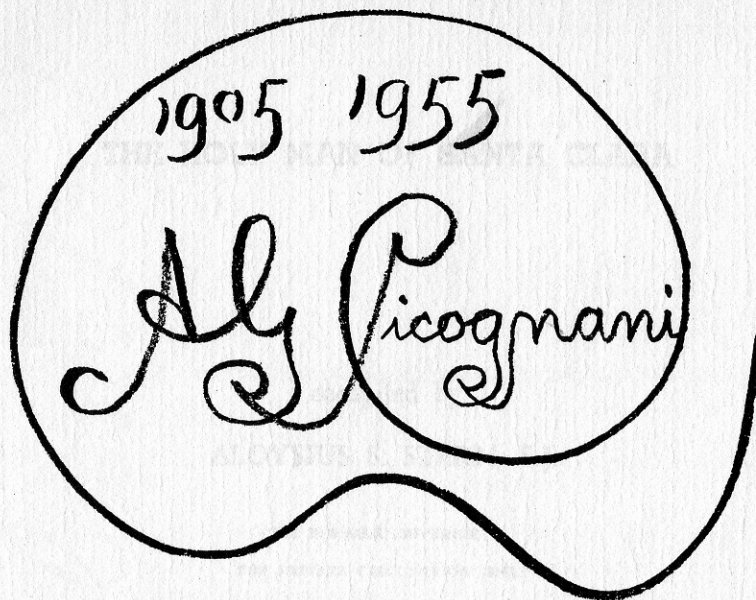


Padre
Mágin Catala

*The second printing of this booklet the compiler
respectfully dedicates to*

HIS EXCELLENCY THE MOST REVEREND



as a gesture of festive gratitude on the occasion of the

GOLDEN JUBILEE

of his

SACRED PRIESTHOOD

RLD4DWD@YAHOO.COM

Magin Catala, O.F.M.

THE HOLY MAN OF SANTA CLARA

compiled by

ALOYSIUS S. STERN, S.J.

CUM PERMISSU SUPERIORUM

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

1955



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

3339 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
WASHINGTON 8, D. C.

No. SU 428.

THIS NO. SHOULD BE PREFIXED TO THE ANSWER

May 14, 1955.

Reverend Aloysius J. Stern, S. J.
University of San Francisco
San Francisco 17, Calif.

Reverend and dear Father:

I wish to acknowledge your letter of May 8, 1955, and to assure you that you have my permission to have reprinted in pamphlet form Chapter VII of "Sanctity in America"....

With sentiments of esteem and with all best wishes, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Archbishop of Laodicea
Apostolic Delegate

Excerpt from

SANCTITY IN AMERICA

by

Most Reverend Amleto Giovanni Cicognani

Apostolic Delegate to the United States

1945

St. Anthony Guild Press, Paterson, N.J.

CHAPTER VII

MAGIN CATALA, O.F.M.

"THE HOLY MAN OF SANTA CLARA"

Among the many missionaries whose careers in America were inconspicuous in their own day, and who even now do not receive the acclaim they deserve, must be numbered Magin Catala, "the holy man of Santa Clara," who, loyally and unobtrusively serving the mission to which he was assigned, spent an unusually fruitful life of prayer and good works.

Magin Catala and his twin brother were born in 1761 at Montblanch, a village in the province of Catalonia, Spain. Their father, a doctor, was royal and public notary in Montblanch. Their mother, Francesca Guasch y Burgueras, was the daughter of a prominent merchant in the city. The Catala family, though not wealthy, were comfortably blessed with the things of this world.

On January 31, 1761, a few days after his birth, the future Franciscan missionary and his twin were baptized in the parish church, each receiving three names: the former, Magin, Jose. Matias; the latter Pedro, Antonio, Juan. Of Magin's boyhood days nothing is known. Early schooling and training must have been of the best, however; while the piety he learned from the example of his parents doubtless attracted him to the circle of Franciscans who had a friary in Montblanch. In time he applied



*The Miraculous Crucifix in the Mission Church of Santa Clara
before which Father Magin Catala prayed.*

for admission into their ranks, and received the habit of St. Francis in the friary in Barcelona on April 4, 1777. After pronouncing religious vows, young Magin pursued the required courses in philosophy and theology, and in 1785 was ordained to the priesthood.

