ST. LORENZO RUIZ

Lorenzo Ruiz is the first Filipino Saint. He is also the first Filipino martyred for Christian faith. Born in Binondo, Manila, Philippines about 1600, to a Chinese father and Filipino mother, both devout Catholics. Lorenzo Ruiz studied under the Dominican Friars.

Lorenzo Ruiz served as an altar boy at a young age, and later as a helper and clerk sacristan at the Binondo Church. He was a member of the Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary. He married Rosario and had three children, two boys and a girl, and raised them as Catholics.

An adverse event made him leave the Philippines in 1636. Upon arrival in Japan where Christians were being persecuted, he was arrested and imprisoned together with his companions. He suffered inhuman tortures and valiantly confessed his Christian faith. Refusing to renounce his faith, he told his executioners that he was ready to die for God and to remain a Christian even to the point of death. Lorenzo Ruiz further responded, “Only to God will I offer my life. Even if I had a thousand lives, I would still offer them to Him.” On September 23, 1637, he began to undergo “hanging in the pit”. He died from blood loss and suffocation. His body was cremated, and the ashes thrown into the sea.

In February 1981 on his papal visit to the Philippines, St. Pope John Paul II beatified St. Lorenzo Ruiz. On October 18, 1987, in Rome, St. Pope John Paul II canonized St. Lorenzo Ruiz, as the first Filipino saint. His feast day falls on September 28.