

## **Missionary Work in the 18th-19th Century: History of the Augustinian Recollect Mission in Balingasag**

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### **Abstract**

During the Spanish period, the colonial evangelization of the Philippines was carried out by the religious orders. In Northern Mindanao, the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) and the Augustinian Recollects (Recoletos) missions played a pivotal role in the propagation of Christianity. The Recoletos held the eastern portion of the second district of Misamis, including the town of Balingasag. This event marked the beginning of the history of Catholicism in Balingasag until it became an independent parish mission (Dongallo, 1968; Magsalay, 1973; Vega, 1999). Hence, this paper aims to document the missionary work and activities of the Recoletos in the town of Balingasag. Primary sources utilized in this paper were retrieved from the National Archives of the Philippine, Jesuit and Recollect Archives, Parishes of Balingasag and Jasaan, Diocese of Cagayan de Oro City, and various libraries. Through the missionary zeal of the Recoletos, the coastal areas of Misamis were opened to evangelization. As a result, new towns were established through the separation of villages from the town matrices. But due to the limited number of missionaries, Balingasag became a visita of Cagayan. This ecclesiastical status remained until the early 19th century. In 1830, Balingasag, along with the other towns, was separated from the spiritual supervision of Cagayan after a successful petition from the local principalia. In 1849, Balingasag eventually became an independent parish. Throughout their mission, the Recoletos facilitated the conversion, baptism, marriage, and other religious and social activities in the town. With the restoration of the Jesuits in Mindanao, Balingasag was handed over by the Recoletos to the Jesuits in 1877.

**Keywords:** Balingasag, Evangelization, Misamis, Recoletos, Visita

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## Introduction

Balingasag is a second class municipality in the province of Misamis Oriental and is located in the coastal area of Northern Mindanao. Just like the other municipalities in Misamis Oriental, Balingasag has a rich and colorful past that spans from pre-hispanic to contemporary period. With the advent of Spanish colonialism, Balingasag was one of the early towns created under *Provincia de Misamis* in Mindanao (NAP, Erecciones, 1803-1839). It is important to emphasize that the process of creating towns was distinctly facilitated by the missionaries. In the case of *Provincia de Misamis* which covered much of the northern and western areas of Mindanao (see Figure 2), the Order of the Augustinian Recollects, popularly known as the Recoletos, and the Society of Jesus, also known as the Jesuits were in charge of the colonial evangelization and establishment of towns. At first, only the eastern portion of *Provincia de Misamis*, including Balingasag, was held by the Recollects but with the expulsion of the Jesuits in the 18th century, the whole area of the province was eventually controlled by the Recollects (de los Santos, 2021).



**Figure 1.** Map showing the location of Balingasag in Misamis Oriental Province.  
Retrieved from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ph\\_locator\\_misamis\\_oriental\\_balingasag.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ph_locator_misamis_oriental_balingasag.png).

The works of Dongallo (1968) and Vega (1999), which served as pillar of the local historiography of Balingasag, pointed out that this marked the beginning of the history of Catholicism in Balingasag. However, in examining these historical accounts, it is clear that none of these provided comprehensive narratives on the Recollect mission in Balingasag. Taking into consideration the historical significance of the ecclesiastical work of the Recollects in Balingasag, this paper aims to revisit and gather both primary and secondary sources as an attempt to document the missionary work and activities of the Recollects in Balingasag in the 18th-19th century. Through archival and historical research, this study will answer the following questions: (1) How did the Recollects facilitate the colonial evangelization in Balingasag? (2) What were the missionary activities of the Recollects?; (3) Why was Balingasag handed over by the Recollects to the Jesuits? This study will not only contribute to the religious history of Balingasag but will also fill the void in the pages of local historiography of Balingasag and Northern Mindanao, in general.



