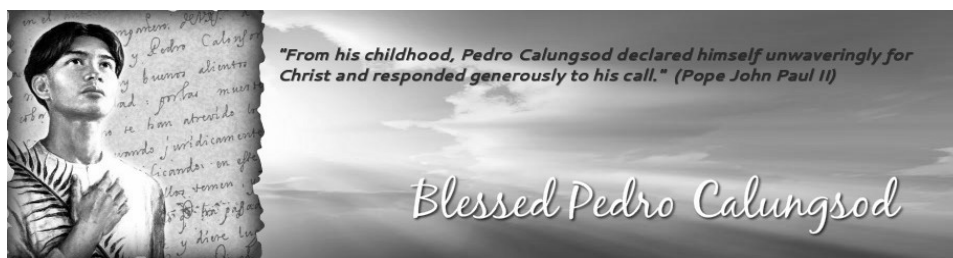




OUR LADY OF THE PHILIPPINES
COUNCIL 13585
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What is the name of the Filipino who is going to be declared a saint on 21 October 2012? His baptismal name is "Pedro". He may have taken his name from the saint of the day when he was born, like for example, from Saint Peter the Apostle on June 29. His surname is variedly spelled in the manuscripts of his Spanish companions and contemporaries as "Calonsor", "Calongsor", "Calansor" and "Calangsor". The present version of the surname is "Calungsod", with the accent falling on the "u" – "Calúngsod". The surname is of Visayan origin. It comes from the Visayan word "lúngsod" which means "town" or "citizenry". The affix "Ca-" forms a noun which means "one's co-[noun]". Therefore, "Calungsod" means "one's townmate" or "one's fellow town citizen". While today the Visayans normally use the word "katagilúngsod" (the "Ca-" is substituted with "ka-" plus the affix "tagi-" functioning as an indicative of a place of origin) to refer to one's townmate, the surname remains to be "Calungsod". The Spaniards may have written the surname according to how they could pronounce it, that is, perhaps with some difficulty in enunciating the "ng" and the terminal "d" – Calonsor – or it may have been the old version of the surname. Even today, when "lungsod" is inflected, the terminal "d" is alternated with an "r"; for example, "kalungsóran" (towns); "lungsoránon" (town citizen[s]). The same is true with other Visayan words that end in "d", like for instance: "búkid" (mountain) → "kabukíran" (mountains); "tubúd" (spring) → "tuburán" (source, springs); "tíkad" (cultivate) → "tikáron" (will cultivate; will be cultivated).

*** Who was Pedro Calungsod?** Pedro Calungsod was a teenage native of the Visayas region of the Philippines. Very little is known about him. We do not even know where exactly in the Visayas he came from or who his parents were. He was just one of the boy catechists who went with some Spanish Jesuit missionaries from the Philippines, headed by Fr. Diego Luís de San Vitores, S.J., to the Ladrões Islands in the western North Pacific Ocean in 1668 to evangelize the Chamorros.

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 Ladrões at that time was part of the old Diocese of Cebu. Pedro worked with Fr. Diego in those islands from June 15, 1668 until April 2, 1672 when they were both killed by two natives on account of the Christian Faith.

***What are our sources of information about Pedro?** Our sources of information about Pedro are the manuscripts of his companion missionaries and contemporaries that report about the first mission in the Ladrões Islands which were used during the process for the beatification of Fr. Diego. These documents are kept in different archives in Spain, Mexico, France and Rome.

***Why can we not be certain of Pedro's exact provenance in the Visayas?** The Visayas is the group of several islands in the central Philippines, the largest of which are Panay, Negros, Cebu, Bohol, Leyte and Samar. There are no existing pertinent documents, like a baptismal record, that could serve as solid bases for identifying which island is the birthplace of Pedro in the Visayas. The documents written by his

companion missionaries simply identify him as an "indio bisaya", that is, a Visayan native.

***Would Pedro's surname help us make an inference about his birthplace in the Visayas?** There are three Visayan languages: Cebuano, which is spoken in Cebu, Bohol, southern Leyte and eastern Negros; Hiligaynon, which is spoken in Panay and western Negros; and Waray which is spoken in Samar and northern Leyte. The term "lungsod" for "town" is Cebuano, while in Hiligaynon it is rendered as "banwa" and in Waray "bongto". Nevertheless, we cannot surely say that Pedro was a Cebuano since there are Calungsod families in the Visayan islands of Panay and Leyte. At the same time, we cannot verify if the Calungsod families had already migrated to Panay or Leyte during the time of Pedro.

