

# Unfolding the History of the Quadricentennial Roman Catholic Churches in the Province of Camarines Norte

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## INTRODUCTION

Faith and religion are inseparable elements that shape one's being and personhood. The foundation of history in any place in the world and even in the remotest area of a small province has its roots in the early civilization of the local folks' culture, traditions, beliefs, and ethnography. As a devoted Roman Catholic who was born and raised in the same faith by equally devoted parents, the researcher took a heartfelt fascination on how religion influenced, shaped, and reshaped the Province of Camarines Norte.

As cited by Noel Alegre (2010) in his study of the Masonic symbols on the façade of Our Lady of the Candle Church in Paracale, Camarines Norte, "History of religions ceases to be on museum of fossils, ruins, and obsolete memorabilia and becomes what it should have been from the beginning for any investigator: a series of 'messages' waiting to be deciphered and understood" (Eliade in Comstock, 1971:57). Inspired by the study of Alegre, the researcher unearthed and unfolded the historical beginnings, developments, and contributions of the quadricentennial Roman Catholic Churches namely: St. John the Baptist Church in Daet, Nuestra Señora De la Candelaria (Our Lady of the Candle) in Paracale and Parroquia de San Pedro Apostol (St. Peter the Apostle) Church in Vinzons to provide and store verified information of the past, and how these catholic churches influenced and shaped the lives of the local folks in the Province of Camarines Norte.

Tino (2023) also cited that "every society which honors basic human rights, has a role for the church and the state, the church has lived with under every form to men, nations, and governments come and go but the church endures; it is the oldest living institution known to man."

Being a devoted Roman Catholic, born and raised in the same faith by equally devoted parents, the researcher took a heartfelt fascination on how religion could influence, shape, and reshape his immediate society, the Province of Camarines Norte.

**Keywords:** Quadricentennial, Roman Catholic Church, Historical Unfolding, Province of Camarines Norte

The study attempted to document the history and significant contributions of the Quadricentennial Roman Catholic Churches in the Province of Camarines Norte. Specifically, this study answered the following questions:

1) What is the historical background of the quadricentennial Roman Catholic Churches in the Province of Camarines Norte?;

2) What are the significant contributions of the quadricentennial Roman Catholic Churches in terms of:

Education,

Family Orientation,

Social Awareness and Responsibility,

Political Practices;

3) What supplementary reference material in teaching Araling Panlipunan in the K to 12 Curriculum can be made based from the findings of the study?

The research evolved along the historical unfolding and significant contributions of the quadricentennial churches of the province namely St. John the Baptist Church (Daet), Our Lady of the Candle Church (Paracale), and St. Peter the Apostle Church (Vinzons).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study was conducted to develop a supplementary reference material in teaching Araling Panlipunan. The oldest living local folks, active church youth leaders, and the present parish priests of the quadricentennial churches were the key informants. To validate the responses from the structured and unstructured interviews, the quantitative method was utilized with the parish pastoral council as respondents. The researcher also employed documentary analysis and observation. The mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative methods) and historical design and descriptive evaluation were employed.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the information gathered, the following are the salient findings of the study:

- Historical Background of the Quadricentennial Roman Catholic Churches of the Province of Camarines Norte c.a. 1610 to present.

### **Parish of St. John the Baptist (Daet)**

Daet is an old community traced to the time before the arrival of Magellan in Cebu in 1521. During the reign of King Philip II of Spain, Daet was described as a riot of thick vegetation and wild animals and beasts. The settlers built their houses “dait – dait” or “taid – taid” meaning close to one another for protection. The Spaniards found the place with thriving settlements of houses in the form of camarin clustered together a symbol of unity amid danger.<sup>1</sup>

Its early settlers were believed to be direct descendants of the group of datus who escaped the court of Brunei (Borneo) to evade the enmity of the ruling rajah. It was said that a woman in the Spanish court pressed King Philip II to exile to the Philippines a Spanish noble who chose to reside in Daet and who became the Marquis to Camarines. Don Manuel de la Estrada devoted his time to the implementation of the colonization plans, building a new town out of the community. He led the community in food production and industry by bringing the first abaca seedlings and encouraging the early settlers to plant them.<sup>2</sup>

Don Miguel helped the church authorities in the construction of the old stone bridge across Daet river and of a number of culverts in the streets. He married a native lass, the resulting union of which gave rise to

kinship among the old families in Daet. The ruins of the palatial mansion of the noble were visible some years ago on the spot where the Provincial Capitol stands.

