

# philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University · Loyola Heights, Quezon City · 1108 Philippines

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## **The Capellania of Padre Mariano Gomes, 1822–72**

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*Philippine Studies* vol. 32, no. 3 (1984): 325–334

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Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

The Capellania of Padre Mariano Gomes, 1822-72  
LUCIANO P.R. SANTIAGO

A SEQUEL TO THE LAST WILL OF PADRE GOMES

After discovering Padre Gomes' last will at the National Archives (see *PS* 30[1982]: 395-407), the author had the good fortune of finding a sequel to it at the Manila Archdiocesan Archives.<sup>1</sup> This cluster of documents, hitherto completely unknown, pertains to the *capellania* Padre Gomes served for fifty years (1822-72).<sup>2</sup> They fill significant gaps in his biography still left unclear in his last will. Furthermore, we learn a great deal from these sources about a canonical institution called *capellania de misas*: its unchanging principles and pragmatic considerations as well as the founder's spiritual aims.

A capellania was a private pious grant whose income was applied for the support of its *capellan* (chaplain). In return, the latter

1. At this stage of development of our archives, most documents are already classified into general headings but still remain uncatalogued. However, certain classifications inevitably overlap and some documents are misclassified. Under the circumstances, it is not unusual for a researcher to find interesting manuscripts he is not even looking for.

2. The documents referred to from the Archives of the Archdiocese of Manila (AAM) consist of the following:

(1) "Espediente instruido a consecuencia de un escrito que presento D.<sup>n</sup> Modesto de la Torre heredero universal del finado Parroco de Bacoor D.<sup>n</sup> Mariano Gomez de los Angeles para que se le liquide y entregue la parte de reditos que correspondian a su causante de la Cap.<sup>a</sup> fundada p.<sup>a</sup> D.<sup>a</sup> Petronila de Guzman. Principio en 10 de Julio de 1973," *Capellanas de Misas (CM)* (1873-86), Folder A;

(2) "Capellania fundada por D.<sup>a</sup> Petrona de Guzman vacada por renuncia de D.<sup>n</sup> Leon Antonio y Adjudicada al Br. D.<sup>n</sup> Mariano Gomez de los Angeles, Año de 1822," *Ibid.* (1816-90), Folder A;

(3) "Libro de la Capellania fundada por Doña Petrona de Guzman. (1836-1904)," *Ibid.* (Cargos y datas). Alphabetically arranged; and

(4) "Capellania fundada por Doña Petronila de Guzman a favor de D.<sup>n</sup> Estevan de Guzman," *Ibid.* (1820-78), Folder A.

was obliged to celebrate a certain number of masses annually for the soul or intentions of the founder.<sup>3</sup> "Capellan" is a canonical title, the possession of which, like that of a *cura en propiedad* (proprietary pastor), lasted a lifetime. The capellan could not be removed except by a canonical process for grave cause.<sup>4</sup> Other possible reasons for termination included resignation or exchange with an equivalent benefice (*permuta*). Padre Gomes was both a *cura propietario* and capellan, but as far as we know he never served as an *operario* (worker, i.e., a cleric who served as coadjutor to a parish priest).

#### THE HEIR'S PETITION

Padre Gomes did not mention his capellania in his last will apparently because his possession of it would cease upon his death. Besides, he seemed more concerned with his obligations which were to be fulfilled by the executors of his testament rather than his privileges. However, we learn from the first of the newly discovered documents that he had not received his annual stipend from his chaplaincy for the final year (1871-72).<sup>5</sup>

On 10 July 1873 or a year and a half after his execution, his natural son, Don Modesto de la Torre, acting as his universal heir, finally got around to petition the Provisor and Judge of Capellanias of the archdiocese for the unpaid stipend. To this end, he presented an authenticated copy of Gomes' last testament to the ecclesiastical court, but asked that it be returned to him as soon as possible because he still needed it for other purposes. Thus, on orders of the Provisor, the Filipino ecclesiastical notary, Licenciado Don Vicente Cuyugan copied the pertinent data from the will, starting with the certificate of authenticity issued by the notary public Don Francisco Abellana in Binondo on 29 February 1872. This shows that the heirs of Gomes had secured a copy of

Historian Carlos Quirino apparently missed these documents in his search for the Gomburza papers in the same archives in 1972, the centennial of their martyrdom. See his "Checklist of Documents of Gomburza from the Archdiocesan Archives of Manila," *Philippine Studies* 21 (1973): 19-84.

