

Peter has spoken through Benedict.

Habemus Sanctum!

Deo gratias!

SOLEMN CANONIZATION RITES OF
Blessed Pedro Calungsod
 Elevating him to the rank of Sainthood
 Second Filipino Saint, A Native of Cebu, Philippines
 OCTOBER 21, 2012, World Mission Sunday, Vatican City

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SAINT PEDRO CALUNGSOD

Feast Day: April 2nd

SAINT PEDRO CALUNGSOD
 SECOND FILIPINO SAINT
 Patron of the Philippines, Catechist,
 Altar Boys, Filipino Youth, OFWs

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Saint Pedro Calungsod

*Blessed Pedro Calungsod (c. 1654 – April 2, 1672) was a young Roman Catholic Filipino sacristan and missionary catechist, who along with Spanish Jesuit missionary Blessed Diego Luis de San Vitores, suffered religious persecution and martyrdom on Guam for their missionary work in 1672. Calungsod was beatified on March 5, 2000 by Blessed Pope John Paul II. On February 18, 2012, Pope Benedict XVI officially announced at Saint Peter's Basilica that Calungsod will be canonised on October 21, 2012.

Very little is known about Pedro Calungsod. Historical records never mentioned his exact place of origin or who his parents were. He was merely identified as a teenage native of the Visayas in the Philippines. Historical research identifies Ginatilan in Cebu, Hinunangan and Hinundayan in Southern Leyte, and Molo district in Iloilo as probable places of origin. Loboc in Bohol also makes a claim.

Moreover, no one even really knows how Calungsod looked like. Calungsod is often depicted as a young man wearing a camisa de chino. He holds the martyr's palm, indicating his death, or sometimes a crucifix, catechism book or rosary, representing his missionary work.

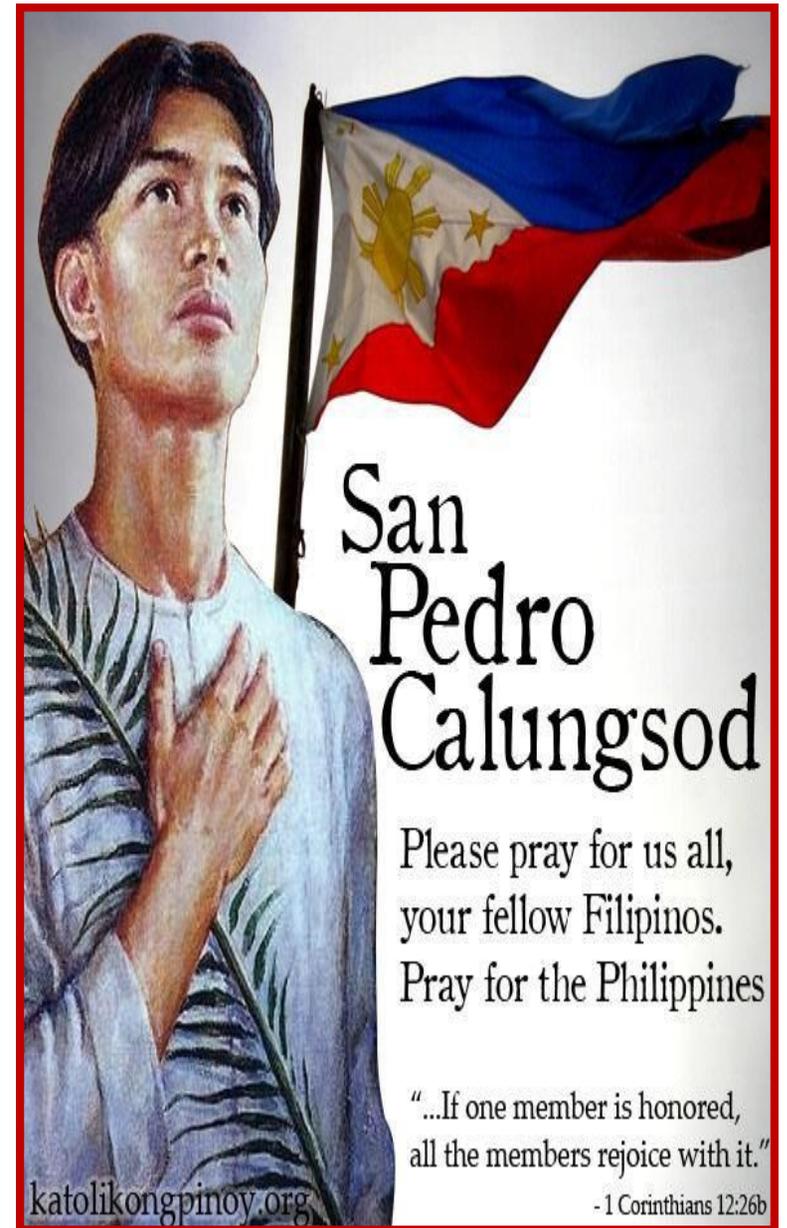
Few details of his early life prior to missionary work and death are known. It is probable that he came to one of the schools run by Jesuits, where he learned Catechism and Spanish language.