**History of Saint John the Baptist Parish.** The parish of Daet was founded by the Franciscan Missionaries in the year 1581. Due to the scarcity of missionaries, the mission was abandoned. In the year 1611 it was established as a parish and the first parish priest assigned was Fray Alfonso de Valderama. The first church was dedicated to the glorious precursor, St. John the Baptist, whose feast day is celebrated every 24<sup>th</sup> of June.<sup>3</sup>

From 1583 until around the middle of the seventeenth century, Daet was under the control of the Franciscans. But about the second half of the seventeenth century, Daet's ecclesiastical administration was given over the care of the seculars. It was largely in the hands of the seculars that Daet went through their colonial experience.<sup>4</sup>

In the annals of history, the transfer took place with spectacular drama for the seculars strongly opposed their assignment in Daet, preferring those parishes near the cathedral. But as colonial policies prevailed, these secular clerics sought other remedies to rid themselves of what they regarded as burdensome pastoral assignment. The seculars' disdain for their assignment in Daet, was received with mutual sentiment by the residents of this town including Talisay, its visita, who even wrote a petition in August 7, 1670 addressed to the provincial of the Franciscans.

The Franciscans were seen as the epitome of ideal priestly responsibility. Despite the sustained efforts of the inhabitants to oppose the control of the seculars, nothing favorable came out of their efforts for this village remained under the care of the seculars until the last few decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>5</sup>

**Church of St. John the Baptist in the Year 1790 – 1819.** For almost two hundred years, since its creation into a convent, Daet remained at the margins of regional life as reflected in colonial writer's lack of interest on the town. Except for a few and sketchy missionary reports, hardly did the town figure in any narratives prior to the nineteenth century. In 1790 when Bishop Domingo Collantes made his Episcopal Visitation in Daet the following observations were recorded:

“The church is of wood and spacious with good doors and keys, the same is true with the parochial house. The church is under the process of construction into a stone building which is already underway in the second floor” (Gerona 2009:31)<sup>6</sup>





Figure 9. Current St. John the Baptist Parish, Daet, Camarines Norte

Thirty years after Collantes visited the church of Daet in 1791, another Bishop Bernardo de la Concepcion, found not only significant improvements in the structure but also a substantial growth in the number of the faithful as could be gleaned in the number of confirmations he made: “On the 14<sup>th</sup> May 1819 as the Lord Bishop continues his diocesan visitation, he arrives at the town of Daet, gave the Episcopal blessing and announce the Holy Word and confirms 1, 373.” The seculars who took over the reins of pastoral ministry in the seventeenth century carried on the pedagogical legacy of the Franciscans – especially in the work of education as an appendage of Christian conversion.<sup>7</sup>

### Highlights in the History of the St. John the Baptist Parish (1911 – 2009)

**Deed of Donation.** As attested by the Deed of Donation Document and the Plan of Private Land for the Roman Catholic Bishop of Nueva Caceres situated in the Poblacion of Daet, Camarines Norte as surveyed on August 22, 1911 – the couple Jose R. Abaño and Concepcion R. Fonacier motivated by the desire to help the religious welfare of the residents of the district of Pasig, Daet, Camarines Norte, hereby cede, transfer, and donated:

“A parcel of residential lots containing an area of 900 square meters more or less, known as Lot nos. 20 and 31, Block “D” of the Subdivision Plan duly approved by the District Engineer Office of Camarines Norte bounded on the North by Vivencio St., on the East by Simeon Elep, on the South by Anacito Saavaedra and Ana de Vera and on the West by Aguinaldo Masocol, situated at Pasig, Daet, Camarines Norte.”<sup>8</sup>

To the Roman Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Caceres, represented by the Archbishop of Caceres, the Most Reverend Pedro P. Santos, D.D., designated as the donee, the above mentioned lots to be used in the religious activities of the residents of District of Pasig – on 7<sup>th</sup> day of December 1957.

These parish priest have their own significant contributions in the remaking of the church as well as in the formation of Catholic faith in Daet. From the year 1948 up to the present time, the Parish of St. John the Baptist has been the forefront of construction development.<sup>9</sup>

**Creation of Daet Parochial School and Pro – Cathedral Complex.** In the year 1948, Daet Parochial School was founded by Monsignor Antonino O. Reganit, the current parish priest of St. John the Baptist the founder’s dream of putting up a Catholic co – education institution in the parish was made a reality by the generosity of the Daet Parishioners, the moral and financial support extended by Msgr. Pedro P. Santos,

Bishop of Nueva Caceres, and the governor of the province, Hon. Governor Panotes. The school's operation and management was turned over to the Augustinian Sisters of the Philippines (ASP) in 1949 with Sr. Ambrosia as first Directress/ Principal and Sr. Juan as the first Mother Superior.

