* of the image; the big old bell of Cainta re-casted by the *Fundacion de Hilario Sunico* on November 13, 1883; and in the letter of August 5, 1884, of Don Mariano (de) San Juan, pastor of Cainta, to Fray Pedro Payo, O.P., Archbishop of Manila, regarding the permission for the publication of the first Tagalog novena.[36]

Outside Cainta, an *estampa* of the *Madre Santisima del Lumen* was enshrined in the Jesuit church in San Miguel Viejo, to which the miraculous survival of the crew and passengers

34 Conquistas by Casimiro Diaz, OSA (Manila, 1718), BR 42:265-66.

35 William C. Repetti, "The Sepoy Myth of Cainta," *Oriental Art and Culture* (July 1941), Archives of the Philippine Province (I-3-013).

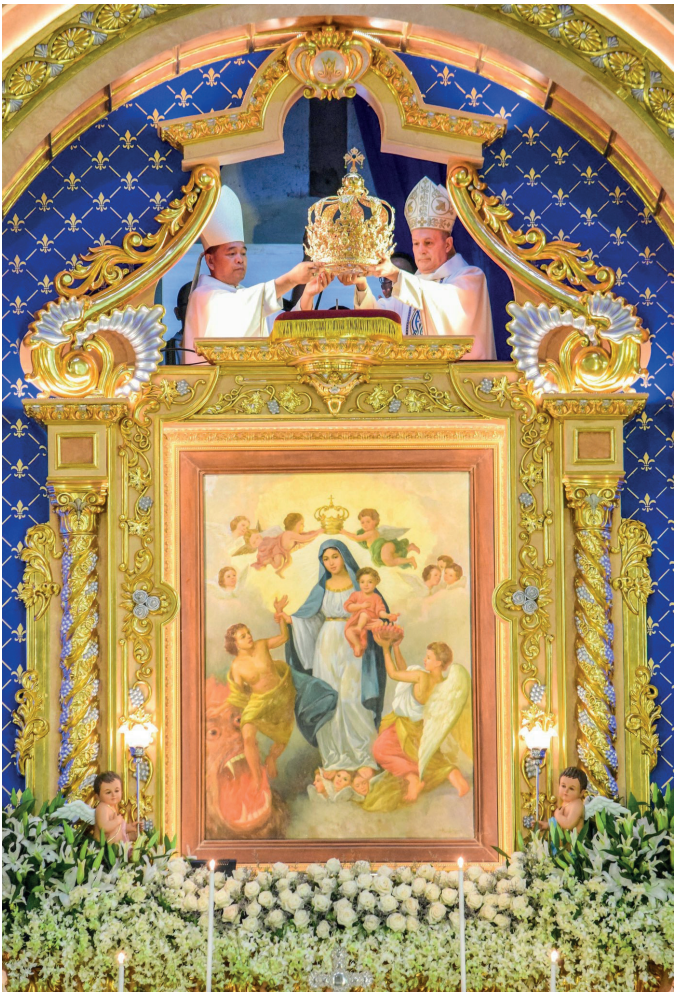
36 Santa Visita de Cainta (28 Julio 1790), AAM 4.B.5 f.7; *Ympresion en tagalo – titulado Pagdedevocion at Pagsisiam sa Casantasantahang Virgen Caliuanagan*, 1884, AAM 36.D.12, f. 1; M. delos Reyes, *Virgen ng Caliuanagan: Patrona ng Cainta* (Cainta: Our Lady of Light Parish), 2006.

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of a boat on March 19 and July 3, 1748 was attributed. This was documented in 1749 by Fr. Juan de Velarde, S.J., Jesuit Procurator General, in the *Relacion de las Milagros que ha obrado la Imagen de la Santisima Virgen del Lumen ala Gente de la tripulacion de la Chalupa*." The image was also mentioned in the *Santa Visita del Pueblo de San Miguel* of 1802 and in the 1937 book on some Philippine churches, but no longer found in the church at present.[37] In Santo Tomas de Villanueva Parish in Santolan, Pasig City, an old bell of 1814 named Nuestra Señora de la Lumen can be found.

The Virgin became the *Segunda Patrona* of Cainta, with her feast being celebrated on December 1, after that of San Andres. As the devotion grew and became widespread, she became the parish church's titular by 1884, or even earlier. Unfortunately, the Patroness' original painting brought by the Jesuits to Cainta was destroyed when the church burned during the Filipino-American War in March 1899. In 1950, the parish commissioned Fernando C. Amorsolo, the first National Artist, to make a new painting of Our Lady of Light. This was initially enshrined in the makeshift chapel and later in the Virgin's own chapel in the reconstructed church that Rufino Cardinal Santos dedicated on February 25, 1968.

