



Dear Friends and Benefactors,

Penitential greetings to you all in this holy time of Lent! Here you find a newly formatted Apostle Magazine that has survived its "facelift" recently. We hope that we can reach a wider audience for our missionary work in this upgrade and save money by shortening it from 24 pages to 12 pages. There will be an online version and a printed version available to all who desire it. However, we are trying to reduce the printing and mailing costs of this newsletter so we hope that more and more people will be happy with the online version. The overall plan is to focus on one or two countries in each issue of the Apostle and cover this vast District of Asia over the course of four issues per year...rather than try to "cram" all the news into each issue.

In this issue 51 we have tried to turn the spotlight on the interesting apostolate in the country of Malaysia. Some of the articles are historical, some are short snippets of our spiritual work in this enormous field of labour spread over two large land masses (Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia). Hopefully this issue will increase your understanding of the complex and exciting missionary work that is in need of your prayers and support.

In Maria,

Rev. Fr. Patrick Summers

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In this issue of **APOSTLE**

all about... Malaysia

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The Extraordinary Life of Don Carlos Cuarteron *First Apostolic Prefect of Borneo*

*After visiting the faithful in Eastern Malaysia and Indonesia, I heard someone speak of Father Carlos Cuarteron, mentioning that his life was most impressive and full of lessons to modern day priests who work in the same region. After digesting several sources (the best was *Crowned With the Stars* by Mike Gibby), I couldn't agree more with this opinion about this missionary to Borneo! He is truly unique in the annals of Catholic missionary work and his life shows that life in the mission fields can be both glorious and adventurous and, at the same time, heartbreaking and fraught with indescribable difficulties. Fr. P. Summers*

Who was Don Carlos Cuarteron?

He was born “Don Carlos Domingo Antonio Genero Cuarteroni y Fernandez” in Cadiz, Spain in mid-September of 1816 into a large Catholic family. Although one his brothers went off to become a priest, for Don Carlos, it did not seem that he would ever enter the religious life. At the age of only 13 years old his private tutor recommended that he should begin a naval career due to his strong character and maturity. So, he boarded a ship to the Philippines (Spain's most prosperous colony at the time) to seek glory and fortune. On this long journey he learned navigation skills and seamanship until he was able to join the merchant navy as a cadet. He found that he was blessed with exceptional talents aboard the ship and within a few years he had climbed up in the ranks and, at the age of eighteen years, he was given command of a ship!

Therefore, he spent the next few years delivering cargo across the China Sea, avoiding dangerous reefs and pirates, dealing with complex customs officers and bureaucrats in every harbor, and handling a rowdy crew of sailors. His ship would carry silk, tea,

various items from Europe, cotton, foodstuffs and anything else that could make a profit for Spain. After seven years of this difficult but rewarding work, he was promoted to “Full Captain of Navy of the Philippines” before he was even 25 years old. He had reached the high point of his profession and from this point on his journeys became more advanced and more difficult.

While restocking and resting up in Manila harbor, he heard speak of the loss of the cargo ship *Christina* which had been carrying large quantities of silver when it struck a dangerous reef in the South China Sea. The adventurous blood of young Don Carlos was enlivened with thoughts of finding this ship and salvaging the silver bullion. To that end he bought a ship called “The Martyrs of Tonkin” (out of devotion to the missionaries who were martyred in Vietnam) and hired a crew to go seek out this lost ship. Reports of this journey are scarce and incomplete, but it is certain that Don Carlos caused a sensation when he salvaged the treasure and brought it to Macao, handing it over to the insurance agents who were responsible for the *Christina*. After

the required time for the owners to come forward and prove ownership and no one had appeared, almost the entire amount was given to Don Carlos. Shock and wonder followed this report and even the Times of London carried a report of this Spanish captain who did the unthinkable, i.e., found a lost treasure and attempted to return it to its owners! How much was found? It seems that the total was roughly 200,000 British pounds in silver bullion... equivalent to several million dollars in modern value.