It is also during the incumbency of Msgr. Reganit, when he started the construction of the cathedral complex. But because of limited time and resources, the best efforts yielded an unfinished project when the good Monsignor retired.

**Refurbishing of the Parish Church and Pastoral Development.** To continue the pastoral work, Msgr. Salvador Naz in 1973 was installed as the new parish priest of Daet, and initiated the improvement of the parish which gave way to the refurbishing of the church. On the following year, the Diocese of Daet was born and became a suffragette of the Archdiocese of Caceres. The Most Reverend Celestino R. Enverga was installed as its first bishop in September 1, 1974. With Msgr. Naz and his priest – associates – religious movements were activated whereby the Cursillo Movement served as one of the vehicle for evangelization, together with the school catechetical formation.

**The Construction of the Parish Rectory and Pastoral Development.** In the year 1984, Msgr. Pedro Espedido, Jr. was appointed to replace Msgr. Salvador Naz. The first thing he did was to spearhead a construction project to remedy the growing infrastructure problem of the parish rectory. In the year 1985, he initiated building a new convent, whereby a year later, the project was ready for inauguration and blessing. With Msgr. Espedido and his priest – associates – barangay catechesis were launched, Sama – Sama Panalangin (SSP) groups were formed, and seminar on Pagsasanay sa Kristiyano Pamumuhay (PAKRISPAM) as the vehicle for evangelization and renewal.

**The Construction of “ANEW” Parish Church and Pastoral Development.** In July 26, 1991 Msgr. Luis Ayo was appointed as Parish Priest of St. John the Baptist. And on the same year of August 17, Daet was formally divided into two parishes. The Most Holy Trinity Cathedral became a new parish.

Two years later, Msgr. Ayo started the parish expansion project to accommodate the growing Catholic faithful of Daet. Yet a lot of resistance from parishioners had been manifested along the expansion projects. Accordingly, the church edifice was the first and the greatest accomplishment the seculars had done in the history of Daet and the only memorabilia to treasure with. The construction went ahead with the plan.

**The Completion of the Parish Project.** It is worth mentioning that in the year 2007 Msgr. Joselito Asis completed the construction of “anew” parish church. The moving force behind the construction project was the “bayanihan spirit” initiated by the different barangays of the parish.

### **The Parish Vision**

Pagkaraan ng 400 taong paglalakbay kasama ang Birheng Maria bilang isang sambayanan ni Kristo, ay buklod sa hangarin na sakabila ng pagkakaiba – iba ay isulong ang isang aktibong pamumuno at buhay na paglilingkod kaisa ang mga dukha at kabataan.

### **MISSION**

Naninindigan at itinalaga ang sarili na tumugon sa tawag ng Diyos Ama na ipagpatuloy ang misyon ni Kristo sa pamamagitan ng:

1. Pagdarasal. Sama-sama sa makabuluhang pagdiriwang ng buhay at pagsamba lalo na ang Eukaristiya.
2. Pag-aaral. Pagpapalalim at pagpapalaganap ng Ebanghelyo na nakasentro sa pamilya na siyang pinagpapahayagan at nagpapahayag nito.

3. Pagmamahal. Mapagmalasakit napagbabahagi ng panahon, talino at kayamanan bilang pasasalamat patungo sa pag-unlad ng kalagayang panlipunan.

The Parish includes in its regular schedule everyday masses, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday confessions, Saturday and Sunday baptism, weddings by appointment, daily devotion activities and the Monday to Saturday adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

At present the most active religious organization is the Parish Pastoral Council. The Parish Council is a consultative, deliberative and advisory institution that brings together lay people and religious who, together with their Parish Priest, work jointly to build the Parish as a living ministerial Catholic community. Parish Council members care about the parish life and ministry, share in the concerns of the universal Church, and strive to bring the Gospel message to all the peoples and places in their neighborhood.