**Figure 2.** Territorial division of the Island of Mindanao in the year 1880.

Retrieved from [https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archivo:Philippine\\_territorial\\_map\\_1880\\_MINDANAO.PNG](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archivo:Philippine_territorial_map_1880_MINDANAO.PNG)

## Review of Related Literature

The researchers found out that there are already existing local studies on the history of Balingasag after considerable library and field research. These historical accounts depict the life of Balingasag as a coastal town in Misamis Oriental and its people from the early beginnings to contemporary times.

*The History of Balingasag* provides an overarching narrative on the colonial history of the town. However, there is a dearth, if not totally absent, on the missionary activities of the Recollects in Balingasag. Although this book provides a list of town priests assigned to Balingasag during the colonial period, no short biographies or information are included. The author simply mentions the priests' names without noting their legacies or activities. Only a Jesuit priest, namely, Fr. Gregorio Parache's works and purpose in Balingasag received a special notice in the book. Also, it only highlighted the twilight years of the Recollects in Balingasag (Dongallo, 1968).

*Historical Glimpses in Balingasag* is another book that examines the history of Balingasag. This book chronicles the key events of this town in Misamis Oriental's past, particularly its cultural and socio-political history. It also recalls the milestones in the town's Christianization; it chronicles the history of a unique society of God-fearing and loving inhabitants. Furthermore, the book explores the early settlers of Balingasag as well as the construction of the church in the 19th century. Undeniably, there are only a few details regarding the Recollect mission in Balingasag. It mentioned little to none about their evangelical works such as mass, marriages, baptism, educational works, and community development. The book only concentrates on the color palettes of the tapestry of life of the early families of Madrono, Valmores, Vegas, Morenos, and Fernandezes, and their pioneering sons and daughters who shaped the town's proud march to civilization. The author primarily focuses on tracing the wide network of intertwined families (Vega, 1999).

The article *Ang Daklit nga Kasaysayan sa Katolisismo sa Balingasag*, which was translated by Xavier University Museum Staffers and compiled by Francisco R. Demetrio, S.J. in his book, is a substantial piece of work about the history of Catholicism in Balingasag. The book tells the narrative of Padre Isko, who taught and baptized the inhabitants of Balingasag about God. The origins of the name Balingasag and how it evolved from Galas to Balingasag are also discussed. The book describes briefly Jasaan's transformation into a parish and Mons' pastoral visit. Romualdo Gemino and how he promised the residents of Balingasag that he would establish the town as an autonomous parish apart from Jasaan. It also emphasizes the Jesuit takeover headed by Father Gregorio Parache, SJ, as well as his successes and the construction of the Balingasag church (Magsalay, 1973).

These historical accounts are seen to be essential to the researchers' efforts in reconstructing the history of the Recollect mission in Northern Mindanao. But in their quest to track down every detail, there is always one more piece lacking. The majority of the sources have given the researchers glances into the town's religious events, even though they may not have offered thorough and detailed information on the missionary work of the Recollects in Balingasag. More importantly, the researchers considered these source materials valuable since they helped them with their writing.

## Methodology

This paper is an archival and historical research that is descriptive-narrative in approach. The primary sources utilized in this paper were retrieved from the National Archives of the Philippines (NAP), Jesuits and Recollects Archives, Parishes of Balinagsag and Jasaan, Diocese of Cagayan de Oro City, and MSU-IIT Department of History Library. These archival documents include various religious reports in Mindanao, government reports and publications, historical maps, and most importantly the *Erección de los Pueblos* (1803-1839, 1821-1894, 1824-1884, 1859-1891) for administrative and political, socio-economic, and military activities in Misamis.

## Result and Discussion

### *The coming of the Recollects to Mindanao*

The Recollects arrived in the Philippines in the late 16th century. It was only in the early 17th century that they had extended their mission to Mindanao as a result of the unsuccessful missions of the Jesuits. As mentioned by Romanillos (2000), "the Augustinian Bishop Pedro de Arce of Cebu - in accordance with the wishes of Governor General Alonso Fajardo - entrusted the spiritual conquest of the huge island of Mindanao to the Recollects." On 1 March 1621, he entrusted to the Recollects the whole northeastern portion of Mindanao, from Butuan to Cateel and Caraga, as well as the islands of Dinagat and Siargao (Echeverria, 1953). The pioneering missionaries commenced their zealous evangelization work in 1622 (Romanillos, 2000). In this pursuit, the native opposition, natural limitations, and the restricted number of missionaries assigned to Mindanao were barriers that inhibited the Recollect religious activity on the Island.



