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## **Lorenzo Ruiz, The Protomartyr of the Philippines, and His Companions**

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even by folklorists. A "W.H. Scott" appears in the Index of Authors, followed by a number 194, but on page 194 there is no reference to Scott. His name appears four pages later on page 198 as translator of the work of a Fray Ruperto Alarcon, but with no reference to his work on these controversial manuscripts.

In fact, the index to authors is confusing. For example, E.A. Manuel is supposedly cited on pages 190 and 253, but his name actually appears on pages 194 and 257. Another random choice: "E. Hassel, p. 253," whereas actual citation is on page 257. The pattern is obvious: page entries in the index of authors are four pages behind the actual pages they supposedly refer to. The same seems to be the case with the index of subjects: e.g. "*zarzuelas*, 225-26," with actual location, pages 229-30. The wrong page indications of the indexes seem to start somewhere around page 59 where important names like Laura Watson Benedict, H.O. Beyer, F.C. Cole, Mircea Eliade, and John M. Garvan appear but are not correspondingly so indicated in the index. Benedict and Garvan among others are left out altogether in the index listing. After this page (p. 59), index references to pages are generally off the mark.

While Fr. Demetrio must answer the questions on folkloricity of forged materials, his editors/proofreaders could have done him better service, for the errors in page indications in the indexes, as well as the many typographical slips, could have been easily avoided.

*Florentino H. Hornedo*

LORENZO RUIZ, THE PROTOMARTYR OF THE PHILIPPINES, AND HIS COMPANIONS. By Fidel Villaroel, O.P. Pasay City: Saint Paul Publications, 1979. 160 pages.

The reason for the choice of Lorenzo Ruiz as the title-name for this book is intriguing. Ruiz is the lone Filipino among a group of seventeen martyrs killed in Nagasaki, Japan, in the years 1633, 1634, and 1637, ten of whom were Japanese, four Spaniards, one Filipino, one Frenchman, and one Italian. By vocation, nine were Dominican priests, two Dominican lay brothers, two Dominican sisters, and four laymen. In an earlier introduction of the Cause for beatification of these martyrs, Fr. Domingo Ibañez de Erquicia, O.P. headed the list (p. 147). The top-billing of Lorenzo Ruiz would have been unlikely in the seventeenth century. But this is post-Vatican II, in a Philippines steaming with nationalist fire and which, in spite of being known as the "only Catholic nation in Asia," has no beatified (much less canonized) native to its credit, while Japan, Vietnam, and China count a sizable number of blessed and saints. In fact, in Japan alone, over 4,000 martyrs could be perfectly identified by the year 1636, and of these 205 have been beatified (p. 39). In this light one may ask whether there has not been some hagio-

graphic politics in the billing of Lorenzo Ruiz, lone Filipino and only family man, among the seventeen. Fr. Villaroel comes close to admitting that there has been when he mentions that the General Chapter of the Dominicans (held in Santo Domingo Convent, Quezon City in 1977 — the first Chapter ever held in the Philippines and in Asia), “in full session strongly recommended to the Superior General to make representations to the Holy See for the prompt expedition of the Beatification Cause, and in deference to the host country (the Philippines), the Capitular Records (*Acta*) placed Lorenzo at the head of the list” (pp. 142-3). The politics is possibly not entirely nationalist but also ecclesiastical, in the spirit of Vatican II’s stress on the important role of the laity in the life of the Church in the modern world.

Lorenzo was born of a Chinese father and a Tagalog mother sometime between the years 1600 and 1610, in Binondo, Manila, where he grew up, married, and had three children, two boys and one girl. He got into trouble with a Spaniard, and would have been arrested, and possibly condemned to die, but with the help of the Commissary of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in the Philippines, Fr. Domingo Gonzalez, O.P., he escaped out of the country by joining a group of Dominicans who, in spite of the strict government prohibition against sending missionaries to Japan, sailed secretly for Japan in mid-1636 on a champan from off the coast of Bataan (rather than from Manila Bay where the guards of Governor General Corcuera would have arrested them (p. 63). Ruiz was under the impression that they were bound for the Portuguese colony of Macao, (p. 64) and it was late in the voyage when he realized they were going to Japan. When he had the chance to disembark at Formosa, he did not for fear he would be arrested and sent to the gallows by the Spaniards there (pp. 67-68). He therefore chose to stay with the Dominicans and landed with them at Okinawa — with martyrdom farthest from his motives for staying.

