

REVEREND ROBERT CUNNINGHAM SJ

Father Cunningham was born December 6, 1922 in Hayward Ca. The family moved to Sacramento where Father graduated from Christian Brothers in 1941 and later attended St. Joseph's Seminary in Los Gatos.

In 1955 he was ordained a Jesuit Priest at Fordham University Chapel by Cardinal Spellman.

He spent 50 years, most of his time as a missionary, in the Philippine Islands. He was stationed in a remote parish at Pangantucan Bukidnoni. He died January 9, 2014 .

There are a couple of letters that describe his work in the missions

MAP OF THE
Philippines
AND MANILA



CUNNINGHAM,

Reverend Robert

Cunningham Born Dec 8
in Livermore, Califor
parents George and Ev
ningham He was brot
George A. Cunnin
Dorothy Rae Cunnin
Bibleston and Dolores M
ningham Espenshade a
in Sacramento. Unc
Michael, Tim and Terry
ey, Susanne Jones, Bl
shade, and Kathleen J
Reverend Cunningham
student of Christian Bro
in Sacramento and late
ed a seminary in Los
California and was orde
a Jesuit priest in New
Reverend Cunningham
as a priest in the Philippi
over 50 years. He pass
on Jan. 6, 2014. Re
Cunningham is at rest
Philippines.

BOB

SIBLINGS





FAMILY

2003 LTR GEORGE, BLUE, BOB, PINT





*Almighty God in His infinite goodness
through the imposition of the hands of His Eminence
Francis Cardinal Spellman
will bestow upon me His Holy Priesthood
at Fordham University Chapel.*

*In the spirit of Christian joy
you will be remembered in the offering of my
First Mass*

*Sunday, the nineteenth of June
Nineteen hundred and fifty-five
Fordham University
New York*

*The Reverend Robert Wallace Cunningham
of the Society of Jesus*

*Ordination to the Priesthood
June 18, 1955*



Bless thy Priest, O God;
fill his heart and soul with
charity and zeal that his
ministry may be fruitful
for Thy honor and glory.
Amen.

+

Robert W. Cunningham, S.J.
Ordained to the
Sacred Priesthood
June 18, 1955
Fordham University

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Rosalie,
May the blessing of Almighty God,
Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
descend upon you and
remain forever.

Bob

BERLINER & MCGINNIS
Pasadena City, California



Rev. Robert Cunningham, S.J.
P.O. Box 45
8700 Malaybalay Bukidnon
Philippines

CHRISTMAS 2003

Dear *George,*

GREETINGS FROM BACUSANON,
PANGANTUCAN, BUKIDNON!

In April 2004 I will be 26 years in Pangantucan: 23 years as parish priest in Pangantucan and three years in Bacusanon a barrio of Pangantucan. It is quiet here and peaceful and we seldom see people during the day as almost all are working at their farms. At 81 I cannot do too much except slowly to help build up the parish so that it is ready for a younger priest to take over.



About two years ago we began construction of our parish church as the existing church can no longer be repaired. The Governor of Bukidnon and the Mayor of Pangantucan sponsored a raffle to help with the construction but due to hard times we received only a third of the expected amount. We can afford only one person, Deding Relos, who for many years has done all our construction and repair work for the church, convento and our high school in Pangantucan. He is in charge of all the cement work, carpentry and he does all the welding besides all the planning. And he has only one helper. The people here are poor farmers but when we need help such as digging the foundation, mixing cement, etc. they are willing to help. It will take a long time before we can actually use the church but hopefully we can continue slowly.

For several months we had very heavy rain almost every day and it was reported that heavy rain would continue until the end of December, rather than the usual end of October. Our annual day of Thanksgiving in Bacusanon (Pyeata) has always been the 8th of November but this year, due to the expected heavy rain but also due to the hard times, the pyeata was changed to December 23rd. But who can predict the weather?. For the past two weeks very little or no rain. The nights are cold but the days warm.

In Pangantucan I had 76 chapels (which also included Bacusanon chapels) but now I have only 23. Last week, Rocendo Gudelos, my assistant, and I went by motor bike and then walking in the mountains to my most remote chapel. We have mass there at least four times a year. Many attended mass and after mass, as usual, the people brought enough simple food so that all could eat together. After the mass I was told that a chapel is almost ready for mass at a place called Kana-an, perhaps a hour walk from Kahayagan where I just said mass. The first time I was invited to go to Kahayagan the Mayor of Pangantucan said I should not go there without police protection as both Kahayagan and Kana-an are in Moslem territory. The Mayor sent six police who went with us all the way but all was peaceful and since then we go alone.