At this time the vast Franciscan mission fields in America clamored for recruits. Magin Catala, a year after his ordination volunteered for these missions. In October of the same year he sailed for Mexico and in due time reached San Fernando College in Mexico City, where he labored until 1792, when the Guardian of the college assigned him to the California field. In July of the following year Father Catala arrived at Monterey, accompanied by Father Jose de la Cruz Espi. Proceeding to San Carlos Mission, the two newcomers reported to the Superior of the Missions, who thereupon appointed Father Espi to San Antonio Mission and directed Father Catala to accompany the Saavedra expedition to Nootka Sound as chaplain of the frigate "Aranzazu." On July 2, 1794, the vessel was back at Monterey. After resigning as chaplain for the second voyage northward, Father Catala was sent to Mission Santa Clara, where the baptismal register has an entry by him for the first time on September 1, 1794.

At Santa Clara, the zealous friar labored without interruption for thirty-six years. During that entire period, barring some visits for ministerial purposes to the neighboring missions, he never left the place to which holy obedience had assigned him, and of which, after 1797, he was the responsible senior missionary. Twice, in 1800 and again in 1804, he asked leave to return to the college in Mexico (for he suffered constantly from inflammatory rheumatism), and reluctant permission was granted; but each time, the friar's love for the Indians triumphed over personal considerations, and kept him at his post, where he cared for the neophytes as well as his health would permit and sanctified himself by prayer and suffering.

While Father Jose Viader took charge of the material affairs of the Santa Clara Mission, Father Catala devoted

M. and College of Santa Clara



From Henry Miller's *Account of a Tour of the California Missions*,
1856, edited by Edith M. Coulter and Eleanor A. Bancroft.

himself almost exclusively to the spiritual instruction and direction of the Indian converts. The mission records show that during the thirty-six years of his administration not less than five thousand persons (nearly all of them Indians) were baptized at Santa Clara Mission. During the same period, 1,905 marriages were solemnized and about five thousand Christian burials performed. Scattered over the valley in which the mission was located were ten Indian settlements. These, too, had to be visited at regular intervals and the Christian Indians living there had to be instructed in the tenets of the Catholic faith. Considering Father Catala's physical ailment, this phase of his duties as a missionary must have called for a spirit of sacrifice that bordered on the heroic.

Even more remarkable than his active life as a missionary was Father Catala's private and hidden life as a priest. There is no earthly record, of course, of the many hours he spent in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament in the mission church or before the crucifix over his favorite altar; of the rigorous fasts he imposed upon himself and the mortifications he inflicted on his ailing body in the secrecy of his little room near the church; of the many ejaculations of resignation to the Holy Will of God that escaped his lips when his limbs were racked with pain, or when he was tempted to despondency and despair. It is to be noted that this sanctified soul did not proclaim itself with outward show. Father Viader, who spent thirty-three years with him at Santa Clara Mission, scarcely ever in the many letters and reports he wrote makes mention of Father Magin's activities. In this, we are moved to believe, Father Viader merely followed the wishes of his senior companion, who preferred to remain unnoticed and unknown.

Finally the end came, serene and peaceful, welcomed by the saintly priest whose life had been a ceaseless preparation for its close. At daybreak of November 22, 1830, the soul of "the holy man of Santa Clara" passed to the better life.

"The saint has left us!" cried the Indians at sight of

their father and friend in death. Placed in a coffin of redwood, his body was laid to rest on the Gospel side in the sanctuary of the mission church.

Movement for Beatification

On December 5, 1882, Archbishop Alemany, of San Francisco, appointed Reverend Benedict Picardo, S.J., notary of the process to be instituted. Two years later Reverend Joseph Bixio, S.J., was made Vice Postulator. At the canonical process held in August, 1884, at Santa Clara, California, sixty-two witnesses were examined. Shortly thereafter Archbishop Alemany, who had resigned his see and gone to Rome, notified his successor, the Most Reverend Patrick William Riordan, that the Sacred Congregation, having examined the acts of the court and found them good, desired corroborative testimony. Thereupon the Very Reverend John Prendergast, Vicar General, was directed to act as judge during the subsequent investigation. The court held one session at Santa Clara, but as nothing could be done until new evidence was procured, the Reverend Benedict Picardo, S.J., of San Jose was directed to present trustworthy witnesses and to report whenever he was ready. But the matter was allowed to lapse, no report was ever made and hence no other session of the court took place.

In 1890, the Postulator General in Rome took steps to further the Cause of Father Catala. He urged Father Clementine Deymann, O.F.M., of Watsonville, California, to write a life of Catala. This Father Deymann did, but the manuscript was never published. In 1904, Father Zephyrin Engelhardt, O.F.M., wrote a series on Catala in the now extinct *Dominicana*, edited in San Francisco.