37 AAM 36.C.9 f.2, 4.A.1 f. 18; Raymundo C. Bañas, *Brief Historical Sketches of Philippine Catholic Churches* (Manila: Commonwealth Press, 1937), 61.



Crowning of Our Lady of Light by Archbishop Caccia
and Bishop Buco (Lorenzo Atienza)

On November 7, 2012, Bishop Gabriel Reyes, granted the petition to bestow on Our Lady an Episcopal Coronation on the occasion of the 285th year of the devotion in Cainta. He conducted the crowning on December 1 of the same year during the fiesta Mass. On the occasion of the 290th anniversary of the introduction of the devotion to Our Lady of Light in

Cainta in 2017, Bishop Nolly Buco, J.C.D., Parish Priest and Auxiliary Bishop of Antipolo, petitioned for the Pontifical Coronation of the venerated image. The Holy See granted the said petition through the decree issued on December 6, 2017. The coronation was conducted by Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Caccia, assisted by Bishop Buco, during the Mass presided by Bishop de Leon of Antipolo on December 1, 2018. In the same celebration, the parish church was declared a diocesan shrine through Bishop de Leon's decree of September 24, 2018.[38]

It is interesting to note that the Jesuits propagated this Marian devotion from the first quarter of the 18th century with the purpose of setting Our Lady of Light up against other "lights" that tried to propagate the new philosophy. However, the iconography of the Virgin was argued as proof of the laxity of the Jesuits because it showed Mary lifting a poor soul out of hell. It was also debated upon during the 4th Provincial Council of Mexico on February 7, 1771, and a Franciscan friar seemed to have ended it by saying that the Virgin is only holding the soul from falling into hell, not pulling him out. After the suppression of the Jesuits, the devotion was repressed, and documents promoting the same were confiscated, with the collaboration of bishops who were against the Jesuits. The controversy affected the iconography of the image, e.g., the devil or hell was erased, and the poor soul held by the Virgin in her right hand was replaced with a heart, rosary, or scepter.[39] On a related note, this local iconography

38 M. delos Reyes, "The Jesuits and Cainta," *WH*, Year XII, Vol. 4 (December 2010 – February 2011): 2-4; "Madre Santissima del Lume," *WH*, Year XIV, Vol. 3 (December 2012): 6-8;"Our Lady of Light: A Jesuit Legacy to Cainta," *WH*, Year XXI, Vol. 1 (March 2019): 8-13; delos Reyes, Salve, 138-139.

39 Enrique Gimenez Lopez, "La Devocion a la Madre Santisima de la Luz: un Aspecto de la Represion del Jesuitismo en la España de

of the Virgin Mary has become known in the Bicol region as *Nuestra Señora de Salvacion*. The Franciscans, fresh from defending this Marian title in Mexico, and who introduced this devotion there in 1776, called the image carved out of a *Calpe* tree in Buhi, Camarines Sur, devoutly and somewhat defiantly, by the said title. Another reason from oral tradition supposed that the title was used given the experience of the people of Joroan during Moro raids, as well as natural catastrophes, calamities, and maladies when their only recourse was the Virgin Mary who saves them.[40]

In the Diocese of Imus

Nuestra Señora de Candelaria: Silang, Cavite

The Franciscans started evangelizing Silang in 1585 and established it as a parish in 1595 under San Diego de Alcala's advocation. In 1599, it was ceded to the Jesuits due to a lack of personnel. Fr. Juan de Salazar, S.J., had its stone church constructed between 1637-1639, and it was dedicated to the *Nuestra Señora de Candelaria* around 1640.[41]

Carlos III," *Revista de Historia Moderna*, No. 15 (1996): 213-231; J. Carlos Vizuete Mendoza, "La boca del dragón infernal: El debate sobre la imagen de la Virgen de la Luz en el IV Concilio Provincial Mexicano (7 de febrero de 1771)," *Fuentes Humanísticas*, Año 26, Número 47 (II Semestre 2013): 25-47.

40 Sabino A. Vengco, Jr., *Shaping the Filipino Marian Piety* (Quezon City: Foundation for Christ's Love-Asia, Inc., 2017), 67; Edgardo D. Alaurin, *Nuestra Señora de Salvacion: History, Theology, Piety* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2019), 39-40.

41 Huerta, Estado, 559; Javellana, *Wood and Stone*, 203-204; Teresita P. Unabia et al, *The Virgins of Cavite: History, Art and Religiosity* (Dasmariñas: De La Salle University – Dasmariñas, 2014), 3ff.

