

**The Inclusive Celebration of the 5<sup>th</sup> Centenary in 2022:  
Its Meaning and Implications**  
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**Abstract**

This is a personal reflection on the 5<sup>th</sup> centenary of the coming of Christianity. When we speak of the Spanish colonial period, we deplore only the negative effects that we have been programmed by anti-Catholic and anti-clerical ideologies to believe. Colonization was not unique to us; it has happened in world history from the start of civilization: with the Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, the countries of Europe, and down the line. Most if not all, were colonized, then they became powerful, that they became colonizers. The 5<sup>th</sup> centenary celebrates the Coming of Christianity, the birth of Christianity, and like all births, it has to be seen also in its inclusive aspect, from a broader perspective, including the influence and elements and elements that have come before 1521.

**The Planning**

The plans for the event were made in 2012, by the Most Rev. Jose S. Palma, D.D., President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), and Archbishop of Cebu, the epicentre of the celebration, in a Pastoral Letter on the Era of New Evangelization: "LIVE CHRIST, SHARE CHRIST" (Looking Forward to Our Five Hundred: 'Go and make disciples...' *Mt 28:19*).

The opening paragraph states that "on March 16, 2021, the fifth centenary of the coming of Christianity...we remember with thanksgiving the first Mass... celebrated on Easter Sunday, March 31..., baptism of Rajah Humabon who was given the Christian name Carlos and his wife Hara Amihan who was baptized Juana in 1521."

It is claimed that "hundreds" were supposedly baptized, but who was there to count? The villages were small then, just a few families, with the head of the barangay, so "hundreds" is in our imagination, to create impact. Later events, however, changed "coming of Christianity" to "Christianization," which has been misleading, because Christianization actually began in 1565 with the coming of Legazpi and the five Augustinians, headed by fray Andres de Urdaneta.

Even if the coming of Magellan and the religious rites that he organized are historic for the history of Christianity in the country, it was only the Coming or Introduction of Christianity

that is commemorated, since the purpose of Magellan's voyage was to find a western route to the spice-rich East Indies, the present Indonesia, across the Atlantic, through South America and over Pacific.