

THE TRANSFORMATION IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF NAMPICUAN, NUEVA ECIJA BROUGHT BY THE RELIC REPLICA OF THE FACE OF JESUS OF MANOPPELLO'S ARRIVAL

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Abstract: Nampicuan is a 5th class municipality in the province of Nueva Ecija. As stated in The UPLB Genetics Society, Nampicuan is politically subdivided into 21 barangays. The province of Nueva Ecija is recognized as the “Rice Granary” of the Philippines because it led the production of the nation’s food staple during the twentieth century. As Nampicuan is part of Nueva Ecija, the main attraction is the vast lands of rice fields around the town until such time that the Relic Replica of the Holy Face of Jesus of Manoppello came to Nampicuan.

Transformation occur upon the arrival of the said relic. The replica was given by the Rector of the Basilica del Volto Santo to the Parish Priest of the Immaculate Conception and is now enthroned in the Parish Church, is the only replica enthroned outside the Basilica del Volto Santo.

Generally, this research focused on one goal: to enumerate the transformations brought by the relic in terms of religiousness, culture, and economy of Nampicuan.

Keywords: Holy Face of Jesus, Nampicuan, Relic, Religious Perspective, Cultural Views, Economic State.

I. INTRODUCTION

Nampicuan is a 5th class municipality in the province of Nueva Ecija. As stated in The UPLB Genetics Society, Nampicuan is politically subdivided into 21 barangays. The province of Nueva Ecija is recognized as the “Rice Granary” of the Philippines because it led the production of the nation’s food staple during the twentieth century. The province had not always been devoted to rice production and was in fact considered a frontier area throughout most of its history (Santiago,2015). As Nampicuan is part of Nueva Ecija, the main attraction is the vast lands of rice fields around the town until such time that the Relic Replica of the Holy Face of Jesus of Manoppello of Manoppello came to Nampicuan.

Transformation occurs upon the arrival of the said relic. The replica was given by the Rector of the Basilica del Volto Santo to the Parish Priest of the Immaculate Conception and is now enthroned in the Parish Church, is the only replica enthroned outside the Basilica del Volto Santo (holyfacenampicuan, 2016)

This paper aims to identify the transformation in Nampicuan in terms of its municipal economy. According to the City and Municipality Competitiveness of the Department of Trade and Industry, it was year 2015 when Nampicuan ranked 844th in terms of the productivity of the city compared to rank 397th as of 2019. Rapid changes in terms of economic is seen to

the Municipality of Nampicuan upon the arrival of Relic Replica of the Holy Face of Jesus of Manopello of Manoppello. Thus, this study specified the transformation of the municipal economy of Nampicuan in relation to the coming of the relic.

Lastly, Philippines as a Christian country involves many religious and cultural beliefs. Christianity is the religion of about 80% of the Philippine population, mostly Catholics (El Saba, 2015) and part of being a catholic is believing to culture and traditions of the religion. Catholic lies many beliefs and traditions that devotees practice. As a result, this study enumerated the different religious and cultural belief that devotes of the Holy Face of Jesus of Manopello practice.

Generally, this research focuses on one goal: to enumerate the transformations brought by the relic in terms of religious perspective, culture views and economic status of Nampicuan, Nueva Ecija.

II. DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design and Methodology

This study features the Municipality of Nampicuan, Nueva Ecija, and the sacred relic that was given to the church of the municipality called the Relic Replica of the Holy Face of Jesus of Manopello. The researcher used a qualitative research design utilizing a phenomenological approach.

B. Figures, Graphs and Tables

The researcher utilized a purposive sampling and snowball sampling in the study. The key informants were (1) the parish priest who received the relic during his term and the present parish priest of Nampicuan, (2) municipal employees particularly the Municipal Tourism Officer and the Municipal Treasurer who are involved in the economic reports of Nampicuan, and (3) the ten selected residents of Nampicuan comprising the devotees, old folks, and business owners.

C. Data Gathering Tools

The researcher used an interview. Using interview guide as the tool. The interview guide is divided into three sections aligned to the three main themes of this study. The first section focused on the theme of religious perspective, the second is on the theme of cultural views, and the last is on the theme of economic status. All these sections focused on the transformations of the municipality of Nampicuan upon the arrival of the relic replica Holy Face of Jesus of Manoppello.

D. Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering conduction was divided into groups depending on the concerned individuals based on the interview guide. The sections on religious perspective and cultural views were participated by the two priests and residents of Nampicuan. Meanwhile, the section on the economic state is participated by the municipal employee assigned to the economy of Nampicuan and business owners of Nampicuan.

E. Analysis of Data

The data gathering conduction was divided into groups depending on the concerned individuals based on the interview guide. The sections on religious perspective and cultural views were participated by the two priests and residents of Nampicuan. Meanwhile, the section on the economic state is participated by the municipal employee assigned to the economy of Nampicuan and business owners of Nampicuan.

F. Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation of Data

Table 1 shows the transformations among the people of Nampicuan since the Relic Replica of the Holy Face of Jesus of Manopello arrived in terms of Religious Perspectives. As shown on the table, there were four (4) themes generated from the responses of the key informants, namely (1) quantitative description of people attending church activities, (2) emerged church activities related to the relic, (3) committed people in serving the shrine, and (4) in-kind support that people contribute to the shrine. Since the arrival of the Relic Replica of the Holy Face of Jesus of Manopello in Nampicuan in 2014, the people of Nampicuan have heightened spiritual commitment as evident in the increased number of people that attended and participated in church activities, more engaging church activities conducted, increased number of people devoting time and effort to fulfill duties as a member of a church organization, and increased amount of in-kind contributions, both monetary and services, given to the Shrine of the Holy Face of Jesus of Manopello.

Table 1: The Transformations among the People of Nampicuan since the Relic Replica of the Holy Face of Jesus Arrived in terms of Religious Perspectives

Themes	F	Sample Responses
Quantitative description of people attending church activities	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pagpunta ko pa lang dito, naabutan ako ng Holy Week, andami talagang tao, lahat naka bus pa, sobrang nakakapagod na ma assign dito, napakarami talaga, kapag nagmimisa ako, dito sa labas na ito punong puno, mostly ay pilgrims from other places, ang mga taga Nampicuan madami rin. (P2) • Sa ngayon kasi napupuno siya, mga pilgrims, hindi lang taga Nampicuan, kung susumahin hindi lang doble, hindi lang triple ang nagsisimba at nagpupunta ngayon. (R7)
Emerged church activities related to the relic	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marami nang nadagdag na activities na may kaugnayan kay Holy Face like Jesus festival kung saan iba't ibang uri ng buhay ni Kristo ang pinapakita through prusisyon kung saan lahat ng barangay ng Nampicuan ang kasali ayon sa Kanyang buhay. (P1) • Mga festival, then every Sunday halos lahat po kasi dati po dito na po ako nakatira sa kumbento. (R8)
Committed people in serving the Shrine of the Holy Face of Jesus upon the arrival of the Relic Replica of the Holy Face of Jesus	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nandyan ang Servants of the Holy Face of Jesus. Dati Lectors and Commentators lamang para sa kababaihan ngayon meron tayong Hand Made of Holy Face of Jesus. (P1) • Malaki ang involvement ng tao, ngayon ang dami nang organization like Servants of the Holy Face of Jesus, then ngayon meron tayong bagong tatag ngayon na Hand Made of Holy Face of Jesus para sa mga kababaihan. (P2)
In-kind support that people contribute to the Shrine of the Holy Face of Jesus upon the arrival of the Relic Replica of the Holy Face of Jesus	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly dahil mahirap ang mga tao, services, naglilinis (P2) • During the time of pandemic walang school, so talagang kapag may time, tumatao kami dito, tumutulong maglinis and the nagkakaroon ng catechism. (R3)

Because of the wide scope of the term culture, Table 2 shows the main theme cultural views is limited to (1) the cultural belief and practice in saying prayers, (2) the cultural belief and practice in hearing the healing mass, (3) the cultural belief and practice in the personal interaction with the relic, and (4) the cultural belief and practice in the occurrences of miracles. These four serves as the sub-themes of the cultural belief and practices transformation theme in this studied as shown in Table 2. Since the arrival of the Relic Replica of the Holy Face of Jesus of Manopello in Nampicuan in 2014, the people of Nampicuan have developed four cultural beliefs that resulted in the establishment of its corresponding cultural practices. First is the cultural belief that the Relic Replica of the Holy Face of Jesus of Manopello can grant any wish by culturally practicing the 2000 Haily Marys. Second is the cultural belief that the Relic Replica of the Holy Face of Jesus of Manopello can heal any sickness by culturally practicing attending the Healing Mass. The third is the cultural belief that Relic Replica of the Holy Face of Jesus of Manopello can initiate strong emotions of devotion by culturally practicing the “pahalik” and “papunas” at the relic. Finally, the fourth cultural belief is that the Relic Replica of the Holy Face of Jesus of Manopello can perform miracles.

Table 2: The Transformations among the People of Nampicuan since the Relic Replica of the Holy Face of Jesus Arrived in terms of Cultural Views

Developed prayer practices in devotion to the Holy Face of Jesus	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have the 2000 Hail Mary's, ito ay nabuo kasi ito ang pinagdadasal na sana maiwan na ang relic dito. So sinagot itong prayer nila. (P2) • 2000 Hail Mary's, they are praying na maiwan na dito sa Nampicuan ang relic, yun ang hiniling ng mga tao sa Nampicuan and prayers granted and then naging practice na nang mga tao yun na every first Friday ay gagawin naming ang 2000 Hail Mary's.(R4)
The cultural belief and practice in hearing the Healing Mass	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tapos kapag first Sunday ay mayroong tayong healing mass, ang mga tao ay expecting to see the Holy Face tapos anointing of the sick but because of the pandemic natigil ito. (P2)