**Figure 3.** The ecclesiastical division of Mindanao between the Jesuits and Recollects.

*Retrieved from the Jesuit Archives.*

Diego de Santa Teresa (1743) reported that “eight (8) Augustinian Recollect missionaries were assigned for the evangelization of Mindanao between 1622 and 1623.” However, the presence of the Recollects in Mindanao created some friction with the Jesuits ignited by the issue of religious jurisdiction. With this, Governor-General Alonso Fajardo on February 6, 1624, partitioned Mindanao Island into two regions to restore order and peace. The Recollects were given care of the lands northeast of the imaginary line that went from Cape Sulawan to Cape San Augustine, while the Jesuits were given control of the areas southwest of the same line. On 12 July 1628, his successor Juan Nino de Tabora confirmed the division. However, the misunderstanding and feuds between the two orders lasted for several more years, partially favored by a certain volubility of the bishop of Cebu. In 1637, acceding to the governor general’s decision, the Cebu prelate declared his 3 March 1625 decree which had favored the Recollects null and void (Romanillos, 2000; Echeverria, 1953; Redondo, 1887).

The jurisdiction emphasized that the Recollects focused their duty and missionary activities starting from the hamlet of Cagayan to the eastern border of Misamis district. Cuesta (2007) specified that the Recollect missionaries spread out to the north, and a small group composed of three religions headed to Butuan from that place the missionaries proceeded to Cagayan and Linao which were situated upstream in the Agusan River.

During this time, the number of exceptional missionaries in Mindanao seldom topped ten. There were ten (10) in 1655 who were dispersed in five dwellings from which they supervised about 10, 000 Christians scattered in 30 places. The two religious of Tandag also controlled the *presidio* of the location and population centers of Cantilan, Tago, Marihatag, and Lianga; those of Butuan served Jabonga, Arwayan, Linao, Hibong, Odyongang, and the reduced Manobos; those of Cagayan reached Iponan, Tagoloan, Gompot<sup>1</sup>, and Camiguin

<sup>1</sup> According to de los Santos (2021), most of the historical sources pointed out Gonpot or Gompot as the earliest settlement of Balingasag.

(Cuesta, 2007). In 1751, the Recollects of Cagayan had four *visitas*<sup>2</sup>, namely, Balingoan, Gompot, Tagoloan and Iponan, under two religious, with 2,500 baptized (Ruiz, 1925).

It is important to note that in 1768 Archbishop Basilio Sancho de Santas Justa y Rufina implemented the decree of expulsion of the members of the Society of Jesus from the Spanish colony. The secular clergy and the Augustinian Recollect friars who supervised the eastern Mindanao missions and parishes took over the *doctrinas* that the Jesuits abandoned in Mindanao (Romanillos, 2007). Thus, the entire island of Mindanao was left under the sole control of the Recollects.

### *Moro Raids*

During the 18th century, one of the problems encountered by the missionaries were the Moro raids in the Christian settlements and communities in Visayas and Northern Mindanao (de los Santos, 2021). Montero (1888) reported that “in Iligan (Misamis District): Iponan, Alilitum, Gompot, Salay, Sipaca were sacked and burned.”

The Christian communities established by the Recollect and Jesuit missionaries throughout the years in Mindanao, particularly the Northern Mindanao, were subjects to the frequent incursions by the Moros, with hundreds of Christians taken slaves, churches and *conventos* reduced to ashes, and many missionaries killed (Ruiz, 1925). Land raids on Cagayan de Misamis and adjacent villages in Misamis continued for a somewhat longer period. In fact, colonial reports in the early 19th century revealed that no portion of Misamis was secured from Moro incursions (NAP, Erecciones, *Expediente 32*, 1821–1894).