A young Carlos Cuarteron in naval uniform

Who Wants to be a Millionaire?

With a king's ransom now in his possession, Don Carlos took some months to sail around the many small islands in Southeast Asia. It seems that he was unsure of his own future. But he revealed later that these months he had formed a triple intention: to devote himself to the redemption of Catholics enslaved by the Muslim rulers in different places, to find the best way to eliminate piracy and, finally, to establish Catholic missionary work in these places. I think our readers will agree, these are not the customary thoughts of a newly minted millionaire! However, he kept these ideas to himself for fear his family or friends would find them foolish and would attempt to stop him. He first went to the Muslim southern islands of the Philippines and saw the atrocious slave markets where captured Catholics were sold into slavery or sent to Borneo for human sacrifice. It was thought that, on average, around 4000 Filipinos each year were kidnapped and taken to the market for sale as slaves, concubines, or for human sacrifice elsewhere. The ongoing scourge of piracy had been targeted occasionally by the colonial powers but without any persevering results. Don Carlos also saw the great need for the establishing of Catholic missions on the island of Borneo once he realized that this island was much larger than even Spain and had nearly 5,000,000 inhabitants, mostly pagan.

After several years of sailing, exploring, and experiencing failures he came to the conclusion that he must change his tactics and overall plan. He would go to Rome, present his case to the Propaganda Fide in the Vatican and ask for missionaries to be sent to this part of Asia. Finally, as it turns out, he studied for some years and was ordained a priest and the Roman authorities were happy to send him as Prefect Apostolic of Borneo, especially as he vowed to finance all the missionary work with his own money! He seems to have understood the old saying, "If you want something done right, you must do it yourself!" Two young Italian priests were chosen to travel out to Borneo with him in the year 1855 and the future looked very bright indeed!

"Go to All Nations..."

After four months aboard the ship *Guadaloupe*, they arrived in Manila Bay in the summer of 1856. Here Don Carlos and his two assistant priests began the complex preparations to establish a new mission at the north of Borneo. Time and time again he was faced with nearly insurmountable difficulties, sometimes it was the bureaucracy of the Manila port, another time the trouble to find a good ship for purchase to travel to Borneo, and still a further problem of acquiring travel documents for the priests. Politically, it was a confusing situation, for Borneo had Dutch settlements, British settlements, Islamic Sultanates,

Political Map of Malaysia



and many local pagan chieftains ruling the interior of the massive island. Finally, nearly one year after arriving in Manila, they sailed for Borneo and landed on the small island of Labuan, just off the coast of Borneo between Brunei and Sabah. Once ashore, Mass was celebrated, Fr Carlos praying for the millions of souls entrusted to his priestly care so that they might embrace the faith and be freed from the slavery of false beliefs.

Time in Borneo

There are far too many episodes in the following 20 years of his apostolate to relate within this small bulletin of the Apostle. In trying to give a sampling of the events in a short space, we must necessarily sacrifice many fascinating details. However, it is our opinion, that *if ever there was justice and wisdom in the entertainment (film) industry, the life of Don Carlos Cuarteron would be made into a "blockbuster" movie that would need at least a trilogy to be complete.*

Over the following years, Fr. Carlos and his priests would establish several important Mass centers, chapels and small parishes in various locations throughout the large island. They suffered continually with lack of funding, lukewarm relations with the European powers in the region, constant struggles with outbreaks of cholera or malaria, and webs of political intrigue we cannot ever describe accurately. To make matters more cumbersome, Fr Carlos was continually travelling back and forth to Manila for supplies and forever caught up in bothersome bureaucracy depending on which port he sailed into and which ruler was in charge.