***Where in the Visayas are the Calungsod families densely found?** The Calungsod families are densely found in the Visayan towns of Ginatilan in Cebu, Hinunangan and Hinundayan in southern Leyte, and in Molo district of Iloilo City in Panay.

***.Could Pedro be from Molo, Panay?** There are Calunsod/Calonsod [sic] families in Molo district of Iloilo City. Who knows, the Calunsod clan may have already migrated there in the 1600's. Besides, there was a Jesuit residence in Arévalo in Panay where Pedro could have been recruited for the mission.

***Could Pedro be from Ginatilan, Cebu?** By the fact that his surname is Cebuano, Pedro may well be from Ginatilan, Cebu. Ginatilan was a very remote place in south-western Cebu during the time of Pedro. If he came from there, it is not surprising that his exact provenance in the Visayas was somehow unknown especially to the Jesuits who had no mission station there. It is interesting to note, however, that the first account we have about Pedro was written twenty-four days after his martyrdom by his companion missionary in Guam, Fr. Francisco Solano, who had worked in Negros since 1665 when Pedro would have been about ten years old. Moreover, on August 8, 1676 – four years after the death of Pedro – two Jesuit priests made mention of Pedro: Fr. Jaime Bestart and Fr. Pedro de Casanova who was a companion missionary of Pedro in Guam for three years. Both priests were the only ones who made a more specific indication of Pedro's age by saying that Pedro was only a niño – more or less 16 to 17 years old – when he was martyred. Nevertheless, both witnesses did not explicitly say that Pedro was from Cebu.

***Could Pedro be from Hinunangan or Hinundayan, Leyte?** During the time of Pedro, Hinunangan and Hinundayan in Leyte were part of the Jesuit mission station of Abuyog. If he were from one of these towns, it may easily be explained why he got in contact with the Jesuits. Leyte was entirely a Jesuit mission territory at that time. It may just be strange why his companion missionaries could not exactly identify which island in the Visayas he came from if indeed he was from the Jesuit mission in Leyte

oot). It originally meant a reward for good news given to the messenger and later "good news", thus, "Gospel" from "good" and "spell" meaning "words" or "speech". In its precise sense, evangelization is the mission directed to those who do not know Christ. In a wider sense, it is used to describe ordinary pastoral work, while the phrase "new evangelization" designates pastoral outreach to those who no longer practice the Christian faith.

***How did Pedro become part of the Jesuit Mission in the Ladrões?** It was the strategy of the Jesuits who were evangelizing the Visayas in the 1600's to train young boys as assistants or catechists to help them in their missions. The training was done in Jesuit-run boarding schools for boys. Pedro may have attended one of the Jesuit boarding schools for boys and thus was among those brought by the Jesuit priest Fr. Diego Luís de San Vitores to start the Mission at the Ladrões Islands together with other Jesuits.

***Fr. Diego Luís de San Vitores was assigned in Antipolo. How could he have recruited boys from the Visayas?** It is known that Fray Juan Lopez, OP, the bishop of Cebu at that time, manifested his willing support to the Mission organized by Fr. Diego since the Ladrões were then part of the ecclesiastical territory of the Diocese of Cebu. It is possible that the bishop himself may have sent boys from the Visayas to support the Mission. Another possibility is that the Jesuits in the Visayas themselves may have sent the boys to their confrere Fr. Diego.

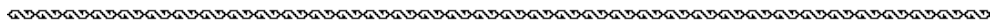
***How did the missionaries arrive in the Ladrões?** Overcoming all difficulties, the missionaries left with the ship named "San Diego" from the port of Cavite on August 7, 1667. They sailed first to Acapulco in Mexico to get some provisions for the Mission. They arrived in Acapulco on January 6, 1668 and stayed there until March 23, 1668 when they left for the Ladrões. They reached the island of Guam in the Ladrões on June 15, 1668.

How was life in the Ladrones Mission? Life in the Ladrones 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 [Agaña; Agaña; Agana] in the island of Guam and was dedicated to the *Dulce Nombre de Maria*, the Sweet Name of Mary. Subsequently, the islands were renamed "Marianas" by the missionaries in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the then queen regent of Spain, Maria Ana, who was the benefactress of that Mission.

***How did the persecution against the missionaries in the Marianas begin?** 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. 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.

***What sustained the perseverance of the missionaries in the Marianas?** The missionaries were able to persevere in the Mariana Mission because of their firm spiritual life. They were fervent in their prayers and sacrifices for the salvation of souls. They were faithful to the daily celebration of the Holy Eucharist. They regularly and frequently received the Sacrament of Confession, thus keeping themselves always at peace with God and always prepared for death. Moreover, they were so devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary as their inspiration and protector.

