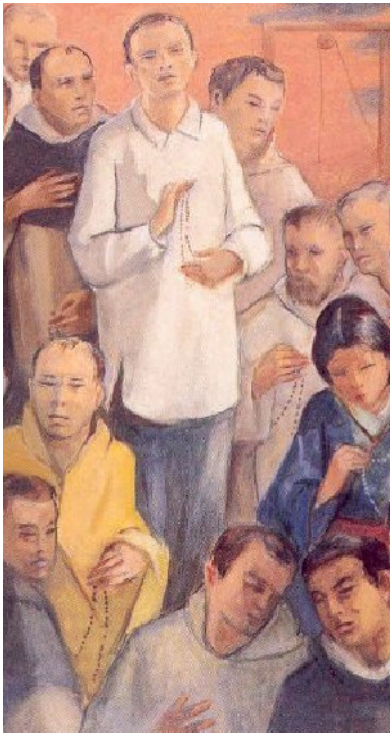


## Lives of Saints

# St Lawrenz Ruiz

1600? – 1637

Feast day: 28th September



I was born in Manila of a Chinese father and a Filipino mother, both Christians. I became a professional calligrapher, transcribing documents in beautiful penmanship. I was a full member of the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary under Dominican auspices. I married and had two sons and a daughter.

My life took an abrupt turn when I was accused of murder. I was sought by the authorities on account of a homicide to which I was present.

At that time three Dominican priests, Antonio Gonzalez, Guillermo Courtet and Miguel de Aozaraza, were about to sail to Japan in spite of a violent persecution there. With them was a Japanese priest, and a layman. I took refuge with them. But only when we were at sea did I learn that we were going to Japan.

We landed at Okinawa. I could have gone on to Formosa, but "I decided to stay with the Fathers, because the Spaniards would hang me there." This was a time of intense Christian persecution, and in Japan we were soon found out, arrested and taken to Nagasaki. The 50,000 Catholics who once lived there were dispersed or killed by persecution.

We were subjected to an unspeakable kind of torture. The superior, Antonio, died after some days. The Japanese priest and I broke at one point. In my moment of crisis, I asked the interpreter, "I would like to know if, by apostatizing, they will spare my life." This was a terrible moment of temptation.

In the end we were put to death by being hanged upside down in pits. Boards fitted with semicircular holes were fitted around our waists and stones put on top to increase the pressure. We were tightly bound, to slow circulation and prevent a speedy death. There were 6 of us. I was the first canonized Filipino martyr.

"I shall die for  
God, and for him  
I will give many  
thousands of lives  
if I had them."

**St Lawrenz Ruiz**

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