On February 5, 1597, twenty-six Christians—six European [Franciscan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franciscan) [missionaries](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missionary), three Japanese [Jesuits](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesuits) and seventeen Japanese[laymen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laymen) including three young boys—were executed by [crucifixion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crucifixion) in [Nagasaki](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nagasaki%2C_Nagasaki). These individuals were raised on crosses and then pierced through with spears.

After the Shogun decided that Christianity needed to be suppressed, the Christian teachers were ordered to leave the country. They did so; however, a few decided to return secretly, including the Augustinian Father Pedro de Zuiniga and the Dominican Father Luis Florez. They went on board a ship from Manila captained by a Japanese Christian named Joachim. The vessel, however, was captured and plundered by the Dutch who reported to the Japanese (into whose custody they were given) that there were Catholic priests on board. They were imprisoned in Hirato; however, they (along with a number of other Christians) broke out of prison with the help of another Dominican father from Manila.

All the prisoners were recaptured, and the emperor ordered the governor of Nagasaki to burn alive Captain Joachim with his entire officers and crew, the two priests, and all the other monks in this and other prisons (both foreigners and Japanese), as well as all the wives and children of those who had previously been martyred.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martyrs_of_Japan#cite_note-nagasakimartyrs-3)

The governor then proceeded to Hirato and examined the prisoners. He questioned them about whether they were Christians, where they were born and when they were baptized. He instructed them to renounce Christianity, and that the Emperor had given him a promise that if they did so, their lives would be spared. They repeatedly refused to renounce the faith. Therefore, the governor ordered the captain and the two priests to be burned alive, and for ten sailors to be beheaded.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martyrs_of_Japan#cite_note-nagasakimartyrs-3) The three to be burned asked for what reason they were being killed, and when upon being told they were being executed for illegally seeking to spread the Christian faith in Japan, they rejoiced for being able to die for Christ.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martyrs_of_Japan#cite_note-nagasakimartyrs-3)

They were executed in Nagasaki on August 19, 1622. The sailors were first beheaded, as the three were made ready for burning. Before they were burned, Joachim began preaching to the crowd that had come to watch. He was ordered to stop, but he asked what greater pain they could inflict upon him that than which they were already going to do. The fire was then set and Joachim continued to preach as he was being burned.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martyrs_of_Japan#cite_note-nagasakimartyrs-3)

The heads of the three were removed and placed upon a board as a public warning. The bodies were left where they were for several days, and large crowds of Japanese Christians arrived, venerating them. The guards beat them. The son of [Álvaro Manrique de Zúñiga, marqués de Villamanrique](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%81lvaro_Manrique_de_Z%C3%BA%C3%B1iga%2C_marqu%C3%A9s_de_Villamanrique) (viceroy of New Spain) obtained a relic of Pedro de Zúñiga,[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martyrs_of_Japan%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-nagasakimartyrs-3) to whom he was related.

The governor of Nagasaki then retrieved 52 prisoners from [Omura](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%8Cmura%2C_Nagasaki%22%20%5Co%20%22%C5%8Cmura%2C%20Nagasaki), including 21 monks, some of whom had been imprisoned for many years in very cruel conditions. At the same time, he also summoned an additional 30 prisoners in Nagasaki. The governor ordered all of them to be sentenced to death by beheading. This execution order also included the prisoners' children.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martyrs_of_Japan#cite_note-nagasakimartyrs-3)

On the day of execution (September 10, 1622), prisoners carried crosses in their hands, while singing hymns praising God and condemning Japanese gods, and many of the crowd that came to watch them included Christians, with reportedly crying and wailing by those who recognized the priests who had converted them. The priests in answer to this, told the crowd that God would give them other teachers and that they needed to keep their faith until death.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martyrs_of_Japan#cite_note-nagasakimartyrs-3)

There were two groups of executions: one by burning and the other by beheading. Four Japanese lay Christians who had entertained priests in their houses, as well as twenty-five priests and monks (European and Japanese) were issued a stake where he/she was to be burned.