One of the classic problems faced by the small trio of missionaries was the backlash from the local Muslim slave owners in Brunei. If slaves escaped and sought protection under the Catholic missions, they were either ransomed or freed. This was unacceptable to the slave owners and they lobbied to have the mission closed so that they would not lose all their Filipino slaves. Fr. Carlos sought the support of both the British and the Spanish authorities but received very little response or help. He finally met with the Sultan of Brunei and, not so delicately, mentioned that he would be in Manila soon and

would tell the authorities there that there are many Filipino slaves in Borneo and he, the Sultan, surely would not want Spanish warships visiting his Sultanate (hint hint). This was a stone-faced bluff and Fr Carlos knew he wouldn't get help from Spain, but it had the desired effect and the order was given to leave the missions alone.

On another occasion, having despaired of receiving help from Spanish and British authorities, he tried to start a subscription list to raise money in Europe for the ransom of slaves in southeast Asia. However, the authorities in Manila blocked this plan, lest people in Europe find out that Catholics were being enslaved regularly in this region and it would cause trouble for them. Truly, upon reading this, one doesn't know whether to cry or laugh at the insanity of the situation!

In general, the small band of missionaries were quite well regarded by the natives and the colonials for their dedication and love of souls. The British ruler of Sarawak, Sir James Brooke, (the so-called "White Rajah") invited the missionaries to come down to the south of Borneo into his little kingdom to work with his support. He complained that his own pastors (Protestants) were worth almost nothing and they only wanted good pay, good houses for their families, and no difficulties. Whereas he admired the Catholic missionaries who lived on nearly no funds, dedicated themselves to the natives and were a great influence on his people.

Don Carlos also struggled with his two assistant priests who had failures of their own, misunderstandings and a difficulty of communication due to the distances and the rarity of seeing their superior. As well, there were problems of overspending and ignoring the budget he set for them in the building of their mission chapels. To make a long story short, these two assistant priests, after several years of dedicated work and many problems, were sent out of Borneo to other places under different superiors. Fr Carlos requested four replacement priests to be sent from Rome and he specified that they should be Maltese so that they would have British protection on Borneo. Over the years he repeated this request many times, but none were sent.

Contra Mundum

Continuous travels to Hong Kong, Singapore, Manila and various other foreign ports were a way of life for Fr Carlos by now. However, he had no assistants to carry on the parish work in Borneo that had been established some years ago. Adding to his personnel problems, he found out the tragic news that King Victor Emmanuel had invaded Rome and the Pope had to flee the Vatican. More troubling news followed: Victor Emmanuel had seized all the property of the Pope which included his investments. This means that a large portion of the salvaged silver bullion of Fr Carlos (which was used for the missions in Borneo) was in the hands of the new Roman rulers and he would never see it again!

Suffering for years with constant dysentery, bouts of malaria, and silence from Rome, it was a standing miracle that Fr Carlos carried on with his optimism and hectic schedule of missionary work. He did admit that he was often tempted to be depressed about the situation because his progress of saving souls encountered so many setbacks. However, remembering that God's Providence is in control, he would soon bounce back to his normal energetic self and throw himself into the next immediate work for souls.

Requiescat in Pace

Unfortunately, we must pass over dozens of interesting episodes in these later years of apos-

tolate in Borneo. Eventually, due to financial difficulties and poor health, we know that he left Borneo in the summer of 1879, nearly 22 years after having arrived there full of hope and dedication. Always the optimist, he told his people that he hoped to return to them (despite his age and infirmity) as soon as he was able. He travelled to Rome and met with Pope Leo XIII where he gave a report of his work and officially resigned his post as Prefect Apostolic. He also met with Cardinal Vaughan (founder of Mill Hill missionaries) and was consoled to know they would soon travel to Borneo to continue his work a few years later.

While in Rome he developed a severe case of pneumonia and then went to his sister's house in Spain where he eventually died in Cadiz on the 12th of March 1880.

There is very little earthly reminder that he existed besides his tombstone and a few scattered references in historical archives. Hopefully, his reward is in heaven with the countless souls of the many he converted, baptized, confessed and married in his decades of apostolic work.