When Muslim threats among Christianized settlements in the Northern Mindanao area were waning, this gave the Recollect missionaries an ample opportunity to carry out the Christianization of the natives living along the coastal areas east of Tagoloan and Gompot (Lao, 1980).

### *Balingasag as a Visita*

In the 19th century, centralization of the political system became the major policy of Spanish administration in the Philippines. It was essential to partition overpopulated towns, create new ones, and appoint officials to assure optimum as well as effective management of the local political entities. Because these territories could not be well-directed spiritually by one priest and politically by one *gobernadorcillo* (Blair & Robertson, 1903).

Given the broad administrative scope of Misamis, effective control was limited only to the coastal area. The missionaries were in charge of forming new settlements out of existing ones. The delay in the founding and development of new towns can be explained by the lack of religious figures in Misamis and Mindanao, in general. For this reason, the missionaries maintained the *cabecera-visita* system. Phelan (1959) in his work explained that:

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<sup>2</sup> “Visita was the term used for all of the administrative centers, including the sitio and municipality, without a resident priest, and was merely visited for priestly ministries” (Arcilla, 2000, p.60)



The *cabecera* was the focal point of all religious events and the residence of the parish priest in this model. The *cabecera* was surrounded by *visitas*, which were small settlements inhabited by converts who lived far away from the *cabecera*. Each *visita* had its own chapel, which was attended by a non-resident priest from the *cabecera* on a regular basis (p.157).



**Figure 4.** Cagayan and its visitas in the 19th century.

*From The Local Historical Sources of Northern Mindanao (p. 339), edited by Francisco Demetrio, S.J., 1995, Cagayan de Oro City: Xavier University.*

Buzeta and Bravo (1850) indicated that “the second district of Misamis was separated into four (4) *partidos*: (1) *Partido de Cagayan* (2) *Partido de Catarman* (3) *Partido de Dapitan* (4) *Partido de Misamis*.” To emphasize the *cabecera-visita* system, under Partido de Cagayan, Cagayan was the *cabecera* and it had the following *visitas* around the turn of the century: Agusan, Balingasag, Iponan, Jasaan, Mabijut, *Mision de Pinangudan* Mulungan, Salay, Tagoloan, and Quinoguitan (Buzeta and Bravo, 1850). As a *visita*, Balingasag was visited on a regular basis by a priest from Cagayan who facilitated the evangelization and catered to the spiritual needs of the converts in the town.

**Table 1.** The number of tributes and christian converts under the ecclesiastical mission of Cagayan where Balingasag was a *visita*.

Year	Town	Tax	Souls
1749	Gompot	140	600
1820	<i>Cagayan y sus anejos Iponan, Malugan, Agusan, Balingasag, Salay y Quinoguitan</i>	1376 1/2	6587

*Source: (Minguella, 1885)*

On March 12, 1830, members of the principalia class in Jasaan, Tagoloan, Pinangudan, Mabijut, Balingasag, Salay, and Quinoguitan petitioned Jose Santa Romana, Corregidor of Misamis, for the secession of these areas from Cagayan, with the support of the missionaries. Subsequently, they sent the appeal to Governor-General Ricafort who approved it in a favorable manner (NAP, Erecciones, *Expediente 6*, 1808-1839). In effect, *partido de Cagayan* was subdivided. Jasaan, a former *visita* of Cagayan, became an autonomous *cabecera* on November 12, 1830, with Tagoloan, Balingasag, Salay, and Quinoguitan as its *visitas*.