The Parish Pastoral Council shall have the following objectives: (a) To serve as a forum for dialogue and consultation among the representative people of God in matters affecting the life and ministry of the parish. (b) To plan, initiate, promote, coordinate and implement Parish Pastoral programs and activities. (c) To propose guidelines on matters affecting pastoral concerns. (d) To evaluate and discern the life of the Parish in view of the diocesan thrust and prompting of the Holy Spirit.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Parish of Our Lady of the Candle (Paracale)**

From the old – antiquated pages of the historical accounts from the Paracale Roman Catholic Convent in accordance with the remarkable incident that happened in the 29<sup>th</sup> morning of August in the year 1809, an invasion of 37 fully loaded Moro Vintas attempted to invade the town of Paracale. The church goers had been terrified by the outcries of men; women and children scuttle in diverse directions after realizing threats from the approaching Vintas.<sup>11</sup>



Figure 10. Old Parish of Our Lady of the Candle, Paracale, Camarines Norte (1966)



Figure 11. Current Parish of Our Lady of the Candle, Paracale, Camarines Norte

The petrified townspeople went directly inside the church to plead for a celestial assistance. The story of the Moro pirates arrived in Paracale to plunder the town. The Blessed Virgin Mother, the Nuestra Señora de Candelaria was said to have gone down from the altar to protect her people according to the old folk Nicholas Velar, Rev. Fr. Joselito Chavez next of kin, were factual and testified by a historian who went to Bicol and stayed long in Paracale.

Fr. Chavez cited that in his research in Spain, accounts from Paracale were mentioned most in the entire history of the Philippines. Dr. Danilo Gerona, director of the Institute of History and Culture in Bicol, affirmed that the town of Paracale had the extant record but not written by a priest but by Don Felipe Tumagay from Malaguit. Dr. Gerona also situated that usually if the town is in close proximity to the oceanic, the customary patron saint would if at all possible a male, but Paracale has the patroness, their Inay Candi.

Thus, the story goes, the towns people had nothing in mind but to rush inside the church to pray for their patroness, the instant this legendary Blessed Virgin Mother determine the nuisance from the townspeople, gone down from her tabernacle, floated on the sea, waived and wielded her sword to warn the prowlers to run off. The invaders came nearer only to find that the woman really meant her descending, wading through the foamy waters, she struck here and thrust with such lighting speed and breathtaking accurateness that her foes found no time to retaliate with her great power enemies were suppressed in one gigantic gulp by the waters of the sea.

The noble encounter was won, but the Virgin lost a finger. Attempts were later made by devotees to have her hand grafted with a new finger, but each attempt proves a failure. But nonetheless, heaven will always move to defend in very mysterious ways. No one really knows the real score but to the extent, the Blessed Virgin who lost her finger would always be accepted as true that the Blessed Virgin defended her beloved town from mere danger and will forever do so as generations may come anew passes.

The Nuestra Señora de Candelaria, our Inay Candi, at all times will be the defender of the people and the divine protector of the church. Townspeople will always look after her as the pure sole Defender of Paracale, or perhaps what they hailed as their own “Inang Palaban”.

From then on, the people of Paracale look upon their inspiration to the Blessed Virgin’s self – sacrificing protection and the prevailing controls were followed accordingly to the role of services conduit to Inang Palaban. Whereas, it was clearly comprehended during the ruling time of the most dear-loved local official hailed and praised as Kapitan Bebang, defended at all cost the town from any detriment and adversities within or perhaps throughout the following path where Inay Candi inspired long ago the town of Paracale.

Kapitana Bebang is Olivia C. Paliza in real name, born June 6, 1922 and returned back home to our dear Lord in November 3, 1996, her soul be rest in so much serenity. Inang bebang think nothing but the peace and order she promulgated during her reign so as her maternal love to Paracale will never lay to cease is a true –kind representation of Inay Candi’s pursuing love and compassion among the populace of Paracale.



Figure 12. Image of Nuestra Señora de Candelaria

Paracale embraces remarkable men and women, occurrences and so familiar natives of trying to put on the inspired path and elevated the history of the town into progression. People of Paracale among them local fishermen, the youth sectors and members of “Save Pulang Daga Movement” proves all that blessed virgin defender of the town will never cease.