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Our Lady of Candelaria (PC Creatives)

Around 1663, the *retablos* of the church were constructed. The *retablo mayor* was dedicated to the Virgin Mary as attested by the *Auspice Maria* emblem carved on top of the broken pediment, the scenes depicted in the *relieves* that fill it (Annunciation, Nativity, Adoration of the Magi, Presentation in the Temple, and Coronation), and the relief of the Immaculate Conception carved on its wooden altar table frontal. Enshrined in the middle of the *retablo* is the venerated image of the *Nuestra Señora de Candelaria*, made of hardwood and standing around two feet excluding

its base. Its provenance has not yet been established, but its features are captivating and suggest western craftsmanship. The image may date back to the construction of the *retablos* and may be one of the Virgin Mary's two images, mentioned in the *Temporalidades* of 1768. However, what is certain is that the parish seal of 1897 had the figure of the Virgin of Candelaria. There is also an image of the Virgin in the facade of the church that dates back to the 1890's or even earlier.[42]

In 2008, the church was declared a National Historical Landmark by the National Museum. In celebration of the parish's 425th year, the parish petitioned for the episcopal coronation of the *Nuestra Señora de Candelaria*, and Bishop Reynaldo G. Evangelista of Imus granted it through a decree issued on the coronation day, January 31, 2019. As preparatory to this momentous event, the *Dalaw Birhen* – the visitation of the image to the parishes in Silang was held in January that year, and a novena was made, with the coronation conducted on the 9th day by Bishop Evangelista. The crowns, *aureola*, and candle were made of sterling silver from the parishioners and devotees' donations. The regalia and vestments' design mimics the texture of the pineapple, coffee leaves, and papaya, representing the agricultural heritage of the town. The Virgin's fiesta was celebrated from February 1-3, and on the 3rd day, the church was declared by the National Museum as a National Cultural Treasure.[43]

42 Josefina M. Liwanag et al, copy editors, *Yaman ng Bayan* (Silang: Parish of Nuestra Señora de Candelaria, 2015).

43 Information from Phillip Lacson Medina of Silang; Phillip N.A. Lacson Medina, *In Nomine: Iconographical Study of Silang Church* (Silang: Herencia de Silan Publications, 2019).

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Nuestra Señora de la Asuncion: Maragondon, Cavite

Marigondon or Maragondon was established as a separate town before 1611 by Fr. Angelo Armano. In 1614, the Franciscans ceded it to the Jesuits, who had a church built in 1615. This was based on the Annual Letters of the Jesuits of 1618. In 1620, the residents, on their own, donated 70 pesos for the purchase of an image of the Virgin Mary, even before Maragondon became a parish under the patronage of the *Nuestra Señora de la Asuncion*. The image was made of *kamagong*, with head and hands of ivory. In 1630, the second church was completed with more elaborate furnishings. The new and bigger church, built in 1633, was apparently made of stone sometime between 1646 and 1649. The government ordered its demolition for fear that the Dutch, who were at war with Spain, might use the church. Another construction began in 1687, was completed in 1714. Among the Jesuit churches, the church of Maragondon is unique for its elevation, with a façade that is narrow but tall, and not squat like other churches. The main roof trusses are exposed and emblazoned with a *lua* (praise to Mary) and verses from Psalm 96.



Nuestra Señora de la Asuncion (Jher Angeles Mendoza)

After the expulsion of the Jesuits, the Seculars took over Maragondon. In 1885, it was handed over to the Augustinian Recollects. It is now under the diocesan clergy. There are two more images of Our Lady of the Assumption in the church. One is in the *retablo mayor* made in the 1700s and called "Birheng Nakatayo," in contrast to the third image called "Birheng Nakaupo." On December 14, 1997, the "Birheng Nakatayo" was granted an Episcopal Coronation by the late

Bishop Manuel Sobreviñas of Imus. On June 30, 2001, the church was declared a National Cultural Treasure by the National Library of the Philippines.[44]

In the Diocese of Boac

Mahal na Birhen ng Biglang Awa (Pronto Socorro): Boac, Marinduque

Marinduque Island is at the heart of the Philippines. In 1621, Archbishop Miguel Garcia Serrano of Manila entrusted to the Jesuits the care of Marinduque, who founded the towns of Boac, Sta. Cruz and Gasan. The Jesuits brought to Marinduque an image of the Virgin Mary measuring approximately three feet. Based on the *Narracion Historica*, "since time immemorial, each night after the Angelus, the people gather together for prayers and novena to our Blessed Mother. The number increases in times of public calamities, such as drought, epidemic, earthquake, famine, and distress, requesting her Motherly care and help." The devotion to the Virgin intensified greatly when the people experienced "her sudden and immediate help or prompt succor."

