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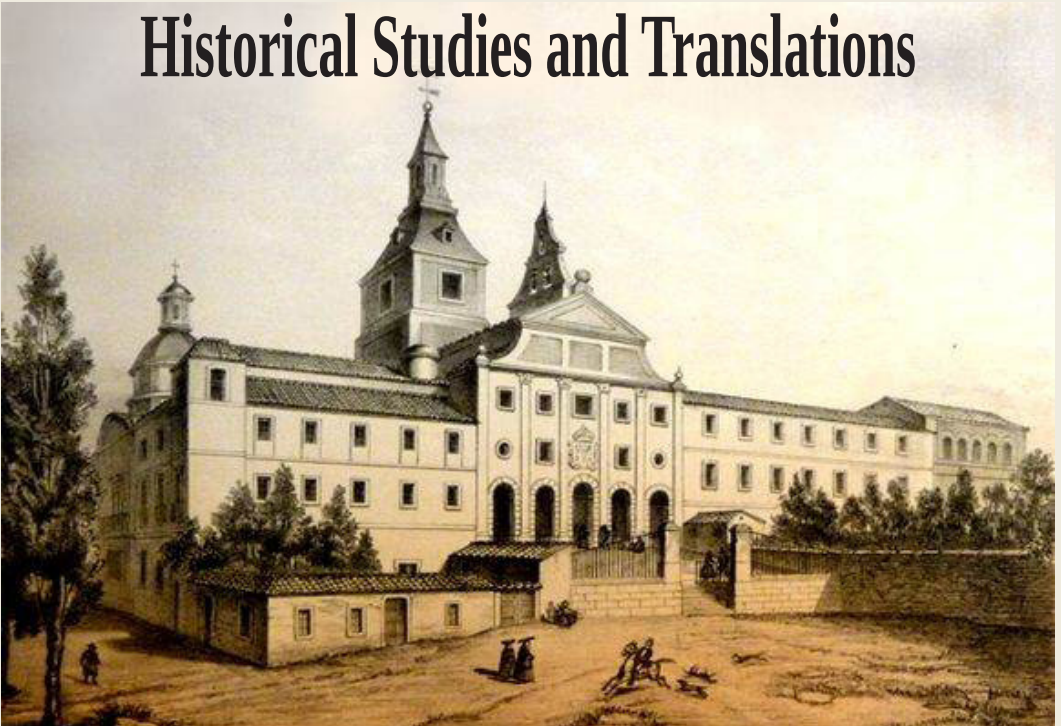
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Journal of Theology and Pastoral Life

**AMOR
DIFUSSIVUS III:
Historical Studies and Translations**



**In Commemoration of the 400th Anniversary of the First General Chapter
of the Congregation of the Augustinian Recollects (1621)**

EMMANUEL LUIS A. ROMANILLOS

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Quaerens is published twice a year, in June and December, by Recoletos School of Theology, Inc. of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno, Order of the Augustinian Recollects (OAR). Its name draws its inspiration from the celebrated Anselmian formula for theology: *fides quaerens intellectum*. The title is also very Augustinian. It calls to mind the constancy of spirit required of every restless heart: “Sic ergo quaesumus tanquam inventuri; et sic inveniamus, tanquam quaesituri” (*De Trin.* IX, 1, i).

As a journal of theology and pastoral life, **Quaerens** is committed to the noble mission of deepening the modern-day Christian’s understanding and praxis of the faith, of fostering an atmosphere of dialogue with cultures and religions throughout the world in general and throughout Asia in particular, and of promoting a scholarly theological discourse that addresses the specific pastoral needs and questions of our time.

The Editors welcome contributions pertinent to theology and pastoral life. The Editorial Board is not responsible for published opinions. It is further to be understood that approval of an article for publication does not necessarily imply endorsement of the views of the author.