Nevertheless, we can be certain of Calungsod's ecclesiastical provenance since the entire Visayas region was under the old Diocese (now Archdiocese) of the Most Holy Name (Cebu).

MISSIONARY WORK

Pedro was just one of the boy catechists who went with San Vitores from the Philippines to the Ladrone Islands in the western North Pacific Ocean in 1668 to evangelize the Chamorros, according to www.pedrocalungsod.org. In that century, the Jesuits in the Philippines used to train and employ young boys as competent catechists and versatile assistants in their missions. The Ladrone Islands at that time was part of the old Diocese of Cebu.

Calungsod, then around 14, was among the young exemplary catechists chosen to accompany the Jesuits in their mission to the Ladrone Islands (Islas de los Ladrones or "Islands of Thieves"). Around 1667, these were later named Marianas (Las Islas de Mariana) in honor of Queen Maria Ana of Austria who supported the mission.



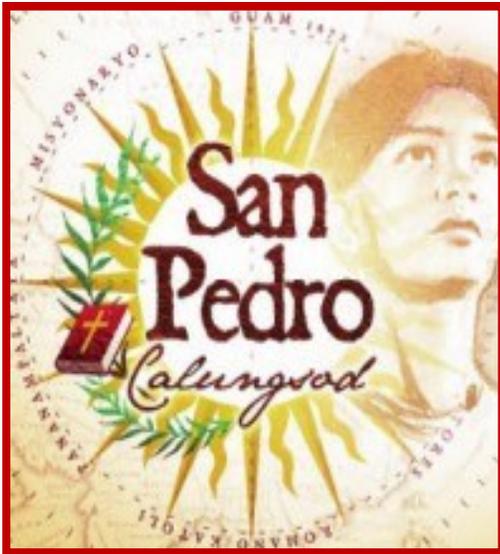
SAINTHOOD

On December 19, 2011, the Holy See officially approved the miracle qualifying Calungsod for sainthood by the Roman Catholic Church. The recognised miracle dates from 2002, when a Leyte woman who was pronounced clinically dead by accredited physicians two hours after a heart attack was revived when a doctor prayed for Calungsod's intercession.

Cardinal Angelo Amato presided over the declaration ceremony on behalf of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. He later revealed that Pope Benedict XVI approved and signed the official promulgation decrees recognising the miracles as authentic and worthy of belief. The College of Cardinals were then sent a dossier on the new saints, and they were asked to indicate their approval. On 18 February 2012, after the Consistory for the Creation of Cardinals, Cardinal Amato formally petitioned Pope Benedict XVI to announce the canonization of the new saints. The Pope set the date for 21 October 2012 (World Mission Sunday).

After Saint Lorenzo Ruiz, Calungsod will be the second Filipino declared a saint by the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic calendar of Martyrology celebrates Calungsod's feast along with Blessed Diego Luis de San Vitores every 2 April.

*(excerpted from: specials.sunstar.com.ph)



Life in the Ladroneas was hard. The provisions for the Mission did not arrive regularly; the jungles were too thick to cross; the cliffs were very stiff to climb, and the islands were frequently visited by devastating typhoons. Despite the hardships, the missionaries persevered, and the Mission was blessed with many conversions. The first mission residence and church were built in the town of Hagåtña in the island of Guam.

MARTYRDOM

According to *Jesuit Martyrs in Micronesia* written by Francis X. Hezel, SJ, the Jesuit mission in the Mariana Islands was the first in Oceania; it soon also proved to be one of the bloodiest. On 15 June 1668, San Vitores and a band of five other Jesuits arrived on Guam, the southernmost and largest island in a cordillera of fifteen volcanic islands. With the missionaries came a garrison of thirty soldiers, many of them colonials from the Philippines, whose responsibility was to protect the missionaries and to pacify the local people if need should arise.

At this time, Spanish missionaries were actively converting Chamorros to Roman Catholicism. This relationship was peaceful at the beginning with the Spaniards, who were led San Vitores. The initial reception of the missionaries by the Chamorro people was enthusiastic and reassuring. However, that changed over time when Chamorros grew resentful of the way their language and other customs were being replaced. Chamorro deaths had also increased due to foreign-borne illnesses.