*Just to wish you a very Happy Christmas
and a blessed New Year. Please give my
greetings to Rosalie and Michael.*

Bob

California Jesuit Missionaries

284 STANYAN STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94118-4299
PHONE: (415) 221-1588



DIRECTOR: REV. THEODORE T. LAHENY, S.J.
ASSOCIATE: REV. JOHN A. HOULE, S.J.

September 24, 1996

Dear George:

I have just returned from a visit to Pangantokan. I stayed with your brother and everything went perfectly. He is very well and very active. As you know, he continues his vocations promotion program by offering "scholarships" to young men from his parish. Right now there are about 9 living in the house so it is quite full. As you may know, from his parish there have been about 8 ordained and 8 more in the seminary. He and I concelebrated a Mass at the high school that the parish has, only a 5 minute walk from the church. Some 1200 students, boys and girls, were present at the outdoor Mass. It was one of the most beautifully sung Masses I have been present at for many years. And everything was so well organized that the congregation, that is the students and their teachers, simply took their places and received communion in a most efficient style. In most cases, the Mass was in their language but I spoke to them in English and they seemed to understand it, at least a good number of the older ones. This school is one of your brother's major headaches financially, as the people in that region can ill-afford even the very small tuition which is necessary to charge. Bob is also grateful that 3 religious Sisters have come to work in his parish. I am sure they are appreciated because they think of little things like bringing special cakes and fruits to Bob's residence, but they decided to go to Poblacion (the real name of Bob's smalltown) to work among the poor, which they thought better than their previous work in schools.

Bob is in a remote place so he does not get down to Cagayan de Oro very much, which is where I stayed. A Jesuit was ordained a bishop there for the Diocese of Ipil in troubled Zamboanga, to the southwest of Cagayan. It would have been quite a trip for your brother to make it to this although his parish duties are a little lighter right now since the Provincial of the Philippines assigned him a newly ordained Philippino Jesuit. Unfortunately the young Jesuit will be going to Nigeria in January and your brother does not know if there will be a replacement. Given the size of his parish, a replacement is very necessary just to hike some of the muddy trails up to the Barrio chapels. I think your brother said he had something like 50 such chapels. His own church, which maybe you saw, or your sister saw, seats, I believe, over 1000 people. It is bigger than most of the churches in California where I preached this past Summer. The Knights of Columbus there have just built a great big bell tower, for which your brother is very grateful, although it still remains to be finished.

All in all, Bob looks fine, is up early and apparently going all day and drove very well when he took me along a pothole-filled road from his place to Malaybalay where I rode a bus down to the big City of Cagayan de Oro. I think Bob will be sure to write at least this coming Christmas, but he wants us to know that, if he does not, it is because he just runs out of time.

Sincerely yours,

Brazil, Ecuador, Japan, Mexico, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand

Nuestra Señora de los Remedios Parish

8717 BACUSANON, PANGANTUCAN, BUKIDNON

PHILIPPINES

For no reason I suddenly could not see from my right eye. I was able to see a spectacle (Retina) and the picture showed a blood clot behind the retina. That was six weeks or two months ago and it is much the same - Dr says nothing can be done - only time. I can read with my left eye and I can still drive (I can see enough distance with my right eye). Sign I guess of getting older.

About two weeks ago I had a very long walk up & down mountains. We got to the Chapel but on the way back I found it harder to walk as my lower back was quite painful. Then I thought of 'Ice, Hot Cream' and Rose helped rub it on. Almost at once the pain was gone and we continued walking. Too bad it is not sold in Cagayan. Many thanks.

Better end here so I can get thru to the post office. - May 10th / elections nationwide. Aquino got in but all local was only millionaire paid money to win. Rose lost her course too.

Best regards to Pink, Blue & Rosalie and with your health & best regards to Stan Gelleon when you see him. Many thanks again & keep well. Bob

Our new Church here
in Bacusanon. All
work done by one man
and his helper. All heavy
work e.g. foundations done
by voluntary labor - men,
women & children.



1980



2 NINE AND FOUR OF THE SEMATRIAN
ASSIGNED TO THE PARISH