Conclusion

Reading the lives of the missionaries of the last several centuries is always a consoling experience. We see men and women who left the civilization of Europe and their families to

Sunset on Borneo





One of the last photos of Don Carlos

struggle against incredible odds in pagan lands for the salvation of souls. Very often we don't hear of them unless they be of such legendary status like St Francis Xavier. However, there are also many other religious men and women (like Don Carlos) who were trailblazers in their regions and built foundations for other missionaries to come after them.

He was not always the most prudent man in his decisions, he was not even always loved by his inferiors, but no one could question his dedication to the work of God and souls. Don Carlos, like many great missionaries realized the truth of what St Paul told the Corinthians, "But I most gladly will spend and be spent myself for your souls; although loving you more, I be loved less." (2 Cor. 12)

Therefore, ***we pray for the strength to fight the good fight for souls, to always be ready to labor without reward in this life and to die, like Don Carlos, without public acclaim. We ask our dear friends and benefactors to do the same for the Asian missions and for their own souls.***

Political Map of Asia, with Malaysia



At the Mission Frontiers: The History and Growth of the Catholic Church in Malaysia

by Timothy Petrus Chan

Malaysia – a confederation of Malaya, Sabah & Sarawak in South East Asia – despite being an Islamic state constitutionally, is home to more than 1 million Catholics. The region was initially dominated by various animistic, Buddhist and Hindu kingdoms.

In the 15th century, the Sultanate of Malacca was founded and it gradually rose to become a prominent force in the region, as it had important trade and diplomatic relations with empires both in the West and the Far East. Through this sultanate, Islam came into the region as the fruit of relations with the Arab world, and it has been the dominant religion ever since. In the early 16th century, the Portuguese had overthrown the Sultan of Malacca and colonized the region. This opened a gateway for St. Francis Xavier to

evangelize the region as he first set foot in Malacca in 1545.

As it was a Portuguese colony, St. Francis Xavier made Malacca his base from which he would set out on missions to Japan, China, India and the Maluku Islands. After his death in 1552 off the coast of China, his relics were temporarily buried in Malacca before being permanently transferred to Goa in India.

In the successive centuries as the influence of the Portuguese waned, the Dutch and English established their colonies in the region, and Protestantism was introduced with their arrival. However, the Catholic Church continued to grow as new communities, parishes and dioceses sprouted, and more religious orders moved into

Ruins of the Church where St. Francis Xavier was buried





Statues from the Vietnamese martyr saints from the College General, Penang

the area. In Malaya, the evangelization efforts were spearheaded by the priests of the Society of Foreign Missions of Paris (MEP); in Sabah and Sarawak, the Mill Hill Missionaries (MHM) took the lead. Soon, local seminaries were built, with the College General on the island of Penang occupying the spotlight as it housed seminarians from across South East Asia. Two French lecturers of this seminary – Sts. Imbert & Chastan – eventually received the crown of martyrdom during their missions to Korea. Five other Vietnamese priests who were the alumni of the seminary – Sts. Philip Minh, Peter Quy, Paul Loc, John Hoan & Joseph Luu – were martyred in Annam, Vietnam.

Currently, there are three archdioceses and six dioceses in Malaysia, and three cities of Kuala Lumpur, Kota Kinabalu & Kuching are serviced by the SSPX priests who travel weekly from the Singaporean priory. These locations are the only places in Malaysia where the Traditional Latin

Mass is available on a regular basis and are experiencing rapid growth as local Catholics rediscover the treasures of Sacred Tradition. Let us increase our prayers and support for these courageous souls!

The statue of Christ the Redeemer at the Portuguese settlement, Malacca



A Short History of SSPX in Peninsular Malaysia

by one of the pioneers

In the early 1990's a few of us together with our families got together to pray the rosary every Saturday. We later began to promote this practice to other Catholics by bringing the Rosa Mystica statue to their house on Saturday praying the rosary and, thereafter, leaving the statue there for a week for the family to continue to pray. However, we felt spiritually starved at that time and someone suggested to invite a traditional priest to come to Kuala Lumpur. Thus, it came to pass that in October of 1991, we wrote to His Excellency Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre requesting for the presence of a traditional Catholic priest in Kuala Lumpur. About a fortnight later, we received a reply from Rev. Fr Schmidberger, the Superior General of SSPX advising us that the Archbishop had passed away in March of that year and that he (Fr Schmidberger) would definitely give our request serious consideration.