Interest was revived in 1907, when the Jesuits of Santa Clara resolved to transfer the body of Father Catala to a newly prepared vault near the altar of their church. In 1908, at the request of the Postulator General, the Very Reverend Francisco Maria Paolini, O.F.M., the Sacred

Congregation of Rites, after examining the testimony of the former process, decided to advance the Cause of Father Catala by ordering the process *de non cultu*. A sealed list of questions was sent to Archbishop Riordan, following which the archbishop issued a decree, read from the pulpits of the archdiocese, calling for the writings of Father Catala.

On September 19, 1908, a Vice Postulator for the Cause was appointed in the person of the Reverend Zephyrin Engelhardt, O.F.M. The court was established on November 6, 1908, and the process was promulgated in February, 1909. Sessions began at Santa Clara, November 18, 1909, and ended January 27, 1910, following which the documents were taken to Rome by Father Engelhardt.

"The Cause of Father Catala," Father Engelhardt writes, "now rests with the Sacred Congregation of Rites." The examination of his writings has been happily completed, and the way is being prepared for the formal introduction of his Cause.

Bibliography

The Holy Man of Santa Clara, by Zephyrin Engelhardt, O.F.M., James H. Barry Company, San Francisco, 1909.

The Missions and Missionaries of California, by Zephyrin Engelhardt, O.F.M., James H. Barry Company, San Francisco, 1908-1915. Vol. III, Part II.

PRAYER

O God, Who didst send Thy holy servant, Father Magin Catala, to preach Thy gospel to the Indians, and didst inspire him to glorify Thy Blessed Name among them by the example of his eminent virtues: we humbly beseech Thee to honor him on earth with the testimony of miracles performed thru his intercession; to grant to us by his merits all manner of blessings; and to fill our minds with the light of Thy truth; that walking always in the way of Thy Commandments, we may come to eternal union with Thee; thru Christ Our Lord. Amen.

IMPRIMATUR

December 8, 1937
University of Santa Clara,
Santa Clara, California

✠ JOANNES J. MITTY,

Archiepiscopus Sancti Francisci

Padre of Nootka Island

THE PASTORATE OF
REV. ALOYSIUS S. STERN

ON

NOOTKA ISLAND

AND ITS

REMARKABLE AFTERMATH

BY

ARTHUR D. SPEARMAN, S.J.

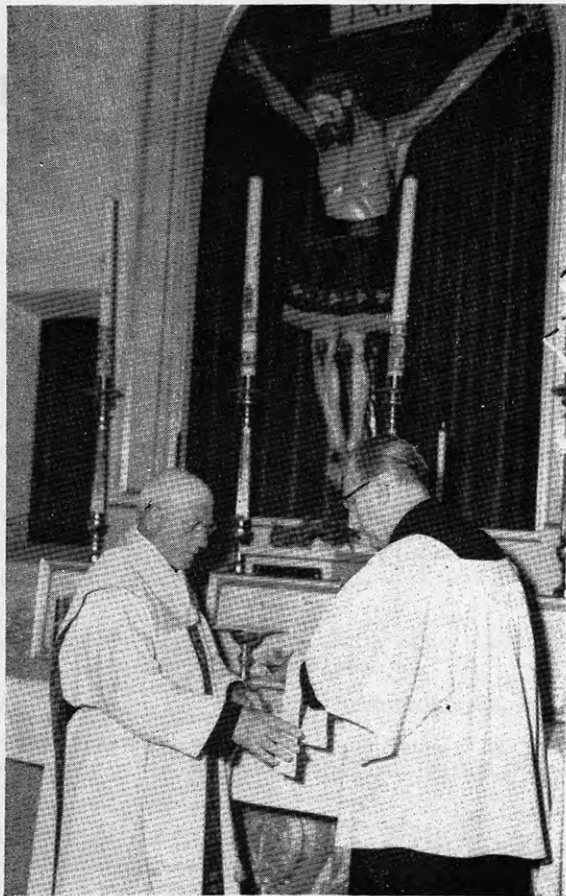


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*Father Aloysius S. Stern, S.J. at the altar
of the Crucifix in Mission Santa Clara,
on the University of Santa Clara Campus.
A marble slab to the left marks the grave
of Padre Magin Catala.*

Padre of Nootka Island

The steady rain of the north west coast was falling on the cabin roof of the simple rectory of Friendly Cove, Nootka Island, in the early winter of 1909. The missionary pastor, Father Stern, settled into the one comfortable chair of the house for a quiet evening's reading.