United they stopped the mining giant away from their land ending the total harm of the land’s 40 hectares of coral reef and mangrove forestry in “Pulang Daga” (red soil in Bicol), the Paracale’s only and last frontier of eco-tourism. Paracaleños prove that Inay Candi will never abandon her beloved children as years goes by of her maternal love.<sup>12</sup>

### **The Parish of St. Peter the Apostle (Vinzons)**

The St. Peter the Apostle Church, also known as the Parroquia de San Pedro Apostol, is a Roman Catholic Church located in the municipality of Vinzons in Camarines Norte, Philippines. It is the oldest church in Camarines Norte built by the Franciscan friars in 1611.<sup>13</sup>

It was in 1571 when the Spaniards led by Juan de Salcedo discovered a “sitio” which was named Tacloban, then renamed Indan and is now well known as Vinzons, in honor of Wenceslao Q. Vinzons, a national was

hero of the province.

Ten years later, in 1581 Franciscan Friars came and started missionary work to spread the word of God, thus the residents began to embrace a new belief in the Christian teaching and the growth and spread Christianity became evident as shown by the unselfish cooperation of the elders of tribes, barangays and members of families. All these were realized through the unrelenting efforts of the Franciscan Missionaries to convert and spread Christianity.

Thirty years later, in 1611 a permanent minister was assigned to Indan, the Fray Juan de Lozar OFM, who constructed the church under the patronage of St. Peter the Apostle. He was the first parish priest of the church. Fray de Lazar was a hardworking and indefatigable missionary who taught and devotion and piety among the early inhabitants. His legacy and those who came after him is now reflected in attitude of the people toward religion.



Figure 13. Old St. Peter the Apostle Parish, Vinzons, Camarines Norte

In 1924 the church was moved to another site (the present town site) where the Rev. Fr. Miguel de S. Lucas constructed the church with the same patronage.<sup>14</sup>

In December 26, 2012, the church was destroyed by a fire. According to its parish priest, Fr. Francisco Regala Jr., the historical artifacts of the church were not saved. The Governor of Camarines Norte, Hon. Edgardo Tallado, said that the slow response of the Fire Marshall resulted to the destruction of the whole church except for the concrete walls.

Thru the efforts of Fr. Augusto Jesus B. Angeles III the 400 year old limestone church will be restored in 15<sup>th</sup> Century setting. The flooring will be the same baldozas mosaicos or machuca tiles, specially baked featuring the same design. Wooden doors and benches made of yakal, featuring sculpted banyan tree leaves. The windows handcrafted and baked by Kraut Art Glass with modern and symmetrical design. Chandeliers and ceiling murals commissioned pro bono to our very own Hermes Alegre, with the best visual artists in the Philippines. These works were made possible by the generous donations of a few families in Vinzons such as the Altar with Italian granite flooring. The church's pulpit was also restored using the wooden materials which survived the fire that gutted it 3 years ago.

The church was inaugurated on June 29, 2015. On the Feast of its Patron Saint, St. Peter the Apostle.



Figure 14. Current St. Peter the Apostle Parish, Vinzons, Camarines Norte

### 3.2 Significant Contribution of Quadricentennial Roman Catholic Churches of the Province of Camarines Norte

It is a notable fact that the Parish of St. John the Baptist exerts effort in information dissemination of its activities to all its parishioners through various means available. This was the common reply of the respondents when interviewed as to the people's awareness of the existence of their parish. For the Parish of Our Lady of the Candle, it can be noted that there are more people who are aware of the church's length of existence are those who actively interact socially with other people aside from their families, the community and the media. Those who were pre-occupied with other activities, thus, such information is not received consciously and realizations came later.

On the other hand, the parishioners of St. Peter the Apostle are very much aware of the activities of the church. The ones who were interviewed were mostly adults with few youngsters, nevertheless, both showed their awareness of the status of their church as quadricentennial. It is noted that they were interacting actively regardless of age group as they participate in most of the activities of the church.

The next factor investigated qualitatively in order to see the significance of the quadricentennial churches was the people being proud that they belong to this church.

As a whole, the respondents of the Parish of St. John gave their answers signifying their pride as a member of their parish which is a quadricentennial church.

According to Gagelonia, et., al, Filipinos had a belief in a Supreme Creator, God... Dios Ama as Adopted by the Roman Catholics.<sup>15</sup> The articles context is affirmed by the respondents in the present research.

The distinct responses from the parishioners of Our Lady of the Candle state that the church signifies as a tradition (this where I was baptized, this is my home, my parents opened my eyes to this faith). The answer that says "it helps him/her personally" is somewhat broad and no further explanation was given. The last one is that "it is a beautiful church..." pertains to the structure of the church (building) as a form of tourist attraction since it is one of the iconic cultural sites of the town. In general, the parishioners believe that they are proud to belong to their church.