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PROVINCE OF ST. EZEKIEL MORENO

ORDER OF AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECTS

Message

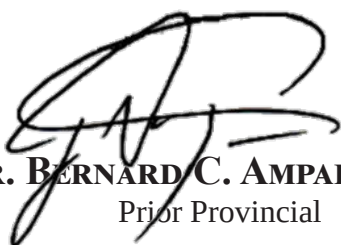
The Augustinian Recollects with the prior general, his general council and the four provincials opened our commemoration of the Fourth Centenary of the First General Chapter on 29 November 2021 at the National Library of Spain] in Madrid. The National Library now occupies the land area of the 17th century Recollect convent, site of the first general chapter of the Congregation of the Augustinian Recollects, created by Pope Gregory XV through his decree *Militantis Ecclesiae* on 5 June 1621. In the General Chapter of 19-30 November, the four new Provinces were set up: Castile, Andalusia, Aragon, and the Philippines under the patronage of St. Nicholas of Tolentino. In 1629 the Colombian Recollects formed the fifth Province. On 30 November 2021, a thanksgiving Eucharist was celebrated at the age-old Monastery of the Incarnation of the Augustinian Recollect Contemplative Nuns in the Spanish capital. The Quatercentenary celebration ends on 5 December 2022 with the 434th Anniversary of the Birth of the Augustinian Recollection.

Our Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno comprising the Philippines, Taiwan, Indonesia and Sierra Leone in West Africa was born in 1998 from the Mother Province of St. Nicholas of Tolentino that counts on various apostolates in Spain, China, Great Britain, Italy, USA and Latin America.

It behooves us therefore to be deeply thankful to the Almighty for the good fortune we received throughout these four centuries. We look ahead with optimism and confidence to the bright future of the Augustinian Recollect Family the world over. We therefore echo what Fr. Miguel Miró, prior general in 2010-2022, had declared at the opening event: “This Quatercentenary is an opportunity to let the Lord touch our hearts... Let us all pause for a while, let us extricate poposals of life and hope for the future.”

Through this book we prepare the people entrusted to our care, teach them our charism and make them “follow our spirituality which is God’s gift” –as Pope Francis told the 56th OAR General Chapter gathered in Rome in March 2022 - “and pass it on forward.” The Holy Father further urged us “to entrust our gift to those who collaborate with us”

May the Triune God shower more blessings upon us in this year of grace even as the Order Undauntedly faces more challenges in the years ahead in the service of Our Lord and His Holy Mother Church



FR. BERNARD C. AMPARADO, OAR
Prior Provincial

Foreword

The Province of Saint Ezekiel Moreno has made the most of the celebrations of the 500 Years of Christianity in the Philippines and the Quadricentenary of the Foundation of the Mother Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino by rendering the deserved homage to Professor Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos. In a most fitting way, it has further done so by making a good part of his contributions to the history of the Augustinian Recollects in the Magellanic Archipelago available to the Filipino people through the research journal of its Recoletos School of Theology. It is a trilogy entitled *Amor Diffusivus*, with a pleasant Augustinian flavor, which gathered seventy-seven articles that highlight to perfection his twin facet of researcher and disseminator.

Fruits of his original research works are on the ministry of Blessed Vicente Soler, Blessed Julián Moreno, Blessed León Inchausti and Blessed José Rada in the Philippines as well as on Fray José Celis, a Filipino Creole, who can be considered a distant forerunner of Philippine independence. Equally valuable are his detailed clarifications on the veneration of the age-old icons of the Black Nazarene of Quiapo and Our Lady of Mount Carmel and the presence of the Order in Zambales, Mindanao, Palawan, Cavite, Bohol, Siquijor and Negros.

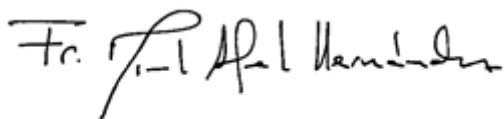
This volume I have the pleasure of presenting to you contains thirty historical studies. Eleven of them stem from his own pen. The rest are all his own translations, except one, published in Spanish and very often enriched with footnotes and an updated bibliography. In him then the fruits of his twin vocation coexist. And one or the other has enriched Augustinian Recollect historiography. It has been culled from primary sources which had been lying there shut out within local walls and they have been brought out into the open and made accessible to researchers and the reading public. A good part of that history remains unexplored and even that explored history employs a language that nowadays very few Filipinos have access to.