**Table 2.** List of Recollect priests assigned to Jasaan wherein Balingasag was a *visita*.

Year	Missionaries
1834	Fr. Jose Casals
1838	Fr. Manuel de Sta. Rita
1844-1845	Fr. Vicente De Dolores
1843	Fr. Gregorio Lagrono del Dulcisimo Nombre de Maria

From four (4) *partidos*, *Provincia de Misamis* was finally separated into six (6) *partidos* (see Figure 5) as reflected in the report of the Misamis *corregidor* (NAP, Erecciones, *Expediente 12*, 1808-1839). It is also evident in the report that new towns were created through the separation of villages from the town matrices in Misamis.

Partidos	Pueblos	Partidos	Pueblos
Misamis	Misamis	Jasaan	Tagoloan
	Poculan		Jasaan
	Nagan		Balingasag
	Nagan		Bagonkong
	Zaitao		Salay
Nagan	Mabijut		Quinoguitan
	Mohogan	Catarran	Catarran
	Pigtao		Mambayon
	Cagayan		Sagay
Cagayan	Ipoman	Dipitan	Humilitan
	Suzo		Dipitan
	Asuzan		Mena
			Dipolog
			Salumpayan
			Langaran

**Figure 5.** List of *partidos* and *pueblos* in *Provincia de Misamis*.

Retrieved from the NAP, Erecciones, *Expediente 12*, 1808-1839.

Dongallo (1968) mentioned that the parish priest from Jasaan only came to Balingasag during Lent. Balingasag residents travel to Jasaan for baptisms, wedding and burial ceremonies, confessions, and masses. In fact, the researchers were able to examine some of the baptismal and funeral records (1830s) exhibited at the parish museum of Jasaan. In these records, it indicated the names of the deceased persons from Balingasag and were buried at the burial ground or cemetery of Jasaan.



**Table 3.** Number of tributes and christian converts under the ecclesiastical mission of Jasaan.

Year	Town	Tax	Souls	Sources
1834	Jasaan. . . . . . .	697	3699	<i>Labor Evangelica de los Padres Agustinos Recoletos en las Islas Filipinas</i>
1838	Jasaan y su visita Pinagaui an	796	3993	<i>Conquista Espiritual de Mindanao por los Agustinos Recoletos</i>
1843	Jasaan. . . . . . .	938	5259	<i>Labor Evangelica de los Padres Agustinos Recoletos en las Islas Filipinas</i>
1847	Jasaan. . . . . . .	1177 ½	6174	<i>Labor Evangelica de los Padres Agustinos Recoletos en las Islas Filipinas</i>

Looking at the religious reports, these only mean that after the separation of Jasaan from Cagayan there were significant increases in the tribute collections and Christian converts in Jasaan and its *visitas*.

#### *Balingasag as an Independent parish*

In October 1849, Monsignor Romualdo Gimeno, a Bishop of Cebu, made his pastoral visit to Balingasag. Upon his visit, he was welcomed by the townspeople and leaders with warm hospitality, the monsignor also saw the ardent faith of the people of the town. As a gift to them, he promised that he would establish Balingasag as a parish independent of Jasaan. Soon after, the Bishop of Cebu, created the Parish of Balingasag, with the title of Santa Rita de Casia, on November 3, 1849 (Magsalay, 1973). It has likewise seceded from its mother parish, Jasaan.

Balingasag as an additional *cabecera* in the district of Misamis had five (5) *visitas* located on the shore up to Butuan, namely Lagonlong, Salay, Quinuguitan, Talisayan, and Gingoog (Buzeta and Bravo, 1850). All of these *visitas* had chapels of light materials and the distance from Balingasag was respectively seven (7), thirteen (13) twenty-nine (29), forty-nine (49), and seventy-eight (78) kilometers (Schreurs, Vol.2, 1998).

With the establishment of Balingasag as a parish in 1849, the Recollects made sure to erect a parish church. Redondo (1887) in his book provided a through description of the church structure in Balingasag:

The church has planks on a base of stone masonry, as well the belltower is in good state of preservation; measures; 58 meters long from the main door until the presbytery, 14 meters wide, 51 meters of the transept by 9 meters, and 5 meters high. The rector house measures 25 meters long, 16 meters wide, and 6 meters high (p. 43).