According to tradition, in the middle of the 17th century, a big expedition of Moros landed on the shores of Barrio Laylay near the mouth of the Boac River. Being the greatest number that had ever raided Marinduque, the people fled in panic and took refuge inside the church. The old men, women, and children prayed the rosary and novena fervently to the Virgin, while the able-bodied men defended the outer

44 Huerta, Estado, 560; Javellana, *Wood and Stone*, 204-205; *Nuestra Señora de la Asuncion Parish* (N.p.: Our Lady of the Assumption Parish, 2010); Unabia, *Virgins of Cavite*, 27-38.

walls of the church fortress. Many Christians were killed during the siege, and on the third day, they ran short of food. The capture of the fortress seemed imminent. The people stormed the Virgin Mary with prayers. Suddenly, a terrible storm came, with strong rains, lightning, and thunder. At the very height of the storm, all were amazed to see standing on top of the wall (where the shrine is now located) a beautiful Lady with her arms outstretched. It was as if she was driving away the enemy. Terror seized the Moros, and they fled away in confusion to their vintas. Recognizing the prompt action of the Virgin, they called her "Biglang-awa."[45]



(Diocesan Chancery of Boac)

45 Lorenzo Menorca and Belen Cordero, compilers, *Canonical Coronation of Our Lady of Biglang-Awa, Boac, Marinduque, May 10-11,`58*; *Ang Mahal na Birhen ng Biglang-Awa 50th Anniversary Canonical Coronation* (Boac, n.p., 2008), 11.

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The Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Lucena, Bishop Alfredo Ma. Obviar, requested through a letter dated April 11, 1957, for the pontifical coronation of the *Mahal na Birhen ng Biglang Awa*, presently venerated in its shrine in the Boac Cathedral. The request for the crowning was granted through a decree issued on May 19, 1957 by Federico Cardinal Tedeschini. Novena in the church preceded the important day. The coronation took place on May 10, 1958, in a shrine prepared at the field of Marinduque High School. Since Archbishop Egidio Vagnozzi, Apostolic Nuncio, could not make it because he had to leave for Rome a few days earlier, Bishop Obviar conducted the crowning of the image. The beautiful crown and its halo, both gold and precious stones, were valued at 10,000 pesos. More than 20,000 people were estimated to be in attendance not only from Marinduque but also outside. The rite was followed by a "Misa Rezada" (Recited Mass) and a solemn procession, where the crowned image was joined by images of the Virgin Mary from the five towns of Marinduque. The Pontifical Mass was held the following day, the feast day of the Virgin.[46]

46 delos Reyes, *Salve,* 88-89.



Bishop Obviar crowning the Birhen ng Biglang Awa
(Diocesan Chancery of Boac)

On May 10, 2007, Bishop Reynaldo G. Evangelista of Boac issued a decree declaring the Virgin as the Patroness of the Diocese of Boac and the Province of Marinduque and prescribed that the official title of the Virgin will be "*Mahal na Birhen ng Biglang Awa*." On May 9 of the following year, Bishop Evangelista raised the temple where the Virgin is enshrined to the status of a diocesan shrine.[47]

47 Menorca and Cordero, op. cit.

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In the Diocese of Borongan

Nuestra Señora de Borongan: Borongan, Samar

Borongan was first mentioned as a Jesuit mission area under the residence of Palapag in 1612. By 1696, it had its resident priest, Fr. Dionesio Ignacio Gutierrez, S.J. Around 1710, the construction of the earliest stone structure of the Borongan church on its present location (near the Hamorawon Spring) began under the direction of Fr. Francisco Diez (Diaz), S.J. It was dedicated to the "*Nuestra Señora en el Misterio de su Natividad*" (Nativity of Our Lady). It was burnt in 1773. In 1768, Borongan was ceded to the Franciscans, and its first missionary was Fray Juan de Mora, O.F.M.[48]



Our Lady of Borongan (Fr. Neil Tenefrancia)

The image of the Nuestra Señora de Borongan was brought to the country by Fr. Juan Jose Delgado, S.J., together with the image of the Virgen de la Rosa of Makati, aboard the galleon *Nuestra Señora de Begonia* that left Acapulco on March 31, 1718. It reached Borongan on July 2, 1718, and finally arrived