The cultural belief and practice are personal interaction with the relic	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every Sunday of the month ay inilalabas naming yung relic nagkakaroon ng anointing of the sick o healing mass kung saan yung pari ay nilalagyan ng oil sa noo ang mga devotee tapos pupunta kay Holy Face magpupunas sila tapos magdadasal. (R4) • Dati kasi every first Sunday of the month ay binubuksan ang relic upang mahawakan kaya nakikita ko na naiiyak sila sa tindi ng debosyon kasi meron silang natanggap na biyaya hindi man naisusulat pero sa kanila na lamang yun. (P2) • Before the pandemic kasi meron yung mga panyo na talagang kapag dumalaw ka ay yun ang pinupunas nila so yun napakaeffective non kasi may mga pilgrims na sumubok noon na nagpunas tapos gumaling sila sa mga sakit na pinagdadasal nila, naramdaman nila yung miracle na healing ni Holy Face. (R2)
The cultural belief and practice in the occurrence of miracles	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pero napansin ko dito, pagdating ko dito, andaming stories ng healing, andaming kwento sa akin na nagpapasalamat na napagaling ako sa cancer, Father nagka anak ako, parang itong anak ko na ito, hopeless case na ito dahil may sakit ito sa balat na hindi alam kung cancer ba pero noong dumating dito, nagdasal kami.(P1) • Yes, personally rin andiyan kami may pipilay pilay, nawitness naming, pumasok, paglabas, nakakalakad siya, ako, the prayer then pinatouch namin siya kay Holy Face of Jesus tapos after six months bumalik siya hindi ko siya nakilala but she recognize me, sabi niya ako yung andito and I'm healed so diba napakasarap pakinggan. (R1)

Table 3 shows the main theme economic state is constrained to two (2) themes as shown in the table namely (1) quantitative description of the tourists visiting Nampicuan and the geographical recognition of Nampicuan and (2) infrastructure and business establishment built in the municipality of Nampicuan. These two plays as the themes of the economic state transformation theme in this study. Since the arrival of the Relic Replica of the Holy Face of Jesus of Manoppello in Nampicuan in 2014, the municipality of Nampicuan gained higher economic status compared to what it had before 2014 as evidenced by the increased number of tourism activities in the municipality and increased number of established infrastructure and business.

Table 3: The Transformations among the People of Nampicuan since the Relic Replica of the Holy Face of Jesus Arrived in terms of Economic Status

Description of the Tourists visiting Nampicuan and the Geographical Recognition of Nampicuan	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sabi ko nga very overwhelming prior to pandemic, in terms of number upon arrival we have 10,000 people who attend the enthronement of the relic the after ng araw na yun, araw araw na may makikita kang record from the church pilgrims na bumibisita. (E2) • We are marked as a tourism destination, religious tourism destination of Nueva Ecija. Hindi nila kilala ang Nampicuan, pero upon the coming of the Holy Face of Jesus unti unting nakilala, sabi nga namin is nailagay sa mapa ang Nampicuan. (R1)
Infrastructure and Business Establishment built in the municipality of Nampicuan after the arrival of Relic Replica of Holy Face of Jesus of Manoppello	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May mga naitulong din, may mga nabuksan na business, nagkaroon sila ng lakas ng loob na magbukas dahil nga nakikita rin nila ang opportunity dahil sa dami ng tao na nagsisimba at bumibisita.(P1) • Nagkaroon ngirigasyon. Umaasa lang ang mga magsasaka sa sahod ulan. Puro first crop lang mga yan, walang second crop pero ngayon nabigyan kami ng patubig. May mga establishment din like commercial building mga kainan, mga daan, napagawa. Mapapansin mo sir yang mcarthur hi way. (R5)

III. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher came up with the following conclusions:

- 1a. The religious perspective of the people of Nampicuan has largely expanded and deepened since the Relic Replica of the Holy Face of Jesus of Manopello arrived.
- 1b. The cultural views of the people of Nampicuan have principally changed since the arrival of the relic in 2014.
- 1c. The economic state of the municipality of Nampicuan mostly flourished since the Relic Replica of the Holy Face of Jesus of Manopello arrived.

In relation with the findings and conclusions of this research, the following are recommended:

- 1a. The Shrine of the Holy Face of Jesus of Manopello in Nampicuan, Nueva Ecija should be recognized as a national shrine by the National Episcopal Conference of the Philippines to recognize its special, cultural, historical, and religious significance.
- 1b. The primary and secondary schools within Nampicuan and within the country implements learning activities related to the cultural belief and practices in the Shrine of the Holy Face of Jesus of Manopello to increase awareness about the relic and to keep the culture alive.
- 1c. The local government unit of Nampicuan and Nueva Ecija provide more projects, activities, and programs related to the Holy Face of Jesus of Manopello to achieve higher economic development.

IV. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Just like any other cities and municipalities, the government gives support and attention to the popularity of relic replica of the Holy Face of Jesus of Manopello in Nampicuan. It should serve as front banner of the province as it improves the social and economic state of the locality.
3. For the adoption Campaigns of the proposed brochure that can boost the popularity of the relic's existence across the nation. Others may create also in the form of Christian vlogs, posters, and advertisements, or an informative text like brochure that can briefly discuss the wanders of the relic replica of the Holy Face of Jesus of Manopello in Nampicuan, Nueva Ecija.

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