**Table 4.** Recollect missionaries assigned in the parish of Balingasag.

Year	<i>Cura Párrocos/Misioneros</i>
1849	Fr. Estanislao Severo
1850-1876	Fr. Angel Martinez del Carmen
1876	Fr. Francisco Arcaya (Int)

Source: (Magsalay, 1973).

The first parish priest of the town was Fr. Estanislao Severo. The Blessed Sacrament was initially enthroned in the church of Balingasag on the same day, and it stayed in the parish for 49 years, 2 months, and 13 days until the onset of the revolution against Spain. For the Blessed Sacrament, Father Severo organized the guardians of honor, which was composed of fifty men and women (Magsalay, 1973). After Father Severo, a new parish Augustinian Recollect priest named Father Angel Martinez del Carmen established a number of contributions and development of the parish and in the town. Magsalay (1973) in her account mentioned that:

In May 1850, a new parish priest relieved Fr. Severo. During his term of office, he organized established a number of contributions within the parish such as he has founded the *Comfradia de la Virgen del Carmen* (Association of the Virgin of Mount Carmel), in which devotees wore the scapular, which was regarded as a weapon against disasters and misfortunes; the church's transept which was built in the style of the church's transept in Cagayan de Oro; the altar's retablo components which were inspired by the retablo of Cebu's San Nicholas Church; the church received ten ivory statues, chasubles, capes, golden ceriales, golden Guion, golden coins, chalices, ciboria, golden pyx, and bells. For 25 years, he served as the parish priest of Balingasag. Father Francisco Arcaya who is a Recollect was his successor, and he worked hard to continue the wonderful job begun by Fr. Angel (p. 779).

BALIÑGASAG. F. 1640						
Fechas de los Estados	Número de tributos	Núm. de almas	Bautismos.	Casamientos.	Defunciones.	Párrocos ó Misioneros
1851	708 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>g</sub>	3561	106	6	334	P. Fr. Manuel Navarro.
1857	1806 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>g</sub>	5159	152	31	86	» Angel Martinez.
1861	1208	6628	251	39	87	El mismo.
1866	1248 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>g</sub>	7340	202	17	127	El mismo.
1871	1556	8084	275	13	322	El mismo.
1877	2188 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>g</sub>	7762	351	79	152	» Francisco Arcaya.

**Figure 6.** Balingasag under the Recollect mission.

From *Labor Evangelica de los Padres Agustinos Recoletos en las Islas Filipinas Expuesta En Cuadros Estadisticos de la Provincia De S. Nicolas de Tolentino*, by Greg Fidel de Blas de la Asuncion, 1990, Zaragoza:

Establecimiento tipografica de Pedro Carra, impresor del Exemo Sr. Arzobispo

The image above indicates that with the assignment of these missionaries, there was a significant harvest and increase in tribute collection, souls converted and baptized, and married in Balingasag. It can be seen that from 1851 to 1877 there was an increase in the number of tributes from 708 ½ to a total of 2,188 ½ tributes. The number of souls converted grew from 3,361 in 1851 to 7,762 in 1877. There were 106 baptized in the year 1851 and the data shows an improvement to 351. The number of couples that were married in 1851 was 6 but in the year 1877 rose to 79. But the number of deceased dropped from 334 in 1851 to 152 in 1877 before the Jesuits took over Balingasag.

#### *Transfer of Balingasag from Recollects to Jesuits*

Almost a century later, the Society of Jesus was restored in the Spanish dominions through the royal decree of 19 October 1852. Five years later, on 26 November 1857 the Dominican Bishop Romualdo Jimeno of the Diocese of Cebu, whose extensive episcopal jurisdiction at that time comprised the entire Visayas, Mindanao, Sulu and Marianas Islands, sent a memorial to the Queen of Spain Isabel II asking for members of the Society of Jesus (Ruiz, 1925; Carceller, 1965).