48 Huerta, *Estado*, 304-307; Javellana, *Wood and Stone*, 223.

in Cavite on the 27th. He could not contain his joy during this voyage for having seen and venerated two authentic relics, a strand of hair of Our Lady, possessed by both images. He confessed that this was a greater treasure than all that Ophir has and all that Tarshish treasures. He dedicated the first volume of his great opus, the *Historia general sacro-profana, política y natural de las islas del poniente llamadas Filipinas* (1751) to the Virgin of Borongan. He was incredibly devoted to her and recognized her as the creditor of all the labors and efforts of his pen. He elected her as his Patroness, considering the many graces he received from her hands amid the dangers in his Visayan mission so that with the Apostle Paul he could say: "No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us" (Romans 8:37). From Palapag, he would make a pilgrimage to Borongan to visit the Virgin, and once to bless her new sanctuary. On her solemn feast, he was filled with joy to preside at the sung Mass, as on the feast of the Nativity of Our Lady in 1751. He was also consoled that he was just a neighbor to her holy shrine and image, which was kept with so much veneration in Borongan.[49]

Inasmuch as it took 33 years from the arrival of the image until the inauguration of Borongan church, which was still under construction during its arrival, it has been supposed that it was first enshrined and venerated at the original mission chapel in Giborongani (Sabang). At present, the original image's whereabouts is unknown, considering the major fires that hit the church in 1773 and 1898. In a shrine beside the cathedral, there is a small image (around 1 foot) of Our Lady with the Child Jesus, which was reportedly rescued by an American soldier from a burning house in Samar. The image was brought to the US as a personal booty and transmitted back through the soldier's family at the efforts of Msgr. Joseph Hart, Bishop of Cheyenne in Wyoming. During the Kalayaan

49 Delgado, *Historia,* 1-4; Sanchez, *Venerada,* 106 ff.

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celebration in 1998, the said image was brought to Borongan Cathedral by former Pres. Fidel Ramos. Whether this image is the original image of the Virgin of Borongan or not, could not be established at this time.[50]

Pueblo Amante De Maria

Indeed, the seeds of Marian devotion planted by the Jesuit missionaries in Filipino Catholics' hearts have grown in time and yielded much fruit – we, who have been called *Pueblo amante de Maria*. This verse was part of the first two stanzas of the "*Himno Oficial del Congreso*" for the 33rd International Eucharistic Congress held in Manila in 1937.[51]

Hace ya cuatro centurias
que esta tierra Filipinas
se nutre de la doctrina
de Cristo, Divina Luz;
Pueblo amante de Maria,
Antes que sus montes de oro
Forman su rico Tesoro
Los tesoros de la Cruz.

The verses convey that for four centuries, the Philippines has thrived on the doctrine of Christ, the Divine Light. A people-loving of Mary, forming a rich treasure before their mountains of gold, the treasures of the Cross. Indeed, the stanzas show the Christological context of the Marian devotion of Filipinos.

Now that we are celebrating the 500 years of the gift of the Christian faith, our Bishops invite us to "recall what God told

50 Neil G. Tenefrancia, *Nuestra Señora de Borongan: A History of Her Image and Devotion* (August 2020). The other information was also provided to the author by Fr. Tenefrancia of the Diocese of Borongan.
51 XXXIII International Eucharistic Congress (Manila, 1937), 143.

his people Israel regarding his choice: 'It was not because you are the largest of all nations that the Lord set his heart on you and chose you, for you are really the smallest of all nations. It was because the Lord loved you and because of his fidelity…' (Dt 7:7-8). Only God's freely given love can illuminate the choice of the Filipino people to receive this valuable gift of faith!"[52] Upon realizing the preciousness of this gift received, let us look on our loving Mother Mary, who after accepting the mission announced to her by the angel, "set out and traveled to the hill country in haste" (Lk. 1:39) visited and served her relative, Elizabeth. This was a true example of *Missio ad gentes*, an evangelizing Church that comes out of herself.

May the words of St. Peter Canisius to his fellow Jesuits about the Virgin Mary also echo in the hearts of Filipino Catholics, especially amid this pandemic: "All in our Society have had and ought to have, an outstanding devotion to Mary, our mother, our mistress, our patroness…No mother ever had more sons, no one was so blessed or showed more fidelity… No mother ever had more love for her Son…Mother of the living, full of grace, begetter of life, mother of God, our mother, who loves us and because of that love, prays to God on our behalf and pleads for us."

Ad Iesum per Mariam.

52 CBCP, *Pastoral Letter for the 2021 Year of Missio Ad Gentes: Becoming Jesus' Missionary Disciples* (November 29, 2020).

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