

FRIAR ANDRES DE URDANETA, O.S.A., Macdonald & Evans, London, 1964.

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" La obra de Mairin Mitchell ha llegado para los lectores de lengua inglesa en el preciso momento cuando se estaba celebrando el cuarto centenario de la evangelización de Filipinas. Al mérito de ser, por decirlo así, la primera biografía en inglés de Urdaneta, añade el de ser una buena síntesis de la mayor parte de lo que se ha escrito sobre el guipuzcoano navegante y agustino. El estudio, muy objetivo, está avalorado con varios apéndices, descripción de mapas y globos el primero, referentes a los viajes de los españoles a las Filipinas, existentes hasta 1965; más un segundo muy extenso bibliográfico. Finalmente nos encontramos con índice de materias muy completo también.

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Here is a timely book and one that should be of special interest to historians of the Order of Saint Augustine. AUGUSTINIANUM is honored to review the first biography in English of Andrés de Urdaneta, the Spanish Augustinian priest, who established the trans-oceanic route from the Philippine Islands to Mexico, thus permitting Spain to continue and insist more firmly upon her right to the possession of the Philippine Islands as a colony. Several Spanish expeditions had set out from Spain and from Mexico for the Philippine Islands, but all the ships before that of Urdaneta had to return to Spain via the Portuguese-held route around the Cape of Good Hope. Thus the discovery of Fray Urdaneta was of considerable historical importance for the continuance of the Spanish claim to the Philippines which was established by Magellan's expedition in 1522.

Urdaneta did not enter the Augustinian Order until after a very adventuresome youth, mostly spent in the Spice Islands. During this time, he preserved for us his experiences in a remarkable diary, upon which the first part of this biography is based.

Quite often in the pages of this chronicle are found the words, «Although we were in great stress, with God's help we came through». Indeed so often are they found that the author is compelled to comment, «so frequently does this phrase 'with the help of God' recur that one is tempted to wonder whether the writer was not predestined to join the Order in which he was later professed, the one whose founder, beyond all other Fathers of the Church, emphasized the utter dependence of man upon his Creator».

Then in 1552, after holding several responsible administrative positions in the government of Mexico, Urdaneta entered the Augustinian Order in Mexico. He was ordained in 1557, and soon afterwards was made Master of Novices. But before long, in 1564, King Philip II called upon this sturdy Basque as the most competent man available to direct an expedi-

tion with the purpose of finding a return route from the Philippines to Mexico, «in which (expedition) he will be giving service to God and satisfaction to me» (Philip II). So we find Urdaneta in the unique position of being both the religious superior and the Imperial representative on the Philippine expedition under Captain General Legazpi.

As a result of this voyage, the Augustinian Friars firmly established themselves in the Philippine Islands and for twenty years they were the only preachers of the Word of God on the Islands. Urdaneta supervised the foundation of the Augustinian mission and then prepared for the return to Mexico. In the meantime, a small ship, the San Lucas, which had defected from the expedition, after venturing to the Philippines, returned to Mexico. Thus as is often the case with inventions or new experiments, Urdaneta's discovery was not a clear-cut first, and his claim to the discovery of the route between the Philippines and Mexico can be questioned. But the author points out that whereas the San Lucas stumbled blindly through the ocean and by accident was driven back to Mexico, Urdaneta, from his previous knowledge, planned and charted the direct route across the Pacific.

After the successful return to Mexico, Urdaneta went to Spain to ask the King for support in the development of the missionary activities of the Augustinians in the Philippines. He then returned to Mexico, but «his own wish to return to the Philippines and continue his missionary activities there... was opposed by his Superior on account of his age».

On June 3rd., 1568, at the age of sixty, and in his sixteenth year of religion, Andrés de Urdaneta died in the Friary of San Agustín in Mexico. Thus ends the human life of a great Augustinian whose life should be known by every Son of Augustine. And with this in mind, we highly recommend that all Augustinians meet Fray Urdaneta through his diary and adventuresome life in Mairin Mitchell's account of his life.