3. The same basic principles apply to military or institutional chaplaincies. In the latter, however, the chaplains receive compensation for the performance of a wider range of spiritual functions.

4. This concept of irremovability has been abolished by Vatican II.

5. See note 2, document (1).

his will just the day after they petitioned the Court of First Instance of the District of Quiapo for its opening. They were referred instead to Abellana since the will had already been probated without the heirs' knowledge on 22 February 1872.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, the first, second and last clauses were also copied by Cuyugan and the will was returned to Modesto on 16 July. The first clause was the spiritual prologue. In the second clause, Gomes declared Modesto his universal heir and in the eighteenth or last clause, he annulled any other testament he might have written prior to the one at hand.

The Provisor referred de la Torre's petition to the Administrator of Obras Pias.<sup>7</sup> On 19 July, the latter reported to the Provisor that an accounting of the funds of this particular chaplaincy showed that it owed Padre Gomes more than ₱69, after deducting administrative expenses. Although this was still a significant amount in those days, it constituted only a minor part of the priest's estate as a whole.

On 28 July, the stipend was finally submitted to the ecclesiastical court which then turned it over to Modesto the following day. Remarkably, the proceedings took only nineteen days to complete. This record time (as compared to other similar cases) was probably an indication of the sympathy and respect of the ecclesiastical officials for the martyred priest whom they must have known personally since he had been the Vicar Forane of the Province of Cavite for twenty-eight years.

#### DOÑA PETRONA DE GUZMAN, THE FOUNDRESS

Separate but not too far from the first manuscript are the records of Gomes' capellania including a copy of its foundation papers (1816) and his original application and subsequent appointment and canonical installation as its third chaplain (1822). Further supplementing these are its leather-bound book of accounts (1836-1904) and records of yet a second capellania (1820) established by the same donor.<sup>8</sup>

6. L. Santiago, "The Last Will of Padre Mariano Gomes," *Philippine Studies* 30 (1982): 395-407.

7. *Obras Pias* were private pious grants, in general, which included capellanias. In particular, however, the term was applied to another form of trust fund which was used for charitable works of religious institutions and associations.

8. See note 2 above, documents (2) to (4).

Who was the foundress of these magnificent endowments? Doña Petrona de Guzman (later records corrupted her name to Petronila) was a wealthy Chinese mestiza from Binondo and the childless widow of Don Domingo de la Cruz Gonzales. The last of her line, she seemed to be haunted by Christ's admonition that "it is easier for a camel to enter the hole of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven." When she founded her capellania on 27 March 1816, she described herself as "well advanced in years." Donating the sum of ₱2,350, she stipulated that 5 percent of its annual income from interest on loans be used as stipends for the celebration of masses by the chaplain for the intention of the foundress and the souls of her departed parents Don Thomas de Guzman and Doña Sebastiana de Jesus. The number of masses would then depend on the resulting revenues in relation to the prevailing schedule of stole fees. She asked the Archbishop of Manila to be its patron and nominated as its first capellan, Bachiller Don Miguel Lazaro, Chief Chaplain of the Royal Chapel of Our Lady of the Incarnation. After the latter's death, his successor should be one of the priest-scholars (*padres clerigos agraciados*) of the Royal Seminary of Manila, preferably a Chinese mestizo and native of Binondo and above all, "of outstanding virtue and ability."<sup>9</sup>

The ecclesiastical fiscal endorsed the foundation the following day 28 March and Archbishop Juan Antonio de Zulaybar erected the capellania on 30 March 1816. More than a month later, Doña Petrona, who was apparently a businesswoman, advised His Grace to invest part of the principal in the trade with Acapulco and China.<sup>10</sup> The Archbishop also approved this postscript on 11 May 1816. Although the Galleon Trade had been abolished in 1815, private merchants continued the commerce between the Philippines and Mexico. This trade ceased only with the Mexican Declaration of Independence in 1821.

The piety and generosity of Doña Petrona did not end here. Simultaneously, she proposed another capellania in her last will written on 13 March 1816.<sup>11</sup> This type of chaplaincy was sometimes called *Capellania de sangre* because it was founded basic-

9. Details drawn from document (2) of note 2 above.

10. *Ibid.*

11. See note 2 above, document (4), and E. Bazaco, *Historia Documentada del Real Colegio de San Juan de Letran*. (Manila: UST, 1933), pp. 121-22.

ally to support blood relatives in the priesthood. In the eleventh clause of her will, she offered her new house in Binondo which she had built with her recently deceased spinster sister Vicenta. The principal consisted of the total price of construction, ₱1,600 and the lot. She named as its first chaplain, Don Estevan de Guzman, a student of the College of San Juan de Letran and son of her great-nephew by a first cousin, Don Jose Telesforo de Guzman. They turned out to be her nearest clerical relatives. If Estevan would not be available or when he died, the chaplaincy would devolve on her closest relative in the Holy Orders. Still failing this, it should be awarded to a student of Letran with a vocation who was a Chinese mestizo orphan and native of Binondo. She, therefore, asked the Dominican President of the College to be its patron. In return, the chaplain would be required to celebrate sixty masses a year for her soul and those of her parents and brothers and sisters who were all without issue.<sup>12</sup>

After her death, the executor of her will, Don Jose Telesforo de Guzman founded the capellania in her name on 25 January 1820. Archbishop Zulaybar, who had become familiar with her spiritual preparations, promptly approved and canonically erected her second foundation. It proved to be a catalyst for vocations among her collateral descendants who were never lacking to receive this benefice during the nineteenth century. They had to compose their genealogies supported by baptismal certificates showing their relationship to Doña Petrona. Bachiller Don Estevan de Guzman was succeeded by his nephew Bachiller Don Simon de Oreta who resigned in 1853; then came Don Antonio Roque who was deprived of it for unknown reasons; followed by Padre Mariano de Guzman in 1867, another nephew of Estevan; and finally, Padre Fernando Maniquis de Guzman took possession of it in 1878.<sup>13</sup>

#### BACHILLER DON MIGUEL LAZARO, THE PREDECESSOR

The first chaplain of Doña Petrona's first capellania was a worthy predecessor of Padre Gomes. The catalogue of the Manila clergy of

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., and "Capellania Fundada por D.<sup>a</sup> Petronila de Guzman vacada por renuncia de D.<sup>n</sup> Mariano de Guzman y adjudicada a D.<sup>n</sup> Fernando Maniquis de Guzman," *CM* (1820-78), Folder B.

1782 listed B.D. Miguel Lazaro as an Indio Tagalo who was born in 1739.<sup>14</sup> If this is accurate, he must have been already seventy-seven when Doña Petrona nominated him. At any rate, this at least indicates that they were contemporaries. He graduated from the University of Santo Tomas in 1776 with the degree of Bachelor of Philosophy.<sup>15</sup> Archbishop Basilio Sancho de Stas. Justa y Rufina ordained him to the priesthood the following year. He evidently fulfilled his humble assignments faithfully and capably or else he would not have risen steadily from the ranks. From 1778 to 1779, he was the chaplain of the ship *Nuestra Señora de la Luz*. In 1780, he was recalled to serve as chaplain of the native troops of Bulacan Province and the next year he was appointed as one of the four coadjutors of the flourishing parish of Binondo.<sup>16</sup> His acquaintance with Doña Petrona must have dated from this period.

