REPLY TO "RECOVERING PEDRO CALUNGSOD"

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The reconstruction of the life of a figure like Blessed Pedro Calungsod, on whom there is so little direct evidence must necessarily be a probable one. On reading Father Leyson’s (I presume, since articles are not written by commissions anymore than Positiones are done by dioceses) objections to my own probable reconstruction, based on a knowledge of the historical context of the times and places, I see no reason to alter what I have published. I feel that the careful reader will find there answers to any difficulties that have been raised. I would just note that all the figures for ages should be from 1667, when Pedro joined the mission, not 1668, when he arrived in Guam, as is done in Father Leyson’s article. Therefore, for example, he would have been 18, or at the least 16, when leaving the Philippines, which would mean he was 23 or at least 21 at the time of his martyrdom.

There is one error of mine that I have to correct: my assertion that the “Deposition”—said by Leyson to have been found “pieno di errori (full of errors)” by the “Vatican” (the Congregation for the Causes of Saints?)—was the Positio prepared for the Congregation by him. Having had some experience of other Positiones, I was indeed somewhat taken aback by the rather informal format of the “Deposition,” particularly when comparing it with the meticulous and schol-
arly *Positio* prepared for the cause of Blessed Diego de San Vitores. However, perhaps I may be excused for my error in attributing it to Father Leyson, since Fr. C.G. Arévalo in his pamphlet on Blessed Pedro had referred to it as “presented by the Archdiocese of Cebu, 1993,” though he added that a copy of it was lent him by Fr. Juan H. Ledesma, S.J. (Arévalo, vii). Since I knew that Father Leyson was the vice-postulator of the cause, I presumed—too easily I confess, but not “rashly”—that it was his, since it bore no name except that of the Archdiocese of Cebu, as is customary.

Not having any access to, even now, or then, even knowledge of, the *Positio* prepared by Fr. Leyson, it was a logical, if mistaken, conclusion. If it was indeed “full of errors,” I cannot say, since I used it only once, I believe, and then, having checked with the original Spanish, correctly translated the age of Ambrosio Hagman as 15 to 16 years of age. Though Father Leyson did err on this point in his 1999 work, I am sorry for having attributed to him another error which was not his, and am glad to be corrected. I feel it gratuitous, however, to emphasize the errors of a 97-year old man, who, even at the time he put together the “Deposition,” was still working diligently in his late 80s.

I am as happy as anyone else to see Pedro Calungsod beatified, and also hope for his canonization. I certainly did not spend the many months that it took me to write my article to lessen devotion to him, but rather that this devotion should be as solidly based on facts as the case allows. Most of what I have written is by no means “conjectures,” but the conclusions of sound historical method.