On 21 September 1637, Ruiz, already a prisoner, arrived in Nagasaki along with a Japanese Christian named Lazaro, and Fr. Antonio Gonzalez, O.P., Superior of the Mission. They were quickly brought to trial, Fr. Gonzalez and Lazaro being tried ahead of Lorenzo. Seeing that his companions were subjected to torture with the end in view of getting them to apostatize, Lorenzo is reported to have asked a court interpreter: “I would like to know if, by apostatizing, they will spare my life” (p. 103). Sometime later, he tells the same court interpreter:

Sir, what I said to you before, I said it like an ignorant man, without knowing what I was saying. I am a Christian, and this I profess until the hour of my death; and for God I shall give my life; and although I did not come to Japan to be a martyr but because I could not stay in Manila, however, as a Christian and for God I shall give my life. And so do with me as you please. (pp. 104-5)

After this, he was subject to what is called “water torture” repeated many

times over, but he would not apostatize. Then he and his companions were sent back to jail, from which two days later, they were brought forth again for trial and torture. When Lorenzo's turn came, they asked him to tell the court about himself, and he said:

Me, what shall I say? I do not know what to say. Why are you tormenting me? Kill me and stop asking questions. I am a Filipino, son of a Chinese father and a Filipino mother. I am married and have two sons and one daughter. I could not stay in Manila because I had a quarrel with a Spaniard. I came with the Fathers without knowing where they were going to, in order to escape from Manila. And when we reached Japan I would have liked to return in the same champan. But when they told me that the boat would stop over in Formosa, I decided to stay with the Fathers because I would be hanged in Formosa. (pp. 107-8)

He was then asked, "If we grant you life, will you renounce your faith?" And Lorenzo answered:

That I will never do, because I am a Christian, and I shall die for God, and for Him I will give many thousands of lives if I had them. And so, do with me as you please. (p. 108)

Lorenzo and his companions were thrown back into prison after being tortured, and by the morning of 24 September 1637, the Superior, Fr. Gonzalez had died in prison. On 27 September, the surviving members of the group were brought to Nagasaki's Nishizaka Hill where so many other martyrs had been tortured to death before them. There, Lorenzo, like the rest of his companions

was hanged from a gallows that looked like the goal of a football field, his feet tied to the upper horizontal beam and his head downwards. The head and a part of the body until the waist fell into a two-yard-deep hole. The mouth of the pit was closed with two boards having semi-circular cuts to adjust to the waist, so that only the remaining part of the body and the legs were visible. Heavy stones were placed over the boards to add to the down[ward] pressure of the hanging body. The body had previously been tightly bound around to slow down the circulation of blood. And, as it was customary . . . to prolong the torture and to give more chance to recant, slight slashes with a knife were made at his forehead or the temples. (p. 119)

Thus hung Lorenzo Ruiz for three days, and by 29 September he was found dead. Those who were still alive were taken down and decapitated, then all were burned and their ashes thrown into the sea.

The chief source of the story of Ruiz's martyrdom is based, ironically, on the eyewitness accounts of two Japanese renegade Christians who had Portuguese names, Pedro Rodriguez and Antonio Carvalho (p. 82). Both were employed as interpreters at the court that tried, tortured, and condemned to death Ruiz and his companions.

Besides the hagiographic material on the martyrs, this book will be interesting to many readers because of the vivid images of Manila in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, and the life of the Chinese in Binondo. There are clear glimpses also of the quarrels between the religious and civil authorities, quarrels that lasted almost throughout the Spanish regime. One sees, too, the peculiar religious psychology of European missionaries of the age, some of whom had a definite obsession for bearing witness to Christ — martyrdom — in pagan lands. There are, too, the vivid images of the methods of torture used by the Japanese persecutors, and the intense xenophobia which was at the root of the religious persecution and which led Japan to self-isolation for two centuries.

This book is a readable and popular version of a larger work by Fr. Villaroel, the *Positio* (of some 700 pages) submitted to the Vatican as a document for the Beatification Cause of Ruiz and his companions. It is hagiographic work made charming by the author's sense of narrative and historical vividness; its occasional grammatical, rhetorical, idiomatic, and typographical lapses notwithstanding.

Catholics as well as other men of goodwill who admire men heroic enough to die for their beliefs will find this book inspiring.

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ASIAN SAINTS. By Francis X. Clark, S.J. Quezon City: East Asian Pastoral Institute, 1979. 80 pages.

It is rather sad that we Filipino Catholics have been devoted for so long to so many European saints, but up to now know nothing about our own Asian brothers and sisters who have been officially recognized by the Church as saints. This is not our own fault but is simply due to historical circumstances. In similar words, Jaime Cardinal L. Sin, in his Foreword, introduces this "small but precious" booklet prepared by Francis X. Clark, S.J. for the International Mission Congress held in Manila, 2-7 December 1979.

In this age of "inculturation" of the Christian faith within each culture, in this era of "local churches" so recommended by Vatican II and the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences, Fr. Clark's contribution to the growing literature on indigenization is a "first." According to Fr. Clark (p. 67), inculturation, indigenization, contextualization are abstract terms. But in the more than 400 hitherto unknown Asian saints, we witness inculturation in the concrete: these saints are the visible realization of the perfect blending of Asian culture and the Christian faith. By their martyrdom, these heroic Asian men and women have demonstrated that they did not have to renounce their own native culture in order to embrace the Christian faith, that they remained 100 percent Asian and 100 percent Christian.