Without any trace of a doubt, the target readers who can benefit most from such historical studies are the very religious of the Province. For the first time a great number of confreres may now possibly connect with their forebears and may unquestionably feel as members of a family that has immensely contributed to the human and religious formation of their nation. Reading them shall contribute to bolstering the corporate identity of the Province. Furthermore, it is my hope that it would encourage the confreres of today to continue the work of their confreres of yesteryears.

Many perished in a violent manner in the exercise of their ministry and almost all knew how to sacrifice their affections for their families at the altar of apostolate. Likewise, the historical studies shall be of use for so many people of the Islands who look into the lives and Christian faith at the charitable shadow of our religious. In these works they would come up with precise information on the persons and circumstances that accompanied them in their birth and in their first steps in the world.

Before putting this brief foreword to a close, it gives me pleasure to highlight the author's skill of reconciling his love for everything that is Recollect with the objectivity and fidelity to historical truth. Examples of that are his extensive researches on

the Filipino nation's veneration of the Black Nazarene and Our Lady of Mount Carmel, on the narrative of the ups and downs that constrained the Order to part with those missions in Mindanao in the second half of the 19th century and on other myriad issues poorly addressed by current historiography.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Fr. Miguel Ángel Hernández Domínguez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some capitalization and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

FR. MIGUEL ÁNGEL HERNÁNDEZ DOMÍNGUEZ
Prior General

Notes from the Editor

The Quærens editorial board is privileged to present the three volumes of *Amor Diffusivus* (Diffusive Love), anthologies of the research outputs of Augustinian Recollect historians. We publish translations of research works of various Spanish writers and historians, including archival sources hitherto unknown in the Philippines. Our first *Amor Diffusivus* volume in 2020 commemorated the Quadricentennial of the Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino (1621-2021). The 2021 volume observed the glorious milestones anent the Quincentennial of Christianity in the Philippines (1521-2021). This 2022 volume calls to mind the Quatercentenary of the First General Chapter of the Augustinian Recollects (1621-2021).

It is indeed opportune for this Quatercentenary to publish eighteen Spanish historical studies and narratives which were all translated into English by Emmanuel Luis Romanillos. Eight research works on the Augustinian Recollection in the Philippines during the three centuries of evangelization were done by Angel Martinez Cuesta, the Order's prolific historian par excellence, and culled mostly from his three volumes of *Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos* [History of the Augustinian Recollects] that deal directly with the Philippine missions. Three excerpted studies deal with the Recollects and the Revolution in Cavite, the Recollects in Siquijor and the post-revolutionary period in Negros Island. A study of the Church history of Caraga Antigua was written for the 25th anniversary of Tandag Diocese.

General Chronicler Manuel Carceller's three narratives focus on the Dagohoy Rebellion, on the Controversial cession of our missions and parishes in Mindanao to the Jesuits and on World War II in Manila, Cebu City and San Juan, Batangas. Added too are accounts on three Recollect missionaries affected by the Philippine Revolution. Of special note are Saint Nicholas Province

Official Chronicler Licinio Ruiz's history of Recollect parish in Cebu and Camotes Islands and Filipino Church Historian Rene Paglinawan's research penned in English on the Order in the 20th century Philippines.

The second part gathers in *Amor Diffusivus III* the authors's historical lectures (one delivered at a 2004 national conference in Manila; another at a 2019 local conference in Bohol) as well as two online lectures in 2021 via Zoom on Blessed Jose Rada and Blessed Leon Inchausti in Bohol and on the Church confiscation decrees of Spanish Minister Mendizabal. There is a chapter published in 2021 on the Diamond Jubilee of University of San Jose-Recoletos that saw print in Madrid, Spain. Hitherto unpublished are two studies on the minor seminary, canonically established in 1948 at San Carlos City, Negros Occidental, and on three historical markers installed by the National Historical Commission of the Philippines.

