



# PORO

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Standing at the slope of a low hill and complementing the vista of a laid-back town, the church of Poro is the first visible structure that greets approaching visitors to the island from the open sea. Poro is one of the two municipalities in Poro Island. The island, along with those of Pacijan, Ponson, and Tulang form part of the Camotes group of islands. Poro comes from the Waray word "Puro" which means island.

The Jesuit historian and cartographer Pedro Murillo (1749) wrote that Poro was burned around 1663 by invading Moros from Jolo. At this time, Poro was administered by the Jesuits which, according to another account written by the Fr. Juan Francisco de San Antonio, started around 1737.

Although its nearest town on mainland Cebu is Carmen, Poro was placed as a vicariage of Mandaue. It was at first administered by Jesuits from Leyte and later from Mandaue until it was made into an independent parish on December 14, 1847 under the patronage of the Sweetest Name of Jesus (Sto. Niño). The first parish priest was Fr. Florentino Dalmacio, a secular, but in 1849 it was placed under the administration of the Augustinian Recollects with the appointment of Fray Nicolas Gonzales (Yap et al. 1981, p. 98).



The present-day parish church, which was well on its way to completion in 1884, is made of coral stones. It is a rectangular structure with one main nave and a simple façade divided into three horizontal segments. The triangular pediment of the façade, topped with a crucifix on a square base at the apex, is very large and bereft of any décor. At the middle section, two small rectangular windows flank a niche



*Poro. (Camotes islands) This was made a parish by the Diocese on December 14, 1847, under the patronage of the Dulcísimo Nombre de Jesus. It was a vicarage of Mandaue (but the nearest town of the island of Cebu is Carmen).*

*The Church: It is made of stone with one nave, of tiled roof; about 42 yards long, 13 wide and 16 tall.*

*Cemetery: With mamposteria, about 64 yards long, the same in width. The wall is about a yard and a palm tall.*

*The Parish Convent: It is made of timber; one half of its height is of mamposteria and the other part is of tabique pampango. The roof is of clay tiles, but in a bad state. It measures about 31 yards long, 14 wide and 12 tall, (up to the edge of the roof).*

*Vicarages: it has the so called Tag-anito about two hours, with public buildings in good state.*

*This town is situated at the southwest on the middle island of the three islands (that make up Camotes). It has for collaterals the town of San Francisco, about an hour to the northwest, and to the east, about eight hours, the separate island of Pilar.*

*Felipe Redondo, 1886, pp. 160-161.*



that contains an image of the Sto. Niño. At the lower section, paired pilasters, each resting on square bases, and rectangular windows flank both sides of the main entrance. The frieze is decorated with eight-point stars alternated by wheels. A tall contemporary belltower, whose design suggests a Muslim influence, stands beside the church.

The interiors of the church, along with the belfry and the nearby rectory, are already modern except for some elements at the ceiling such as the horizontal wooden beams, each resting on a corbel attached to the top of each of the rectangular columns that support the walls. The church faces the town square where the municipal hall is also situated. Barely a few meters of reclaimed land separate one side of the church as well as a gymnasium from the sea. A two-lane concrete road, the main highway on the island, runs between the church and the gymnasium and connects the town with the other towns of the island.