As an ad interim chaplain, Lazaro was granted his first capellania on 2 February 1793 due to the resignation of its proprietary, Don Pedro Mayoralgo. It had been founded by Doña Ana Maria de la Cruz, also of Binondo with a capital of ₱2,000 and the obligation for the chaplain to say twenty-five annual masses.<sup>17</sup>

After thirteen years of pastoral work in Binondo, he was promoted to the Royal Chapel in 1794. In the same year, he was given the title of general confessor with the faculty to absolve cases reserved to the archbishop. He made his last trip abroad to Acapulco in 1797 as chaplain of the ship *Don Fernando Magallanes*. By 1808 at the latest, he had become the *capellan mayor* of the Royal Chapel. This was his ultimate position. Both he and Doña Petrona died in early 1820, after he had served her capellania for four years.<sup>18</sup>

Lazaro was succeeded on 22 February 1820 by Don Leon Antonio, a Chinese mestizo from Sta. Cruz, Manila who had received his first tonsure in 1818.<sup>19</sup> Antonio resigned the chaplaincy two years later. The fact that his term was quite brief and he

14. J. N. Schumacher and S. P. Escoto, "Filipino Priests of the Archdiocese of Manila, 1782," *Philippine Studies* 24 (1976): 326-43.

15. U. S. T. Alumni Association, *Graduate Listing, 1611-1971* (Manila: UST, 1972), p. 8b.

16. AAM. *Expedientes de Diferentes Materias (EDM)* (1779-99), and *Libro del Gobierno Eclesiastico (LGE)* (1772-83), pp. 18, 23 and 66v.

17. AAM. *LGE* (1789-97), p. 140v.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 168 and 184v; *LGE* (1797-1803) p. 19v; *LGE* (1815-24), p. 323v; and "Clerecia del Arzobispado de Manila, Año de 1808," *Catalogos del Clero Secular (CCS)*.

19. AAM. *LGE* (1815-24), pp. 227 and 299.

was simply called Don without the customary Bachiller suggest that he had not finished his studies then and that he might have left the seminary.

#### PADRE GOMES, THE THIRD CHAPLAIN

On 5 February 1822, Padre Gomes applied for the vacant capellania of Doña Petrona de Guzman. His credentials stated that he was a Bachelor of Sacred Theology working as a teaching assistant (*Bachiller pasante*), an ordained deacon, a Chinese mestizo and the most senior scholar (*mas antiguo agraciado*) of the Archdiocesan Seminary. Thus, he fulfilled almost all the qualifications set down by the foundress except that of being a native of Binondo since he was born in Sta. Cruz, Manila. On the same day, the Archbishop, who was still Fray Juan Antonio de Zulaybar, approved his application confirming that he also possessed the high moral and intellectual qualities specified by the donor.<sup>20</sup>

His Grace issued the formal decree the following day, 6 February, conferring on Gomes the title of chaplain of the capellania of Doña Petrona de Guzman. The number of annual masses he was obliged to say after ordination, or arrange for other priests to say, was set at forty-seven. Finally, on the third day, 7 February, he was installed in the capellania by Bachiller Don Raymundo Roxas, Secretary of the Archdiocese.<sup>21</sup>

The chronological records of the foundation show that Gomes fulfilled his annual obligations without fail and received the corresponding stipends for exactly fifty years and ten days. The chaplaincy officially fell vacant only when he was executed by the garrote on 17 February 1872. By that time, its total funds had risen to more than ₱3,093. For unknown reasons, however, its book of accounts shows that it was never reassigned after Gomes to another priest.<sup>22</sup>

Inspired by Doña Petrona, Padre Gomes himself created the equivalent of a capellania in the fourteenth clause of his will. For this purpose, he set aside four-fifths of the rents of five stores in Sta. Cruz, Manila which he had inherited from his mother. He determined that this should be applied as stipends for the follow-

20. Details drawn from document (2) of note 2 above.

21. Ibid.

22. Data from document (3) of note 2 above.

Al Sr. Obispo de Manila y de las Islas Filipinas.  
Enero 5, 1722.