On the 19th of January 1992, Father Horatio Gentili visited Kuala Lumpur. Visits from Father Gentili at that time were infrequent-- about once a month, and

since we did not have a chapel, Masses were celebrated in our homes on a rotation. I recall that when Fr Gentili was subsequently posted elsewhere, he told us that he would be succeeded by Fr Laisney, and that we had better be prepared for a bigger vehicle to fetch Fr Laisney from the airport as Fr Gentili claimed that Fr Laisney was much much bigger than he. Anyone who knows Father Gentili will know how big he is, so we were at wits end trying to procure a large enough vehicle to ferry Fr Laisney from the airport. Imagine our surprise/relief when we realized that Fr Gentili had played a joke on us, when a rather skinny Fr Laisney exited the airport.

A few years later, through the generosity of the Lim family, we were able to establish a chapel at their commercial premises in Sungei Buloh and we were able to purchase the necessary altar, benches and other necessities through donations

Fr. Gentili, Kuala Lumpur, circa 1992





The parishioners of the Chapel of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Kuala Lumpur with Fr. Demornex after Pentecost Mass

from the faithful. Visits from SSPX priests gradually became more frequent, first fortnightly and then weekly. We have been blessed to have had so many SSPX priests and bishops visit and stay with us over the years and take care of our spiritual needs. Among our faithful regular attendees were students from East Malaysia who were studying in Kuala Lumpur and subsequently through their urging, a chapel was established back in their hometown in Kota Kinabalu (on Borneo) where they are now able to get the traditional Mass twice a month.

Although we were grateful to have a chapel in Sungei Buloh, the location was not so convenient as the area lacked public transport and people found it difficult to reach the Mass there regularly. In July of 2016, we managed to find and

rent a place in Bukit Jalil and the chapel was moved to the present premises which are more centrally located and close to two Light Rail stations. Since then the number of attendees has grown so much that the chapel is now packed. Our numbers are growing further following the establishment of the youth group and the chapel website.

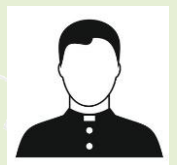
Deo Gratias!

"Father, when are we getting a bigger chapel?"



SSPX Asia in Numbers

- **6 Pories with 16 Priests**



- **1 Novitiate for SSPX Brothers**
- **1 Novitiate for SSPX Oblates**

- **11 Seminarians at Holy Cross Seminary (Australia)**



- **40 Chapels in 10 Countries**

- **3500 Faithful**



The Laughing Flower

One of the nuns who lived with St. Therese of the Child Jesus gave the following description of her: *“A novice and jewel of the community, tall and strong, with the expression of a child, hiding within her a wisdom, a perfection, and an insight of a fifty-year old. Her head is full of mischief to play on anyone she pleases. Mystic, comic, everything. She can make you weep with devotion and just as easily split your sides with laughter during recreations.”*

In the Far East we can see first-hand how important it is to be able to laugh at the difficulties and reversals that beset the work of a missionary.

For instance, not every country we enter to visit our faithful is friendly to Catholicism. We must visit these countries in civilian clothes to make it through the border. You will forgive us for not mentioning any names nor showing you any picture of the disguised missionaries (as much as we are tempted to do so!)

Other priests dress more casually; after all, we Westerners dress amazingly poorly nowadays and since Asia is invaded by tourists, why not hide in plain sight?