According to the parishioners of St. Peter the Apostle the strength of the Roman Catholic Church to stay steadfast amidst the passing of time and the challenges of the modern living were evidenced by the high number of church goers on Sundays and even during the daily services and that the Roman Catholic Church as the church founded by Christ himself. In addition, it is a way of receiving God's grace.

When interviewed as to the significance of the quadricentennial churches in the aspects of education, the common responses of the respondents of Parish of St. John the Baptist were that the encouragement of the church gives to the people thereby leaving them to imitate programs and principles that enhance education.

On the other hand the respondents of the parish of Our Lady of the Candle said that the most common answers were that the teachings of the church stopped them from committing petty sins. Naturally, if this goes on it will become a culture of doing what is right and beneficial not only to themselves but to others, too. It could therefore be interpreted as a positive effect to education because enculturation is also an educative process.

Relatively, after an interactive interview in the parish of St. Peter the Apostle, the following answers were gathered: the most common ones speak about instilling moral uprightness, developing good values and avoidance of temptations. These responses clearly show the positive effects of the church to education and the moral development that goes with them in both the young and the old.

Collectively when asked about the significant contribution of the quadricentennial churches to family orientation. The common responses reveal that they became closer to their family members and each member realizes the importance of the family.

According to them, the church keeps them informed of the issues and concerns of the society and how to lend a hand to those who need. They believe that the church made them discern what is right and wrong and to take care of their neighbors and the environment. They agree that the church is significantly involved in instilling social awareness and responsibility to its people. When interviewed about the significant contribution of the quadricentennial churches to political practices, they believe that the church significantly affects their behavior and reactions on political issues. They believe that the church instills conscience and vigilance among the people.

The respondents clearly state that the laws of the church govern the laws of man because the church merely suggests and does not dictate but allows individuals to be analytical in all affairs of the home, the society and the government.

Thus, these findings from the three quadricentennial churches affirm the functionalism theory of Emile Durkhiem which states that religion within the context of the entire society can greatly influence the thinking and behavior of the members of the society.<sup>16</sup>

**Contribution to Education.** According to the results, the very significant contributions of the church are the following: the church facilitates students' love and fear of God and His commandments through the development of good attitudes and behaviors with a weighted mean of 2.67; it provides a venue for education and religion to meaningfully co-exist and become pillar of youth development, with a weighted mean of 2.6; the church propagates faith through education via sectarian school with a weighted mean of 2.59. The respondents classified the contribution of the church as significant in catering to worthwhile activities involving the students", 2.50.

As a whole, the church has a very significant contribution to education with a mean of 2.59. According to Beyer, religion of any kind reinforces that driving force whether personally, within the family, community.

This is affirmed by the findings of this study, specifically in the field of education.<sup>17</sup>

The church helps in molding the people's disposition to act as expected based on the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church in relation to others in the society. The schools also teach the norms of the church and the society as a proof of faith, love and fear of God and the development of a good behavior. When one is educated, utmost conformity with the teachings of the church and the school becomes an expectation.

**Contribution to Family Orientation.** As to the church contributions to family orientation perceived very significant are as follows: the church disseminates the importance of the family as the basic unit of the society and it helps hone individual to value the presence of every family member with a weighted mean of 2.59 and it promotes family life through various religious organizations under its wings with a weighted mean of 2.54. The church significantly contributes to the provision of essential activities that draw the families into one harmonious relationship, with a mean of 2.43.

As a whole, the parishioners of the three churches contribute very significantly in the dissemination of the importance of the family in the valuing the presence of each member in the promotion of family life through various religious organizations and in the provision of essential activities that draws the families into one harmonious relationship. As a whole, the mean of 2.54 signifies that the contribution of the church in the family orientation of the parishioners is very significant.

According to Beyer, families are united by the church's holiday's which are culturally important as family occasions, and are observed in the civil calendar. These holidays include Christmas, New Year, Holy Week, All Saints Day and All Souls' Day. This validate the findings of this study, specifically in the field of family orientation.<sup>18</sup>

How each church member relates with his family members is believed to be significantly influenced by the church he/she belongs. It implies that actions and activities a catholic faithful does are governed by the teachings of the church. Another important influence that this church embedded to the life of the people of Camarines Norte is the holiness of family its sanctity that needs to be preserved.

It can also be deemed that this culture will be handed to the next generations of these Roman Catholic families under the care of the Quadricentennial churches.

**Contribution to Social Awareness and Responsibility.** The data discloses the very significant contributions of the Quadricentennial Roman Catholic Churches in spearheading the various activities that promote respect generosity, and compassion as it works with the government and non-government organizations, with a weighted mean of 2.50; and on providing shelter for guidance and inspiration to those who need them thru the various organizations such as YFC, Prex and catering to the programs and projects that reach out the old, the middle age and the young, with a weighted mean of 2.46. Perceived as significant is the church promotion on the value of life thru its teachings manifested by the programs and projects with a mean of 2.43.

According to De Para the church (Roman Catholic Church) exists in every society and it plays a vital role in nation building. The people's response during the People Power Revolution which ousted President Marcos is an evidence of responsiveness of the Filipino.<sup>19</sup> The church stand as the avenue of camaraderie in shaping the mind and values of the people through the different activities that are conducted by the church.

As part of human development, human beings develop not the material things but the drive to seek energy and aspiration forms the motive force that give way to development. People's awareness may decide as to how and when are they going to succeed. Religion, of any kind, reinforces that driving force whether personally, within the family, community, the whole country and the whole world.<sup>18</sup> This is affirmed by the

findings of this study, specifically in the field of social awareness.

The results proved that the church plays a significant role in the lives of the people in dealing with social issues particularly the issues on morality and sanctity of life. It directs the parishioners to do what is right, just and pleasing in the eyes of God. Furthermore, through the efforts of the quadricentennial churches, the love and respect for other people, the environment and the world we live in general will always be at the forefront of the church's teachings. Such would allow the parishioners to show their love for the Lord and His people and the wonderful creations of God.

**Contribution to Political Practices.** As to the contributions to the political practices, the respondents discern of the significant contributions of the churches in providing spiritual guidance to the politicians and the voting public alike and It helps the voting public come up with a decision through “words of enlightenment”, with a weighted mean of 2.48; their healthy discussions about pertinent issues of the land, with weighted mean of 2.46; directly and publicly proclaims their stand on national issues such as drug addiction, abortion, terrorism and a lot more with a mean of 2.43. Over-all, the respondents affirm the significant contributions of the Quadricentennial Roman Catholic Churches as shown by the computed general weighted average of 2.46.

According to Tunser, Religion will be a major force in political and ideological struggles across the globe in this century. Beyond the European framework, there is ample evidence that religion plays a major role in society, culture and politics.<sup>20</sup> The Roman Catholic Church was considered a ‘great power’. That governs the political affairs though there is already the separation between the church and the state.<sup>21</sup>

The Church and State today maintain generally cordial relations despite differing opinions over specific issues. With the guarantee of religious freedom in the Philippines, the Roman Catholic clergy subsequently remained in the political background as a source of moral influence especially during elections. Political candidates still generally court the clergy and other religious leaders for additional support, although this does not guarantee victory.<sup>22</sup> This confirm by the findings of this study, specifically in the aspects of political practices.

This result indicates that the influence of the church in the political affairs of the state is very influential specifically in choosing the right person for a political post or else removing a politician through a bloodless revolution who abused the authority given to them by the people. Despite the separation of the church and state, the strong belief system of the Roman Catholics to the teachings of Catholicism influences their choices of candidates as well as their support to the political parties.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn: The quadricentennial churches kept the local folks faith in God amidst the passing of time and the challenges of modern livin; These churches are proofs of the long and steadfast catholic faith of the people in Camarines Norte despite the influences of modern technologies, globalization and growth of religious sects; the three quadricentennial churches had contributed significantly to education, family orientation, social awareness and responsibility and the towns' political practices; and, the prepared output entitled “Delving into the Quadricentennial Churches in the Province of Camarines Norte: Their Contributions to the Cam Norteños”, is a supplementary reference material for teaching Araling Panlipunan and History subjects.

Based on the results, the researcher recommends that: Local historians and other research enthusiasts may continue to unearth and record the significant events, cultures, practices and traditions of Camarines Norte using technology to ensure widest dissemination and preservation of the historical records.

A strong relationship should be maintained with the community, various government and non-government sectors like different societal groups, religious and education sectors, family and individuals so that the church can continue to imbue the Catholic faith and transform individuals as persons with sense of purpose and meaning, morality and integrity.

The utilization of the supplementary reference material is imperative. DepEd may consider evaluating this material to establish its validity and reliability.

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