

Jesuits in Macau - 450 Years

Although Fr. Melchior Nunes Barreto, S.J., an emissary to Japan, was the first Jesuit to pass through Macau on November 20, 1555, Frs. Luís Fróis (A picture of his statue is on CPN's cover this year.) and Giovanni Battista Del Monte arrived on August 24, 1562, the year of Xu Guangqi's birth, and were the first Jesuits to actually set up a residence and start apostolic work there, helping the two diocesan priests who were there ministering to the 5,000 inhabitants of Macau, among whom were 600 Portuguese. They had arrived with "Diogo Pereira, a successful merchant, who had been appointed Portuguese envoy to the court of Beijing, and were provided lodgings first in the residence of Guilherme Pereira, brother of Diogo and benefactor of Francis Xavier. Afterwards, they were also welcomed by Pedro Quintero, and it was he who would offer funds for the construction of the first Jesuit house in Macau.

"In 1563, Fathers Francisco Peres and Manuel Teixeira, the first biographer of Francis Xavier, together with a scholastic, André Pinto, reached Macau, and Frs. Fróis and Del Monte went on to Japan. The new arrivals also took up residence temporarily at the house of Pedro Quintero." (1) Later in 1563, three more Jesuits arrived: Belchior de Figueiredo, João Cabral and Baltasar da Costa.

The indulgence conceded by Pope Pius IV for the Jubilee Year of 1560, which was published in Malacca in 1561, when the first prelate Dom Jorge de Santa Luzia arrived there, was extended to Macau in the following year. Thanks to this indulgence, the chapel in the Jesuits' residence became a center of spiritual renewal used by the Portuguese inhabitants of Macau.

The Jesuits awaited instructions regarding the embassy to Beijing until late in 1565, when they received word from the Jesuit Provincial, António de Quadros, to erect a permanent residence for the Society in Macau. They began to build at the end of December 1565. The new residence and chapel were made of earth and covered with wood and straw, and stood next to the humble hermitage and church of Santo Antonio. (2) The first bishop of Macau (1568-1581) was the Portuguese Jesuit Melchior M. Carneiro, who founded a leprosarium and the "Santa Casa da Misericórdia."

In 1573, a more stable Jesuit residence was being built higher on the hill above Santo Antonio, where they were able to sink a well, thanks to the generous donation from a Baltasar de Lage of 100 taels. Between 1573 and 1578 the building was again extended to accommodate more guests, as they passed through on their way to Japan, China and Tonkin. By 1579, Fr. Alexander Valignano was able to declare that the new residence of the Mother of God, with ten huge, airy rooms with their respective community rooms, was one of the best in India and the Far East.

In 1572, the Jesuits had started a school in Macau for Reading and Writing. Years later they introduced Latin. The number of pupils quickly increased, and in 1592 there were some two hundred students, including the children of residents in Macau and the slave children who accompanied them – a reflection of the spirit of social and racial integration, which was already a mark of the Portuguese expansion in the Far East.

During the first half of 1592, at a vice-provincial congregation organized in Nagasaki by Fr. Visitor, Alexander Valignano, the idea was born of setting up a college at St. Paul's for Japanese Jesuit students, who were being affected by the situation in Japan at that time, where missionaries were expelled in 1587, and where 26 Christians were actually crucified in Nagasaki in 1597. Fr. Valignano left Japan for Macau on October 9, arriving there on the 24th. He stayed at the residence of the Mother of God until mid November, and while there, discussed with the fathers of the China Mission, in whose jurisdiction the territory lay, the idea of a college for Japanese Jesuit students. At that time, it happened that the Superior of the Mission and Rector of the Residence and College of the Mother of God, Fr. Duarte Sande (1585-1598), was considering renovations. This was a good occasion to respond to the Macanese aspiration for more school subjects for the local children, and also make the Mother of God a training center for missionaries from Japan to China, Tonkin and other countries.

The College was built further up the hill from the residence and completed by 1594. The Annual Report of 1594 offers a vivid description: "The new College structure was erected, fitting into the space with a back wall and two very large houses which stand out from this with a beautiful courtyard between them; and the two houses which protrude like bulwarks stand two storeys high. The back wall made of earth, is like a corridor with cubicles and stands at the same height as the upper storey of the houses. At

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the foot of the hill which is connected to the upper part with two or three flights of steps, stands the school with its courtyard and the entrance to other workshops. Further up, there are other offices, very well fitted out, for the officials. In front of the entrance there is another very large, closed courtyard." (3)

Before leaving Macau, Fr. Valignano set up two separate communities. The Residence of the Mother of God, linked to the Vice-Province of China, housed ten members of the Society; and the College of St. Paul, dependent on the Japan Province, had nineteen members of the Society including the visitor. There were an additional eight or ten students from Japan and others from India and the rector was Father Duarte de Sande. The official separation of the two communities took place on October 21, 1594. The proximity of the two buildings, however, meant that contact was easy and ultimately they were joined in September 1597 when Father Manuel Dias was rector. Thus they became a single institution comprising both residence and college which was called Mother of God and St. Paul's indiscriminately.

The independent status given to the College of St. Paul in December 1594 by Fr. Valignano and the formal organization of higher studies in Theology and Arts which began in 1597 (with the awarding of degrees) meant that the college effectively became a university establishment. Consequently, historically it can be described as the first western university in the Far East. At the same time, two other institutions can lay claim to this fame as the first establishments of tertiary education in the Far East, namely, St. Joseph's College and Seminary founded by the Spanish Jesuits in Manila and the College of St. Thomas, which was to become the celebrated university founded by the Dominicans also in Manila.