The S.S. Maquina had touched at Nootka Entrance that day, and there was mail. Little time was needed to open and read the few letters. But there was a book just off the press, entitled "The Holy Man of Santa Clara", by the late Father Zephyrin Engelhardt, O.F.M. The Nootka pastor opened it casually, and by the soft light of the oil lamp began to read. The book told of the birth and life of Padre Magin Catala, venerable missionary of the Seraphic Order of St. Francis, and of his labors on the west coast of America. Catala had been born in Montblanch, Province of Catalonia, Spain, the year 1761. He had in the year 1777 entered the Franciscan novitiate. Completion of his studies found him sailing from Cadiz to New Spain, 1786, where landing at Vera Cruz he made his way overland to the City of Mexico. Special training was given him at the missionary college of San Fernando de Mexico, and early 1793 found him sailing for his destined mission, Santa Clara, California.

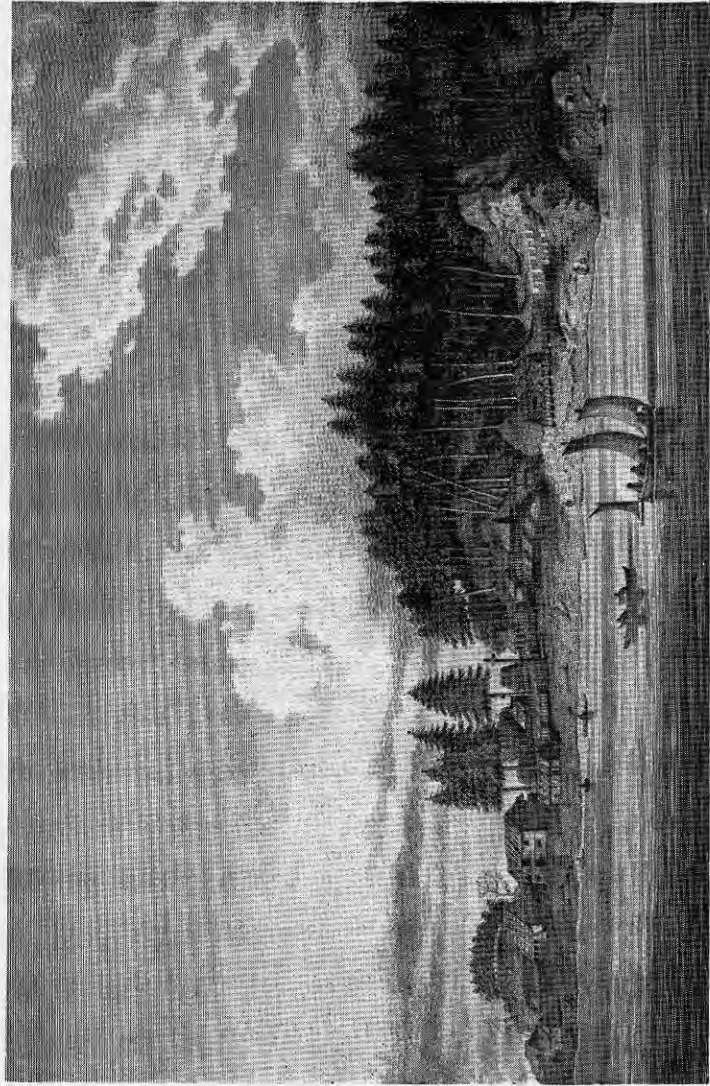
Governor Arrillaga welcomed the arrival of the young priest's ship at Monterey, and also somewhat changed his plans. The chaplain of the ship Aranzazu was ill. As the boat was due to carry needed supplies to Nootka and must sail at once, the Governor suggested that the young missionary serve as chaplain and winter at Nootka. Cueva de Los Amigos, or Friendly Cove, as it was to be known to later history, was then Spain's northernmost outpost, lying in latitude 49° 30'. The young Franciscan Padre agreed.

