

Testimony

Original to Adm. Murphy - War Crime Trials - Com Mar - June 26, '47

Information concerning events connected with the deaths of four Spanish Jesuit Priests and two Spanish Jesuit Brothers in Palau at the hands of the Japanese given by Mr. Rodin [Indalesio Rudimch], Korrer.

In 1941 the Japanese desired the fathers to live with the Protestant minister [Pastor Wilhelm Fey who had a wife] in another place and leave the Parish house and church. The Fathers requested that instead the Protestant minister be moved to the Priests' house and be quartered in part of it. The Japs also wanted to use the church and the Fathers suggested that part of it be cut off for use of the people for Mass and devotions.

Later the people were forbidden all access to the church and the Fathers were not allowed to go out. The Civilian police accused the Fathers to MPs of not being willing to cooperate with the Japs.

In March 1944 came the first U.S. bombardment. [In] May, the natives were forced to go to the Big Island [Babeldaob] to live. The fathers had to leave the Mission House and live in a native house. Later, they too were moved to the Big Island.

August, 1944. Fr. Elias sent a note to Rodin [Rudimch] that he was in "Caspan" a place of the Jap soldiers and civilians. The note requested Rodin to try to visit the Fathers and bring some comotes, salt, and fish as they had no food.

After about a week, Rodin went. He was not allowed to see the Fathers who were very near the military camp. However, R. [Rodin] heard the Fathers praying in Latin. The Brother, Emilio Vilar heard the signal R. gave and spoke through the window and Fr. Marino called R. into the house. This was possible, because when US planes began a raid all the Jap soldiers and civilians went into caves and left the Fathers alone in the house. R. saw Fr. Elias, Fr. Marino and Bro Vilar with the two Fathers and the Brother from Yap. Also present was a Filipino from Yap with his wife and two children.

Fr. Marino:- Things are very bad here now and we will die here. You know that in Korrer the Japs were seeking reason to kill us. The MPs said that we would go to the P.I. but the air raids prevented it.

My last word to the people. They will be a long time without priest, so find a place to meet and pray the Rosary. Work to prepare fields for

food since it will be scarce and take care of your clothes as they will be hard to get. Saludos a todos les Catholicos porque ese es ultima palabra.

Fr. Elias:- The things we have not brought with us are in the house of Francisco: sotonnes, blankets and money of the Mission. 3,000 yen and 50 pesos to pay the native working for the Mission. We do not know where he is. Take care of the things of the Mission, a clock, typewriter and the 3,000 yen. He gave R. a can of coffee and salt and beans and one can of rice and twelve bottles of pig grease. He asked R. to bring them a hammer and knife and axe and saw to help them prepare fire wood.

Fr. Elias asked [Jap] MPs to allow them to live with the natives but was refused. R. [Rudimch] asked Fathers to give him permission to request authorities to allow him to visit them, but the Fathers said no, too dangerous.

Rodin [Rudimch] finally got permission from Jap authorities to come to mission house to look for things, Sept, 1944, 9:00 A.M. He found typewriter and clock, but money and other things of the Fathers not there. R. returned to Big Island with the things and asked natives to find comotes for the Fathers.

Sept. 14, 1944. American troops enter Pelelieu. All movement of natives forbidden by Japs. After some time, about two weeks, when things got quite, R. went again to place of Fathers. No one there, no house. As the Japs had been in the habit of moving the Fathers from one place to another, R. kept looking. R. found a boy who had worked for the Jap MPs.

R. - Where are the Fathers?

Boy - I know, but I am afraid to tell because the MP will kill us.

R. - Don't be afraid. I will not tell.

Boy - MPs killed them.

R. - What day?

Boy - Sept 18, 1944 6:00 P.M.

R. - How do you know?

Boy - I wrote in my notebook. I have hair clippers and eyeglasses of the Fathers.

R. - I want to see.

Boy - My father has them

R. - Take care of them until the end of the war

Later I saw them and recognized the glasses as those of Fr. Marino. The boy gave them to Lt. Ebiling, USN of the MG [Military Government] Education Office about February, 1946. Boy is Roam [Roman] Tmetuchel now in Teachers' Training School, Guam.
June 18, 1947

In 1945 while Japs were still on Korrer the MPs called Rodin and asked if he knew the names of the Fathers. R. said he did.

Japs: - Where are they?

R. - I do not know.

Japs:- They went to the P.I.

Testimony taken by the Rev. Vicnet I. Kennally, S.J. at Korrer, June 12, 1947.