On 30 July 1859, the eve of the feast of the Jesuit founder Saint Ignatius of Loyola, the Spanish monarch issued the royal decree. The spiritual government of Mindanao and its component islands were given to the Society of Jesus by the ruling Queen Isabel II. The goal was to establish locations from which the Jesuits might evangelize the interior's non-Christian peoples. Parish-grabbing was not unheard of in the colonial Philippines. Old disputes were reignited in the process. New wounds had been opened. Given the country's precarious circumstances, the royal edict was clearly ill-advised (Romanillos, 2007).

As mentioned by Schumacher (1999), “the 30 July 1859 decree dispossessed the Congregation of Augustinian Recollects of all its parishes and *visitas* in Mindanao, both the old doctrines and those created after the Jesuit expulsion:...not only the new missions [founded by Recollects after 1768] would be under their [Jesuits'] supervision but also the older towns along the coast held by the Recoletos, which would serve as bases from which the missions into the interior of the island would work.”

The Augustinian Recollect missionaries in Mindanao were taken aback, befuddled, and disheartened when their parishes and missions, particularly those they had founded at the start of the evangelization period in the 17th century, were taken away from them when they were doing more and better in the conversion of the heathens and in the formation of new pueblos. There was no prior consultation and no due process at all. Nonetheless, the cession of Recollect parishes to the Society of Jesus was serene and quiet (Romanillo, 2007).

Thus, one of the most significant events for the Recollects in this century was the restoration of the Jesuits to the Philippines in 1859. Their mission in Mindanao was in jeopardy, as it was declared that the Jesuits would take over the spiritual government of the island upon their return. Later, it was discovered that the history of the Augustinian Recollects, and the Jesuits are inextricably linked, as are the political upheavals of the nineteenth century.

The table below only shows that for two decades the Society of Jesus had not immediately and completely complied with the 1859 royal decree. In the case of Balingasag, it was only in 1877 that the Recollects successfully turned over it together with its five *visitas*, namely, Logonglong, Salay, Quinuguitan, Talisayan, and Gingoog to the Jesuits with a total

population of 8,762. Jasaan which was a parish and the center of the Recollect missions in 1830 had not retained such status or prestige. In 1877, when the first Jesuits took Balingasag from the Recollects, it was established as the Jesuit residence on the eastern side of Misamis Oriental with Fr. Gregorio Parache as the Parish Priest and Superior.

**Table 5.** *Doctrinas* ceded to the Jesuits.

<b>Town</b>	<b>Year of Cession</b>	<b>Population</b>
Tetuan	1862	2,715
Isabela	1862	378
Zamboanga	1865	11,477
Polloc	1865	382
Davao	1868	1,064
Dapitan	1870	5,860
Lubungan	1870	2,040
Surigao	1871	5,480
Gigaquit	1872	4,643
Bislig	1873	7,606
Mainit	1875	3,341
Butuan	1875	5,569
Bunawan	1875	1,807
Balingasag	1877	8,762
Dinagat	1878	3,618
Cantilan	1879	9,676
Salvador	1879	4,989
Jasaan	1882	5,849
Numancia	1883	3,365
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>88,613</b>

*Source: (Minguella, 1885)*

## **Conclusion**

In the history of Northern Mindanao, one cannot disregard the role played by the Recollects not only to colonial evangelization but also to the establishment of towns and its development in the 19th century. Such is the case of Balingasag. In this paper, it aims to

reconstruct the missionary work and contribution of the Recollects to Balingasag in the 18th-19th century

Through archival and historical research, this paper reveals that the coming of the Recollects to Balingasag signals the beginning of colonial history and Catholicism in the town. Considering the scarcity of religious missionaries, they retained the *cabecera-visita* system and paved the way to evangelize further the local inhabitants of Balingasag. But with the coming of additional missionaries in Misamis in the 19th century, Balingasag elevated its status into an independent parish mission. All this development contributed to the increasing number of Christian converts and tribute collections in the town. Thus, Christianization was just part of the whole process to incorporate the locals into the political and cultural realm of colonial society.

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