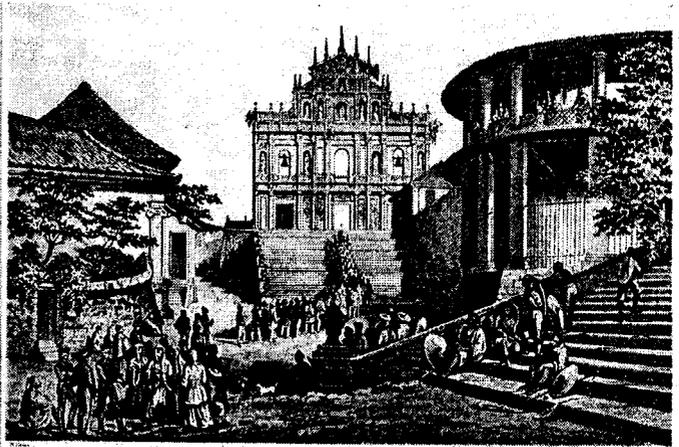
In 1601, the church and three-fourths of the college were destroyed by a huge fire, but Fr. Rector,



Valentim de Carvalho, S.J. (1601-1604) managed to bring together a group of residents to build it up once more. The rebuilding of St. Paul's Cathedral began in 1602 with the laying of its cornerstone, and under the artistic direction of Blessed Carlo Spinola, S.J., who was later arrested in 1618 in Japan and martyred there in 1622, twenty-five years after the martyrdom in 1597 of St. Paul Miki and his companions. The interior of the church was completed in 1603, but work on its intricate stone façade was carried out between 1620 and 1627 by local craftsmen, together with Japanese Christian artisans who had fled from feudal persecution in Nagasaki. The façade was completed in 1634.

In 1617, when the Court of Peking was hostile towards Christians, the Spaniard Diego Pantoja, Jesuit companion of Matteo Ricci, and other missionaries were expelled to Macao. Thanks to the diversity of its resident population, which was made up of teachers, students and missionaries who were either resting, learning languages or in transit, the College of St. Paul was, throughout the first half of the seventeenth century, in the words of Caldeira Rego writing in 1623, "one of the largest and most learned communities of clergy in terms of buildings, and the number and quality of members" to be found in the Orient."

The drastic edict issued by the Marquis of Pombal in 1759, and applied to Macau in 1762, led to the expulsion of the Jesuits, closing the doors on the academic life of the College of the Mother of God and St. Paul. Up to that time, 463 Jesuits had arrived in Macao – a privileged port of passage to the China mission – 174 from Portugal and 289 from other European countries. (4)



JESUIT COLLEGE MACAO

[Painting by Wilhelm (William) Heine (1827–1885), 1854]

Although the cathedral and its façade caught fire three times and was rebuilt after each tragedy, the final blow came in 1835, when the typhoon and fire of that year left it in its present condition, leaving as solitary witnesses to a distant past, only St. Paul's famous façade, a magnificent set of 66 stone steps worthy of comparison with its most splendid counterparts in Rome, and the crypts of the Jesuits who had established and maintained the Cathedral.

Bringing us up to date, Fr. Fernando Mateos, S.J., reminds us in his manuscripts that, at the end of the 19th century, when Hong Kong was ceded to the British Crown, many of the local people of Macau migrated to other promising cities, and its population was reduced to 6,000. At the time of World War II, being the only port in the Far East not occupied by the Japanese, Macau witnessed an influx of Chinese and foreigners that increased its population to 250,000 inhabitants. After the surrender of Japan in 1945, most of the refugees left Macau, but in 1949, thousands of people fled to Macau from mainland China." (5)

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From another paper by Domingos Mauricio Gomes dos Santos, S.J., Fr. Louis Gendron, S.J., points out the three-fold objective in 1565 of establishing a stable installation of Jesuits in Macau: 1) A rest area for missionaries during the slow trip to Japan; 2) A waiting station for the entry to China at the appropriate moment; and 3) A center of spiritual assistance for the nascent city, whose commercial growth stimulated an increase in its population. (6)

Writing about the College of St. Paul's influence, Antonio Lopes, S.J., wrote in 1999: "The most distinguished role of the College of St. Paul's was that it functioned for almost two centuries as a hub, opening up trade and cultural links to all the peoples in the Far East, and making Macau a launching pad for missionaries who were sent in the spirit of dialogue and universality in relation to the various religions and ways of life of the surrounding peoples." (7)

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REFERENCES:

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- 2) "Macau, the First Western University in the Far East", by Domigos Maurício Gomes dos Santos, S. J. (3)
- 3) Adapted from "Macau the First Western University in the Far East" by Domingos Maurício Gomes dos Santos, in *Review of Culture* No. 21 (1994) p. 8. [submitted by Fr. Louis Gendron, S.J.] (6)
- 4) (Quoted from Antonio Lopes, S.J. "Services provided to the Residents of Macau by St. Paul's College," in *Religion and Culture*, Macau: Instituto Cultural de Macau, 1999, p. 345.) [submitted by Fr. Louis Gendron, S.J.] (7)
- 5) Material submitted by Fr. Fernando Mateos, S.J. (4) (5)

