

MIDDAY VENUS OF VENUS AT MANILA

By Rev. Miguel Selga, S. J.

During the war and in the proximity of aerial bombardment, people have frequently turned their eyes towards the sky in an attempt to locate the position of the incoming or receding planes. About the middle of December, 1941, when the aerial bombardment of military objectives around Manila and Cavite became serious, every drone of a plane would draw hundreds of spectators, ready to scan the sky and anxious to be the first to locate the flying machine. The days of the second and third decade of December, 1941, were exceedingly clear at Manila. On three instances, between the 14th and the 19th of December, 1941, the two following facts took place. First, several people called the Observatory by phone, about midday, inquiring what was the object, star or comet, that was shining brilliantly at a short distance from the Sun. Second, military observers stationed at strategic points reported to headquarters that a plane had been sighted very high in the sky, the wings of which reflected the light of the Sun, like a star. Some members of the ROTC expressed the opinion that the bright object was a very large bundle of printed sheets dropped by a plane for propaganda purposes. What was the source of the light in the sky that was seen at midday by many people with the unaided eye, in spite of strong sunshine? The position assigned to the object corresponded to Venus whose coordinates on December 16th, 1941, were $20^{\text{h}} 46^{\text{m}}$ in right ascension and $-19^{\circ} 54'$ in declination and whose greatest brilliancy throughout the year 1941 was attained on December 29th. The stellar magnitude of Venus on De-