We are cognizant of the great relevance, import and impact of these studies in Philippine church history-both national and local. The direct beneficiaries of the rich information arsenal, naturally, are our very own confreres, aspirants. Postulants, novices, professed theology students, both Augustinian Recollect Sisters and Contemplative Nuns, Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity, Recollect Augustinian Youth, Marian confraternities, faculty members, students, academic and non-academic staff as well as administrators of our high schools, seminaries, colleges and universities, most of all our parishioners in the Philippines, Taiwan and Sierra Leone. All other history researchers and enthusiasts will surely find in it a fount of knowledge on top of its myriad references and archival sources.

Christ Jesus is the Lord of History-as George W. Rutles says-because "He guides it and gives it purpose. Without what we call

Providence, which is God's plan for living, the pattern of human history, history would be just a tangle and not a plan at all, but rather a meaningless cycle, as many ancient philosophers thought and as many bewildered and bored people think today." May the Lord of History and Savior reign over history forever.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Caparas', with a stylized, cursive script.

FR. RADNI L. CAPARAS, OAR, SThD

Research, Planning and Development
Recoletos School of Theology, Inc

I

Historical Studies and Translations

by

Various Authors

The Augustinian Recollects in the 17th Century and the Martyrs in Japan

Ángel Martínez Cuesta OAR

Introduction

The early years of the nascent Augustinian Recollection saw its expansion that was certainly not to the liking of Observant confreres. The year 1597 was the beginning of a new phase of troubles. The Province of Castile viewed with envy the increasing number of novices in the reformed convents. They tried to put obstacles to the acceptance of novices as well as to the foundation of houses. Four houses—the Observants argued—would be a sufficient number for the Recollects. The notable diversity of their lifestyles and the formation of Recollects in their own novitiates and philosophates finally led to an open confrontation. The Calced Augustinians looked down with disdain on the Recollects even in public, considering themselves superior to them. But the Recollects were neither free from ambition and egoism.

All told, both Recollect and Augustinian procurators rushed to Rome to settle the full-blown rancor and hostilities. Under the protection of the prior general, the procurators came up with a “peace treaty” which was confirmed by the pope on 22 October 1598. Apparently, it was enough to restore peace and tranquility

between the warring factions. The four convents would remain forever under the jurisdiction of the Castilian province, but the Recollect friars would wear the habit and live the lifestyle for which the Recollection was established.

Father Gregorio de Alarcón had wanted the creation of an autonomous Discalced province but what was instead granted was the appointment of a Recollect councilor in the Castilian province. Pope Clement VIII approved the request despite the Philip III's strong opposition. A papal decree was subsequently issued on 5 October 1600.

In December 1601, the so-called *capítulo de cuatro cabezas* [chapter of four heads] took place. Fourteen Recollect delegates met in Portillo, and a collegial body of four councilors—composed of Rodrigo de Ayala, Gregorio de Alarcón, Juan de Vera and Jerónimo de Saona—was elected to govern the Recollection. Not long after, the reformist Pope Clement VIII decreed the separation of the Recollects from the province of Castile and the establishment of the “province of Saint Augustine of Discalced Recollect friars of Spain.” The papal brief *Apostolici muneris* was issued on 11 February 1602. There were but seventy friars in five convents: Talavera, Portillo, Nava del Rey, Madrid and El Toboso in Toledo. This last convent in Toledo was located in a shrine dedicated to *Nuestra Señora de los Remedios* [Our Lady of the Remedies]. Father Jerónimo de Saona had established it in 1600.

The first provincial chapter took place in Valladolid. In it, Father Juan de San Jerónimo was elected prior provincial. A man of mature judgment, experienced in religious observance, he enjoyed the respect of the papal nuncio. Most of the chapter ordinances were aimed at strengthening the common life as well as the spirit of prayer, including norms on cloister, mental prayer, absolute retreat of eight days every year in the solitude of one's cell, