

ADDRESS BY FR. SELGA ON THE OCCASION OF THE UNVEILING OF THE
HISTORICAL MARKER ON THE CHURCH AT LEGASPI, ALBAY

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The conversion of the Bicoland from Paganism to Christianity is a puzzle to the unbeliever. The historian, however, conversant with the facts attending the Spanish colonization, finds the solution of the problem in the docile responsiveness of the natives to the light of truth, the fervent zeal of the franciscan Missionaries in preaching the Gospel, and the cooperation of both to the grace and plans of Divine Providence. Very few people realize that, about the same year that Mary, Queen of Scots, was executed by her intolerant cousin the Queen of England, the followers of the maguino Gat Igal, occupants of the marshy lands of Binanwahan, welcomed the visit and preaching of the Franciscan Missionary from Cagsawa, who gathered a Christian community in Binanwahan and set up a cross on the roof of the first chapel ever erected at Legaspi. Very few people realize that at the time that some Japanese Shoguns were making a violent persecution against the Christians, by laws of exile and bodily torments, and four years before the Pilgrim Protestants landed on Plymouth Rock, seeking religious liberty, the Christians communities of Binanwahan had increased so rapidly in number and so fervently in the profession of faith that the ecclesiastical authorities decided to separate Binanwahan from Cagsawa and to erect at Legaspi a canonical unit of missionary activities. The faith and civic virtues of the people were