Very soon, a Chinese quack, named Choco, envious of the prestige that the missionaries were gaining among the Chamorros, started to spread the talk that the baptismal water of the missionaries was poisonous www.pedrocalungsod.org explained. And since some sickly Chamorro infants who were baptized died, many believed the calumniator and eventually apostatized. The evil campaign of Choco was readily supported by the Macanjas who were superstitious local herbal medicine men, and by the Urritaos, the young native men who were given into some immoral practices. These, along with the apostates, began to persecute the missionaries, many of whom were killed.

The most unforgettable assault happened on April 2, 1672, Saturday just before the Passion Sunday of that year. At around seven o'clock in the morning, Pedro – by then already about seventeen years old, as can be gleaned from the written testimonies of his companion missionaries – and San Vitores came to the village of Tomhom [Tumhon; Tumon], in Guam.

There, they were told that a baby girl was recently born in the village; so they went to ask the child's father, named Matapang, to bring out the infant for baptism.

Matapang was a Christian and a friend of the missionaries, but having apostatized, he angrily refused to have his baby christened.

Meanwhile, despite the growing distrust and animosity between Chamorros and the Spanish, San Vitores and Calungsod visited Matapang's home and baptized Matapang's daughter. It is unclear whether San Vitores came unannounced or if he had been invited into the home by Matapang's wife.

To give Matapang some time to cool down, Padre Diego and Pedro gathered the children and some adults of the village at the nearby shore and started chanting with them the truths of the Catholic Faith. They invited Matapang to join them, but the apostate shouted back that he was angry with God and was already fed up with the Christian teachings.

Determined to kill the missionaries, Matapang went away and tried to enlist in his cause another villager, named Hirao, who was not a Christian. At first, Hirao refused, mindful of the kindness of the missionaries towards the natives; but, when Matapang branded him a coward, he got piqued and so he consented.

When Matapang learned of the baptism, he became even more furious. He violently hurled spears first at Pedro. The lad skirted the darting spears with remarkable dexterity. Witnesses said that Pedro had all the chances to escape because he was very agile, but he did not want to leave Padre Diego alone. Those who personally knew Pedro believed that he would have defeated his fierce aggressors and would have freed both himself and Padre Diego if only he had some weapon because he was a valiant boy; but Padre Diego never allowed his companions to carry arms. Finally, Pedro got hit by a spear at the chest and he fell to the ground. Hirao immediately charged towards him and finished him off with a blow of a cutlass on the head. Padre Diego could not do anything except to raise a crucifix and give Pedro the final sacramental absolution. After that, the assassins also killed Padre Diego.

Matapang took the crucifix of Padre Diego and pounded it with a stone while blaspheming God. Then, both assassins denuded the bodies of Pedro and Padre Diego, dragged them to the edge of the shore, tied large stones to their feet, brought them on a proa (multihull sailing vessel) to sea and threw them into the deep. Those remains of the martyrs were never to be found again.

The companion missionaries of Pedro remembered him to be a boy with a very good disposition, a virtuous catechist, a faithful assistant, a good Catholic whose perseverance in the Faith even to the point of martyrdom proved him to be a good soldier of Christ.

BEATIFICATION

A year after the martyrdom of San Vitores and Calungsod, a process for beatification was initiated but only for San Vitores. Political and religious turmoil, however, delayed and eventually killed the process. In 1981, when Agaña was preparing for its 20th anniversary as a diocese, the 1673 beatification cause of Padre Diego Luís de San Vitores was rediscovered in the old manuscripts and taken up anew until Padre Diego was finally beatified on October 6, 1985. It was his beatification that brought the memory of Pedro to our day.

Beatification is the act by which the Church, through papal decree, permits a specified diocese, region, nation, or religious institute to honor with public cult under the title "Blessed" a Christian person who has died with a reputation for holiness.

In 1994, then Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal asked permission from the Vatican to initiate a cause for beatification and canonization of Pedro Calungsod. In March 1997, the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints approved the Acta of the Diocesan Process for the Beatification of Pedro Calungsod. That same year, Cardinal Vidal appointed Fr. Ildebrando Jesus A. Leyson as vice-postulator for the cause and was tasked with the compilation of a Positio Super Martyrio to be scrutinized by the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome. The positio, which relied heavily on the documentation of San Vitores's beatification, was completed in 1999.

Blessed John Paul II, wanting to include young Asian laypersons in his first beatification for the Jubilee Year 2000, paid particular attention to the cause of Calungsod. In January 2000, he approved the decree super martyrio (concerning the martyrdom) of Calungsod, setting his beatification on March 5, 2000 at Saint Peter's Square in Rome.