

# Devotion – college essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

### i. History

The world is not flat! This discovery of the Spain's expedition commanded by the Portuguese navigator Hernando de Magallanes or Ferdinand Magellan, that set the record as the first expedition to circumnavigate and confirm that the world is round is the same expedition that brought the image of Sto. Nino and the Catholic faith to the Philippine islands. On September 1519, a fleet of galleons under the flag of Spain set sailed in search for the Spice Islands. Instead they landed in a group of islands in the central part of the Philippines and in Limasawa island where Magellan declared possession of the (part of the Maharlika Kingdom of Asia) archipelago and named it after King Philip of Spain.

Without spices and in search of needed supplies, they continued their journey to the village of Zebu, now the City of Cebu, planted a mission Cross, befriended and converted into the Catholic faith the local chieftain Raja Humabon and his wife Hara Juana and the members of their tribe. As a gift on their baptism, Magellan gave the image of the Holy Infant Jesus, the Sto. Nino. A Sandugo, a blood compact was made between the two leaders and Magellan promise to fight with them against the neighboring tribe of the island of Matan, now Mactan. Magellan was killed in the battle of Mactan and the remnants of his forces returned to Spain using a different route, thus making the historic first voyage around the world.

It was 44 years later that the new group of Spanish explorers led by Miguel Lopez de Legazpi and an Augustinian priest, Fr. Andres Urdaneta, a cosmographer from the Augustinian monastery in Mexico arrived in Cebu

and find out that the new chieftain, Raja Tupaz was unfriendly to the newcomers. Skirmishes between the two groups left the village of Cebu in ruins. When a party was dispatched to check the village, a soldier, his name, Juan Camus found the image of the Child Jesus in one of the burning huts, the same image given to the former village chieftain's wife, Juana 44 years earlier. The natives went back to their pagan ways and may have kept the image as an anito, or one of the native gods, as it was found with floral offerings.

Legazpi was said to have included this event in his report, "Relation of Voyage to the Philippine Islands", to the king of Spain: "Your Excellency should know that on that day when we entered this village (Cebu City), one of the soldiers went into a large and well-built house of an indio where he found an image of the Child Jesus (whose most holy name I pray may be universally worshipped). This was kept in its cradle, all gilded, just as if it were brought from Spain: and only the little cross, which is generally placed upon the globe in his hands, was lacking. The image was well kept in that house, and many flowers were found before it, and no one knows for what object or purpose. The soldier bowed down before it with all reverence and wonder, and brought the image to the place where the other soldiers were. I pray to the Holy Name of his image, which we found here, to help us and to grant us victory, in order that these lost people who are ignorant of the precious and rich treasure, which was in their possession, may come to knowledge of Him."

Since then, devotion to the Santo Niño has grown and has taken root in Filipinos' popular piety, particularly in the Visayas, the central part of the

Philippines group of islands. Pilgrims from different parts of the country make their yearly journey to the church, the Basilica Menore del Santo Nino or the Minor Basilica of the Santo Nino, in Cebu, to take part in the procession and festival. Different parts of the Philippines called this celebration differently: in Cebu, they call it Sinulog, Ati-Atihan in Kalibo, Aklan and in Tondo, Manila, Dinagyang in Iloilo and Binirayan in the province of Antique, to name a few. But all of them, all of these festivals, are centered on one and only purpose: the devotion to the Holy Infant Jesus, the Sto. Nino and His role in all of the Philippines' embrace of the Catholic faith.

## ii. Magazines

FIESTAS in honor of patron saints are among the most effective way of gathering people and keeping the spirit of the Christian community alive. Of all the fiestas, that of the Sto. Niño has captured a large following of devotees from islands south of Manila, particularly in Cebu-Legazpi's Ciudad del Santissimo Nombre de Jesus, a center of political economics and religious activities in the south.

Nowhere in the country is the devotion to the Sto. Niño as intense than in Cebu. Every third Sunday of each year, throngs of the faithful converge in the centuries-old Basilica del Santo Niño to venerate the miraculous icon of the Holy Child enshrined in a marble chapel, and to accompany the solemn procession of the icon as it winds through the major streets, surrounded by a sea of humanity fired by faith in the power of the God-Child.

## iii. Miracles

\* It was during the early part of Spanish colonization of the Philippines when the Santo Nino started to perform miracles. It is told that when the capital of the Spanish government in the Philippines was moved from Cebu to Manila, the authorities decided that the image of the Sto. Nino should also be moved to the new capital.

\* The image was then placed inside a crate and was shipped to Manila. However, upon its arrival at the port, they discovered that the crate was empty. The image miraculously disappeared from its crate and reappeared in its shrine in Cebu. It was again placed inside a crate which was placed inside another box. The image was again shipped to Manila. Again, the boxes that arrived in Manila was empty. The image was again placed inside a crate, which was placed inside two boxes. However, the Santo Niño was again back in Cebu.

\* Eventually, the shippers placed the Santo Niño inside a series of Chinese Boxes—one box placed inside another box—with the seventh and inner most box containing the image. The image arrived in Manila and was enthroned in the Augustinian Church. However, the image keeps on disappearing from the Augustinian church and reappearing in its shrine in Cebu. Therefore, it is told, the Manila Augustinians decided to cut off one of the Holy Child's legs to stop it from escaping and returning to Cebu. To no avail, the Santo Niño still kept on returning to Cebu, until the Manila Augustinians finally gave up and let Cebu keep its little Lord.

\* Today, it is said, that one can still notice how unevenly the Santo Niño stands. It is a sign of how, at one time, it had been amputated to keep it from returning to its beloved home.