

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4229



Introduced by Representative Ambrosio "Boy" C. Cruz, Jr.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Catholic churches breed both familiarity and wonder among us. Whether in the middle of bustling town or in the peripheries of a quiet barrio, there would always be that one edifice with a looming bell tower, welcoming devotees with its age-old, but ever recognizable façade.

In the province of Bulacan, one church that truly captured the interest of many is St. Martin of Tours Parish Church.

St. Martin of Tours Parish Church, also known as the Diocesan Shrine of the Holy Cross of Wawa, is located in Brgy. Poblacion, Bocaue, Bulacan. It was founded by Franciscan Missionaries in 1606 and is considered as one of the oldest churches in Bulacan.¹

Central to the existence of St. Martin of Tours Parish Church is the wooden cross called Mahal na Poong Krus sa Wawa. The said cross is believed to be miraculous when it was found floating in the river in 1850 after saving a girl who followed it until it had brought her to the shore. As a tribute to the relic, a river procession called Bocaue Pagoda Festival is celebrated every July.²

Truly, St. Martin of Tours Parish Church stood the test of time and became one of the most venerated Catholic churches in the country. In fact, in 2021, St. Martin of Tours Parish Church was included in the list of Jubilee Churches for the celebration of the 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines.³

Aside from its religious significance, it is undeniable that St. Martin of Tours Parish Church is also a product of exquisite architecture. From top to toe, its magnificence is timeless

¹<https://www.philstar.com/other-sections/newsmakers/2018/03/20/1798343/top-10-must-see-places-events-bocaue-bulacan>

² <https://newscorebulacan.net/grandiose-pagoda-sails-again-in-bocaue-rivers/>

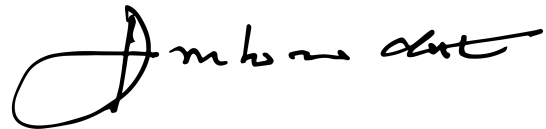
³https://cbcnews.net/cbcnews/list-of-jubilee-churches-for-the-celebration-of-the-500-years-of-christianity-in-the-philippines/?fbclid=IwAR30MGXMZT1bbxiKKPdKTM_61xwzQaSRd_3S9hXA1wST_AoFKcNP2G4z1Yc

and inviting. As such, many would always visit it, not only to pray, but also to marvel at the beauty and history it embodies.

Considering its religious and historical significance, this bill aims to declare St. Martin of Tours Parish Church as a tourist destination. Through this bill, policies and measures would be in place to protect its architectural, cultural, and historical significance while also ensuring its accessibility to all those who want to see it.

With the help of the Department of Tourism (DOT), St. Martin of Tours Parish Church will continue to flourish, not only as a religious structure, but also as a symbol of Catholic faith in Bulacan and in the country.

In view thereof, the immediate approval of this proposed measure is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ambrosio C. Cruz, Jr.', with a large, stylized initial 'A'.

AMBROSIO "BOY" C. CRUZ, JR.
Representative, Fifth District of Bulacan

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**AN ACT DECLARING ST. MARTIN OF TOURS PARISH CHURCH AS A TOURIST
DESTINATION AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “St. Martin of Tours Parish Church Tourist Destination Act.”

Section 2. *Scope and Coverage.* – St. Martin of Tours Parish Church, located in Brgy. Poblacion, Bocaue, Bulacan is hereby declared a tourist destination. In view thereof, the development and preservation of St. Martin of Tours Parish Church shall be prioritized by the Department of Tourism (DOT), in coordination with the Municipality of Bocaue and other related agencies, subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of tourist destinations.

Section 3. *Tourism Development Plan.* – The DOT in coordination with the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) and other government agencies, shall prepare a tourism development plan. The said tourism development plan shall consist, among others, of the construction, installation, and maintenance of such appropriate facilities and infrastructure that shall encourage tourism in the area: *Provided*, that said tourism development plan shall ensure the preservation and conservation of St. Martin of Tours Parish Church.

Section 4. *Implementation.* – The DOT, in coordination with TIEZA and other concerned agencies, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

Section 5. *Appropriations and funding.* – The Secretary of the DOT in the Department’s program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act and from internally generated funds of the DOT.

Section 6. *Separability clause.* - If any provision of this Act shall be declared invalid or unconstitutional, such declaration shall not affect the validity of the remaining provisions of this Act.

Section 7. *Repealing clause.* - All provisions of laws, presidential decrees, letters of instruction and other presidential issuances which are incompatible or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby deemed amended or repealed.

Section 8. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect within fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,