

hesitate to call a humble son of Binondo, of Manila extra muros”, 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 evangelization 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 Philippine families to grow in dignity, 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 Saint Dominic: the representatives of the University of Saint Thomas in Manila: the staff and students of the Pontifical Filipino College: and all of you present here close to the tomb of Saint Peter.

Through your new Saint, Jesus Christ renews his call to persevere in the genuine work of evangelization. Faith rests, not on the wisdom of man, but on the power of God (Cfr. 1Cor. 2, 5). 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*" (Act. 20, 27). 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 (Cfr. Rom. 5, 5).

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

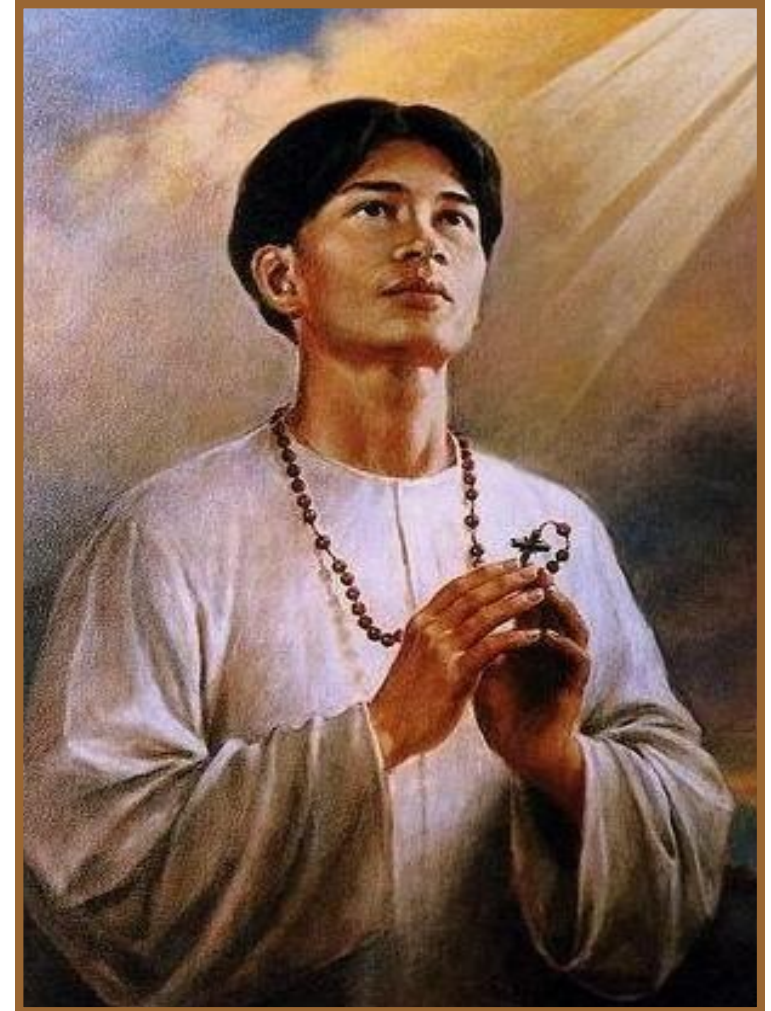
God bless the Philippines.

*(excerpted from: www.vatican.va)

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SAINT LORENZO RUIZ OF THE PHILIPPINES

Feast Day: September 28



**Patron of:
the Philippines, poor, overseas Filipino workers, Filipino youth, Chinese-Filipinos, Archdiocese of Manila**

Saint Lorenzo Ruiz

On September 29, 1637, San Lorenzo Ruiz professed his faith by martyrdom. He was beatified by Pope John Paul II in Manila and later canonized on October 28, 1987. San Lorenzo Ruiz holds the distinction of being the first person beatified outside the Vatican. He also holds the honor of being the first Filipino saint, the "most improbable of saints," as Pope John Paul II described him during the canonization ceremony.

Lorenzo Ruiz, the first Filipino saint, was the kind of man who could die for God and religion a thousand times if he had to. Lorenzo Ruiz was a layman who worked as a calligrapher for the Dominican parish of Binondo, Manila. As an "escriba," he was exceptionally gifted, and the Dominican friars relied on him to transcribe baptismal, confirmation and marriage documents into the church's official books. He was also an active member of the Marian confraternity, a man the Dominicans described as someone "they could trust."

The son of a Chinese father and Tagala mother who lived in the Parian district outside the city walls of Manila, Lorenzo Ruiz married a Tagala like his mother and had three children -- two sons and a daughter -- whose descendants are currently residents of the same area where the original Ruiz family lived. In 1636, Ruiz was implicated in a murder. He sought help from his Dominican superiors who believed in his innocence. In order to escape what they believed would have been an unjust prosecution for their protegee, the Spanish friars immediately sent Ruiz on a missionary expedition outside of the Philippines. Initially, Ruiz thought he was being sent to Taiwan, where he believed his Chinese roots would enable him to start a new life. Little did he know that he and the missionary expedition led by Fray Domingo Ibanez was actually headed for Nagasaki, Japan, where feudalism was fanning the flames of Christian persecution. Lorenzo Ruiz was headed straight into the arms of death.

He was arrested almost immediately upon his arrival in Japan in 1636, and subjected to torture by his Japanese captors for more than a year. Tied upside down by his feet and dropped into a well where sharp stakes lined the bottom, his torturers would stop just before he would be impaled, and thereupon try to convince him to renounce his faith.

"Deny your faith and we will spare your life," his persecutors said.

To which Lorenzo Ruiz answered, "I will never do it. I am a Catholic and happy to die for God. If I have a thousand lives to offer, I will offer them to God."

Existing documents attest that the Japanese promised him a safe trip back home where he could be reunited with his loved ones, but Ruiz staunchly chose to remain faithful to his religion.

On September 22, 1637, Ruiz, Fray Domingo and their 14 companions were led up a hill overlooking the bay of Nagasaki. There they were hung upside down with their heads inside the well. Their temples were slit open to let blood drip slowly until they died either from loss of blood or asphyxiation. Many died after several days. Ruiz died last, on September 29, 1637.

"The Lord gives us saints at the right time and God waited 350 years to give us this saint," the Holy Father then said. "It is the heroism which he demonstrated as a lay witness to the faith... which is very important in today's world. The witness of San Lorenzo is the testimony we need of courage without measure to show us that it is possible. Faith and life for Lorenzo was synonymous and inseparable. Life without faith would have been without value...he proved that sanctity and heroism are there for anybody and the final victory is made to size for each one of us."

*(excerpted from: www.chapelofsanlorenzoruiz.org)

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PHILIPPINE PILGRIMS WHO HAD COME
FOR THE CANONIZATION OF ST LORENZO RUIZ
AND THE OTHER PHILIPPINE MARTYRS**

*Paul VI Audience Hall
Sunday, 18 October 1987*

*Your Eminences,
Your Excellencies,
Dear Filipino Friends,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

*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, Filipinos have their first native-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 in 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 evangelization begun nearly four hundred and fifty years ago.

Through that work of evangelization and conversion, Jesus Christ became a Filipino. He entered the hearts of your forefathers. He shared the hopes, the sufferings, all the dramatic events of your nation's history. His grace transformed lives. His saving message shaped your culture. And he did not