***What were the circumstances of the martyrdom of Pedro Calungsod?** The most unforgettable assault happened on April 2, 1672, the 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 the superior of the Mission, named Padre Diego Luis de 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.



What did Padre Diego and Pedro do to show that they were missionaries of peace? 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.

***What was the response of Matapang to the friendly gesture of Padre Diego and Pedro?** Matapang 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.

***How were Padre Diego and Pedro able to baptize the child of Matapang?** During that brief absence of Matapang from his hut, Padre Diego and Pedro took the chance of baptizing the infant with the consent of the Christian mother.

***How did Padre Diego and Pedro die?** 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 because they were missionaries of peace. 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.

***What did the assassins do to the remains of Padre Diego and Pedro?** 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 to sea and threw them into the deep. Those remains of the martyrs were never to be found again.

What did the other Mariana missionaries say about Pedro? When the fellow missionaries of Pedro learned of his death, they exclaimed, "Fortunate youth! How well rewarded his four years of persevering service to God in the difficult Mission are; he has become the precursor of our superior, Padre Diego, in Heaven!" They remembered Pedro 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. We may lament the "failure" of the companions and contemporaries of Pedro in indicating his place of origin in their

manuscripts. However, "bissaya" may be just the perfect description of who Pedro was and who he should be to us today. For according to Fr. Ignacio Francisco Alcina, SJ, who worked in the Visayas during the time of Pedro, "bissaya" means "a happy man", "a man of fine and pleasant disposition". And this is how Pedro is described by his companions in their accounts of his martyrdom: that he was a lad of "very good disposition", and that he was a "fortunate [happy] youth" because he lived and died for the Christian Faith.

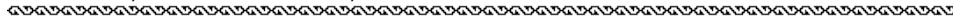
***What did the other Mariana missionaries do after the death of Padre Diego and Pedro?** The Mariana Mission continued amid turmoil. Meanwhile, the surviving Jesuit missionaries managed to start the process for the beatification of their Mission superior Padre Diego on January 9, 1673.

***What is meant by "beatification"?** 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. The cult usually consists of a Mass and Divine Office (liturgical prayers) in the person's honor. Formal beatification is a positive declaration, following a canonical process, that a person did practice heroic Christian virtue, or suffered a true martyrdom, and after death worked authentic miracles upon being invoked in prayer. Besides witnesses' testimony to his virtues, evidence of one first-class miracle is required, though this requirement may be waived in the case of a martyr, the martyrdom being itself the miracle. In proclaiming a person "Blessed", the Pope does not exercise his infallibility but his magisterial authority, for he does not declare definitively that the person is in glory. Beatification, then, does not demand faith yet gives moral certainty of its truth, and to deny it would be temerarious.

***What became of the beatification process of Padre Diego?** Written testimonies of the missionaries and of the Mariana natives were gathered to document the martyrdom of Padre Diego. Naturally, the documentation could not but mention also his lone companion in martyrdom, the boy from the Visayas, Pedro Calungsod. However, due to the difficult situation at that time and the eventual suppression of the Jesuits in the 18th century, the cause for the beatification of Padre Diego fell into oblivion and, together with it, the memory of Pedro which went hidden for centuries in the long-forgotten manuscripts of his companion missionaries.

***What happened to the Mariana Mission?** The Faith that was planted in the Marianas in 1668 did not die with Padre Diego, Pedro and the first missionaries. It remained. It survived. It grew, thanks to the blood of the martyrs and the perseverance of the succeeding missionaries. On September 17, 1902, the Marianas became an Apostolic Prefecture and was separated from the old Diocese of Cebu. On October 14, 1965, Guam became a diocese by the name of "Diocese of Agaña". On March 8, 1984, Agaña became an archdiocese.

***What brought the memory of Pedro to our day?** In 1981, when Agaña was preparing for its 20th anniversary as a diocese, the 1673 beatification cause of Padre Diego Luis 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.



***What were the important moments of the cause for the beatification of Pedro?**

The Archdiocese of Cebu, where Pedro belonged by ecclesiastical jurisdiction, also started to process his beatification cause,

inquiring about the authenticity of the documents pertinent to the martyrdom of Pedro and establishing the fact that he gave his life for the Christian Faith and that he was killed on account of the same Faith. The Diocesan process was opened on November 21, 1994 and concluded on December 28, 1994. The Vatican recognized the validity of the diocesan process on March 21, 1997. On June 25, 1998, Pedro's *Positio Super Martyrio* was submitted to the Vatican's Congregation for the Causes of Saints. On October 5, 1999, the Vatican Historians gave a unanimous affirmative vote on the authenticity of the historical documents about Pedro while the Vatican Theologians gave a unanimous affirmative vote on the authenticity of the martyrdom of Pedro on January 4, 2000. Immediately, on January 11, 2000, Vatican Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops gave a unanimous affirmative vote for the beatification of Pedro. On January 27, 2000, Pope John Paul II promulgated the Decree on the Martyrdom of Pedro.