In Nootka, 1909, as the pages of Catala's biography unfolded before Father Stern, he realized with deep feeling that the very spot where he sat had once been hallowed by the apostolic tread of Padre Magin Catala. Father Stern read on. He read of the thirty-six years, 1794 to 1830, during which the indomitable Padre Magin had labored against sickness and trial training and Christianizing his great Indian family of eighteen hundred neophytes at the flourishing Mission of Santa Clara. Father Stern read of the death scene of Catala, the worn-out padre breathing forth his soul to God in the arms of his brother priest, Fray Jose Viader, just as the Indian neophytes were responding to the rising bell and the morning star ascending, November 22, 1830.

Thirty-six witnesses of the exemplary padre's life and labors swore to his personal virtues and holiness at the Ecclesiastical Process of 1884. As Father Stern read their testimony, the ejaculation which the early Californians were wont to use in time of need found an echo in his own heart: "Soul of Padre Magin, assist me." It was more than five years that Father Stern had then been laboring among the Indians of Nootka, on the west coast of Vancouver Island. The response to his efforts had been disheartening. He had come there as a young priest full of zeal to dedicate his life to the salvation of this lowly people. But they would not accept salvation. Only fishing, trading, money for liquor, and ruin of body and soul seemed attractive to them. They did not care about worthiness of life, nor about God.

A strange emotion trembled in Father Stern's heart as he read more of Catala. He recalled that Father Brabant, his distant neighbor Missionary, first of the heroic Belgian missionaries who worked on Vancouver Island, said the Indians had told him, on his arrival in 1870, of remembering in their distant childhood the men with long coats caught at the waist with a cord, and shaven heads, who told them of "Dios".

Father Stern seemed to sense, as he read, the com-



Courtesy Gleeson Library, University of San Francisco

From Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Round the World 1790-1795*, Volume I, page 388.

panionship of those Franciscan padres of old. In his heart a promise welled up, "O God, if You will deign to bless and make fruitful my apostolic labors among these Indians, granting this to me through the intercession of Father Catala, I will publish this to Your glory and his honor."

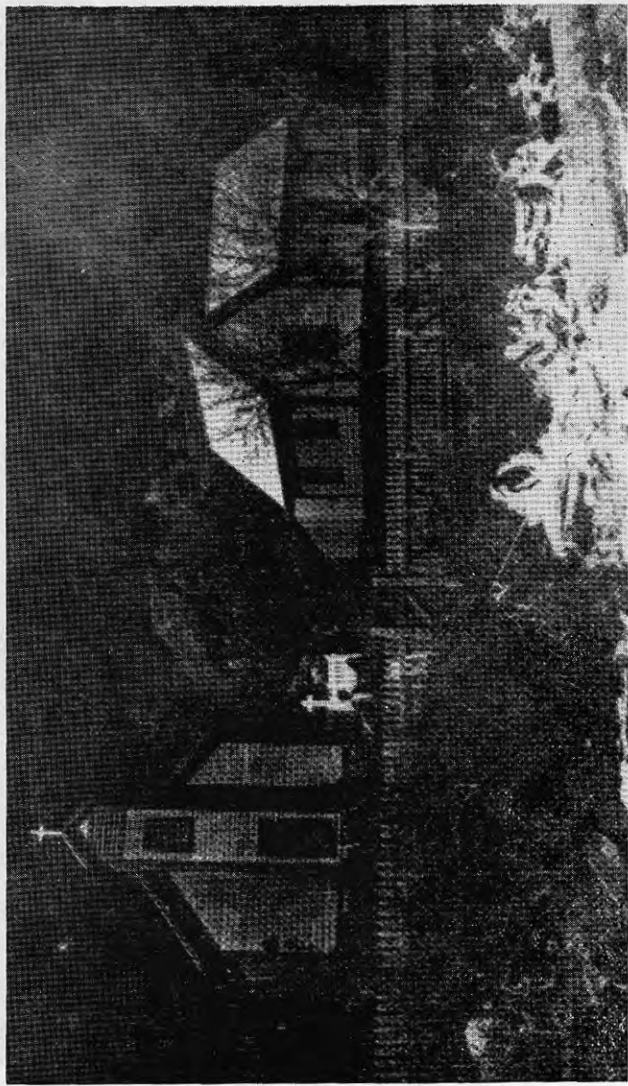
On the following day Father Stern announced to the two or three faithful souls that came to Sunday Mass: "There will be a great series of instructions beginning in the church tomorrow. Two hours talk in the morning for the women; two hours talk in the afternoon for the men. All must come."