Comunicando en el presente las Condiciones y pides  
Fundadas, esta, para la presentacion y  
Fulo. & colacion que necesito para el que a  
ra Capellania.

*[Handwritten notes and signatures on the left margin]*

D. Deseo poner a los Obispos, Arzobispos y curules  
en el Sr. Obispo de Manila, y de las Islas Filipinas  
mismo, y el mas antiguo Obispo de Manila,  
ante quien en dicha forma me presento  
y digo: Que hallandose vacante en el presente  
Fundada por D. Petrona de Guzman, y su sucesora  
a D. Leon de Guzman, y su sucesor con el fin  
de los Obispos y curules; con un y de las  
condiciones de las dadas, y de las dadas  
de en atencion de las Condiciones y pides de  
mencionada Fundacion, de las de me amada  
asunto, y de las dadas: Estas con

quiere  
A V. S. pido y suplico se digna proveer con  
ello dicho, y se guarde y cumpla con el  
juramento necesario de

Por mi Padre  
Mariano Gomes  
de las Islas Filipinas

Letter of application of Padre Mariano Gomes for the capellania founded by Doña Petrona de Guzman

ing: (1) at least four Masses a month to be celebrated by his two priest-nephews, Don Feliciano Gomes and Don Manuel Trias, for the eternal repose of his soul and those of his parents and beloved sister Paula; and (2) the support of priest-descendants of Modesto and of his nephews and nieces. Since this was not a formal capellania, however, the arrangement would end if none of his descendants would take Holy Orders.<sup>23</sup>

#### BIOGRAPHICAL CLARIFICATION

In terms of completing his biography, this is the first time we learn from Gomes himself and his appointment papers that his official racial classification was Chinese mestizo. However, Gomes appeared to have avoided or abandoned this label later in life, so that in his last will, he did not even bother to mention it. Indeed by the nineteenth century, the Spanish colonial system of racial grouping had become a travesty of classification since it was based exclusively on the direct male line. As a result, an officially classified Chinese mestizo might have more Indio blood from the maternal branches of his family on both sides than his Indio counterpart and vice versa. The enlightened Filipinos by that time had stopped thinking of themselves in those unrealistic terms. Even the University of Santo Tomas had discontinued this racial classification of students as early as 1855.<sup>24</sup> The colonial administrators, however, continued to cling to it as a lucrative way of imposing taxes. They charged the Chinese mestizos twice the prevailing rate for Indios.

Nevertheless, this new piece of information at least clarifies Gomes' background on his father's side. It further lays to rest previous speculations about his race. They ranged from the idealistic declaration of Pardo de Tavera that he was a "pure blooded Tagalog," to the romantic notion of Regidor that he was a descendant of Japanese immigrants who were forced to leave the country and forsake their wives and children, to the unwarranted claim of Nick Joaquin that he was a creole. Only his nephew Marcelino, who indeed should know, correctly pointed out his Chinese mestizo background.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the Chinese element in

23. Santiago, "The Last Will," p. 405.

24. F. Villaroel, *Father Jose Burgos, University Student* (Manila: UST, 1971), p. 5, footnote.

25. E. A. Manuel, "Mariano Gomez," *Dictionary of Philippine Biography* (Quezon

Philippine society is dramatized by the fact that the martyred triumvirate Gomes, Burgos and Zamora were all of Chinese extraction. Like Gomes, Zamora was most probably a Chinese mestizo too, according to Pardo de Tavera and by inference from his maternal surname, "del Rosario," a typical Chinese patronymic in the Philippines. Although Burgos was considered a Spanish mestizo, his paternal great grandmother was a member of the Chinese Limjap clan.<sup>26</sup>

City: Filipiniana, 1955), 1:195-99; Nick Joaquin, *A Question of Heroes* (Makati: Ayala Museum, 1977), p. 9; and Marcelino Gomez, "El Padre Mariano Gomez," *The Independent*, 4 February 1922, pp. 15-22.

26. E.A. Manuel, "Jacinto Zamora," *Dictionary*, 1:489-90; and "Jose A. Burgos" 2:62-97.