***When was Pedro beatified?** The beatification endeavor was rewarded when, on 5 March 2000, Pedro Calungsod was beatified by Pope John Paul II at Saint Peter's Square in Rome.

***What did Pope John Paul II say about Pedro?** In his homily during the beatification, Pope John Paul said, "From his childhood, Pedro Calungsod declared himself unwaveringly for Christ and responded generously to his call. Young people today can draw encouragement and strength from the example of Pedro, whose love of Jesus inspired him to devote his teenage years to teaching the faith as a lay catechist. Leaving family and friends behind, Pedro willingly accepted the challenge put to him by Fr. Diego Luis de San Vitores to join him on the Mission to the

Chamorros. In a spirit of faith, marked by strong Eucharistic and Marian devotion, Pedro undertook the demanding work asked of him and bravely faced the many obstacles and difficulties he met. In the face of imminent danger, Pedro would not forsake Fr. Diego but, as a 'good soldier of Christ', preferred to die at the missionary's side. Today, Blessed Pedro Calungsod intercedes for the young, in particular those of his native Philippines, and he challenges them. Young friends, do not hesitate to follow the example of Pedro, who 'pleased God and was loved by him' and who, having come to perfection in so short a time, lived a full life."

***When is the feast of Blessed Pedro?** The feast of Blessed Pedro is celebrated every April 2, the anniversary of his martyrdom and it will remain as is after the canonization. If the date falls within Holy Week or Easter Week, the feast is observed on the Saturday before Passion Sunday. If the date falls on a Sunday of Lent or on a Sunday of Easter, the feast is observed on April 1. ***What day of**

the week do we observe the weekly devotion to Blessed Pedro? The weekly devotion to Blessed Pedro is observed every Saturday because of its significance in his life: he set foot in Guam to begin his mission on Saturday June 16, 1668 and ended his mission with his martyrdom on Saturday April 2, 1672.

***What is meant by "canonization of Blessed Pedro Calungsod"?** The Canonization of Blessed Pedro Calungsod is the solemn act by which the Pope, with definitive sentence, inscribes in the catalogue (canon) of saints Blessed Pedro. By this act, the Pope declares that Blessed Pedro now reigns in eternal glory and decrees that the Universal Church show him the honor due to a saint. Thus, Blessed Pedro will henceforth be addressed as Saint Pedro Calungsod or San Pedro Calungsod. The solemn canonization is an infallible and irrevocable decision of the Pope. "By canonizing some of the faithful, that is, by solemnly proclaiming that they practiced heroic virtue and lived in fidelity to God's grace, the Church recognizes the power of the Spirit of holiness within her and sustains the hope of believers by proposing the saints to them as models and intercessors. The saints have always been the source and origin of renewal in the most difficult moments in the Church's history. Indeed, holiness is the hidden source and infallible measure of her apostolic activity and missionary zeal." – *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 828.

***What was required for the canonization process of Blessed Pedro?** For the Pope to decide for the canonization, he needs a divine sign of approval which we call a miracle. A miracle may be defined as an extraordinary religious occurrence that came about through a special and gratuitous intervention of God. It is contemporaneously a sign or a manifestation of a divine message to man and a call to conversion. A miracle is a supernatural occurrence, and so, it cannot be explained naturally or scientifically. A major miracle is required for the canonization.

***Were there supernatural occurrences upon the invocation of Blessed Pedro's help?** After the beatification of Pedro Calungsod on March 5, 2000, many different divine favors were reported by people who asked for his intercessory aid. Choosing a major miracle from among these favors was not an easy task. There had to be sufficient objective documentation. Such a criterion was met in a medical case that happened on March 26, 2003 at a hospital in Cebu City. The supernatural occurrence was reported by the doctor himself who was the one who invoked Blessed Pedro Calungsod.

***What was the major miracle that God performed through the intercession of Blessed Pedro?** The presumed miracle is about the rapid recovery of a 49-year-old patient from Glasgow Coma Scale score 3 and the absence of motor and sensory deficits thereof.

***What is the official title given by the Vatican by which we may call Blessed Pedro when he will have been declared a saint?** He will be called Saint Pedro Calungsod,



By Msgr Ildebrando Jesus Aleno Leyson

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