Father Stern had tried this formula before. And before, no one came. But this Monday morning, five women came. In the afternoon, three men came. Tuesday brought eight women. Tuesday afternoon eight men. Day by day the number swelled. Within two weeks, the walls of the church could not hold the throng. Was it a movement of grace? The numbers kept increasing, and Father Stern continued his instructions. Six months went by, till Holy Saturday saw a goodly number of neophytes, men and women, bathed in the saving waters of baptism.

A new series of instructions was begun at once. New classes of Indians, old and young, presented themselves. Children were gathered into a school. The Faith manifestly had taken hold at Nootka. Nootka men and Nootka women, between fishing trips came to the Father's house to ask how they could help him. Did he want his garden weeded? Did he want his church painted, or the floor scrubbed? The fervent converts only waited the priest's wishes to busy themselves as Nootka men and Nootka women had not been seen to busy themselves before.

"If you grant this favor," Father Stern had promised to God, "I will also make a pilgrimage to the tomb of Padre Catala at Mission Santa Clara in California. I will publish the results of my promise."

It was a year of undoubted graces in the life of Father Stern and in the development of the Catholic mission at



Marble Cross on Nootka Island in honor of Padre Magin Catala
erected by Rev. Aloysius S. Stern, 1906.

Nootka. But in Father Stern's own heart there was now a new, strange stirring. The thought of adding the obligation of religious vows to the already noble calling of his diocesan priesthood had begun to occupy his mind. He wrote, and arranged to make a three-day retreat at the community residence of Seattle College, Washington. Benedictine Peace, and Franciscan Lady Poverty were appealing strongly to the missionary's soul. Was it a call from God?

To make sure, the young priest returned to his West Coast Indians and worked more ardently than ever for them. "He is Nootka Man, now", they said of him, "for he speaks our language". However, amid continued favorable results in his mission work, the voice of the spirit seemed to whisper: "Fulfil your promise! Go to Santa Clara. Offer yourself for the religious life." Finally Father Stern sought and obtained the needed permissions from his Bishop, while his good friend, and nearest neighbor, the missionary of Kyuquot, Father Emile Sobry agreed to look after Nootka.

Father Stern at Santa Clara offered Mass each day for ten days at the Altar of the Crucifix, before which Padre Catala was known to have spent long nights in devotion. It was of this life-size crucifix that eye-witnesses in the ecclesiastical processes had averred the figure of the Christ unbent to embrace the gray-robed Franciscan and to lift him above the ground.

In a metal casquet close beside the Altar of the Crucifix, the dust of the venerable Padre Catala's remains rested. And a stone's throw away, in the old Campo Santo, the burying ground beside the mission wall, there lay also the remains of certain Indians "de Nootke", from Nootka, as the burial registers record. Perhaps their prayers, too, were being joined on high with those of Padre Catala to ask special graces for the anxious Father Stern. At least God's ways are not our ways, and so we need not be surprised to find Father Stern at the end of his ten days retreat seeking permission of his Bishop to

apply for entrance at the Jesuit Novitiate of Los Gatos, California.

Father Emile Sobry who, upon the departure of Father Stern from Nootka, had generously taken over the work, gave the writer the following account of the Indians as he found them. "I found a better disposition toward religion among the Indians at Nootka than I had encountered among the Indians where I had been laboring. For this reason, when Nootka was left to my charge, I determined to make my headquarters there."

Father Stern until very recently was the Catholic Chaplain of the city and county hospital of San Francisco, where, besides the many Catholics who come under his care, he has received hundreds of non-Catholics into the fold. At present he is stationed at the rectory of St. Ignatius Church, San Francisco, much incapacitated by sickness, yet busy still. But amid his busy work, his thoughts go back at times to Nootka, and Padre Catala. He wants the results of that evening's reading at Nootka made known. He hopes that others will seek the intercession of the Holy Man of Santa Clara even as he did.

In 1908, the Sacred Congregation of Rites authorized the second investigation regarding Padre Magin Catala's life and virtue. The testimony gathered under Father Richard A. Gleeson, S.J., was sent to Rome, and the Cause of Padre Catala now rests with the Sacred Congregation. A prayer for the successful issue of the Cause was authorized by Archbishop Hanna of San Francisco in 1916, and by subsequent ecclesiastical authority.

The devout faithful may be seen visiting the Padre's grave beside the Altar of the Crucifix in the restored Mission of Santa Clara. The mention of the holy man by the present Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Amleto Cicognani, in his book, "Sanctity in America", may perhaps re-awaken the Cause, and bring back again to California lips the cherished invocation, "Soul of Padre Magin, assist me!"