

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY POPE JOHN PAUL II TO THE FILIPINO PILGRIMS IN A GENERAL AUDIENCE AFTER THE CANONIZATION RITE OF BLESSED LORENZO RUIZ

" During my visit to your country on February 18, 1981, the whole Philippine nation rejoiced in the Beatification of sixteen martyrs, among them the First Philippine Beatus. Now today, the Filipinos have their first-born Saint: Saint Lorenzo Ruiz. This is indeed a day of joy and happiness for the nation and for the Church in your land. It is a time of prayerful gratitude to God for all who see in this new Saint - and his European and Asian companions, many of whom are related in one way or another to your country - the highest recognition of the work of evangelisation begun nearly four hundred and fifty years ago.

Through that work of evangelisation and conversion, Jesus Christ became a Filipino. He entered the hearts of your forefathers. He shared the hopes, the sufferings, and all the dramatic events of your nation's history. His grace transformed lives. His saving message shaped your culture. And he did not hesitate to call a humble son of Binondo, of Manila 'extramuros'¹, to become one with Him in the great mystery of His saving passion and death, not in his own land, but far away in Japan, as a seed transported to another field, at the beginning of another heroic page in the history of evangelisation in Asia.

Saint Lorenzo Ruiz calls Philippine Catholics of today to uphold and strengthen their nation's baptismal consecration. His example urges you to meet the challenges of the present with the same strength of character and trust in God with which he faced the supreme test of love, in a special way, Saint Lorenzo Ruiz calls families to grow in dignity, in harmony and responsibility as the "domestic Church", where each one learns to be at the service of all, witnessing to the sanctity of human life at every stage and in every condition. For all of this we must pray to God through the intercession of Mary, for whom you have such great devotion, and through the intercession of the newly canonized martyrs.

I wish to greet each one of you present at this commemorative act. I welcome the representatives of the Philippine Government; the bishops, priests, religious and laity who have come from the Philippines and from other parts of the world to celebrate this great occasion.

I greet the sons and daughters of St. Dominic; the representatives of the University of Santo Tomas in Manila; the staff and students of the Pontifical Filipino College; and all of you present here close to the tomb of St. Peter.

Through your new Saint, Jesus Christ renews his call to persevere in the genuine work of evangelisation. Faith rests, not on the wisdom of man, but on the power of God. You must look to Jesus Christ and to the grace of our heavenly Father for the light and courage to proclaim "God's design in all its entirety". The sign that you belong to God will be that his love has been poured into your hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to you.

May Almighty God bless you all; together with your families and friends, your children, your sick and all who need your care and solidarity. God bless the Philippines.

Extract from Rev. Jose Maria S. Luengo "Lorenzo Ruiz" The Filipino Protomartyr in Nagasaki.