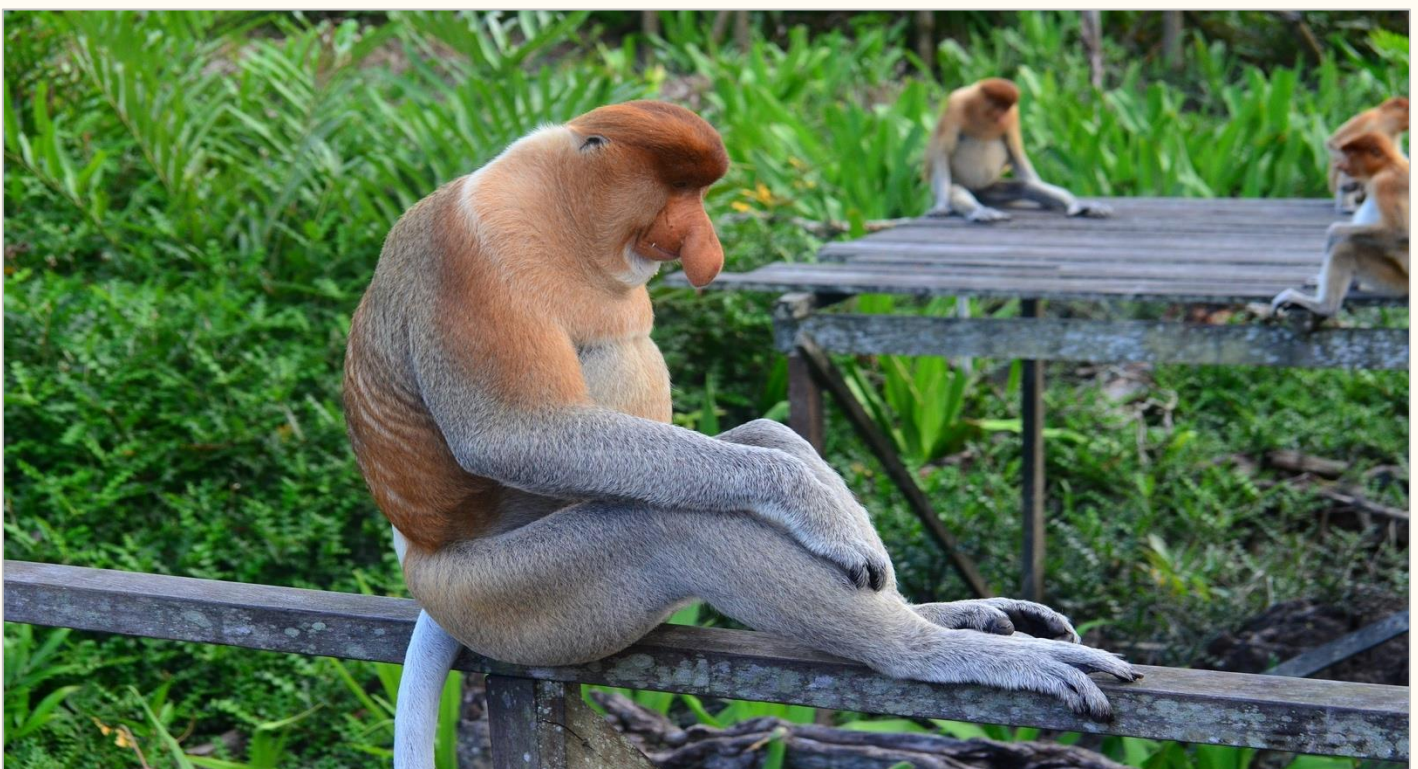


Once, asked by the Immigration officer the purpose of his visit, our priest answered: *“I am keen to visit the holy temples of your country.”* The officer naturally thought of the many famous pagan temples...but the man in front of him had consecrated hands and was looking for *“the temples of the Holy Ghost.”*

Another priest in disguise is asked the usual question by an Immigration officer: *“Purpose of your visit?”* *“I come to celebrate the birthday of a very close friend.”* The date of the entry stamp? December 24th.

St Therese of Lisieux – Patroness of the Missions – help us to laugh in this valley of tears!

Proboscis monkey on Borneo – When will plastic surgery be available for animals!?



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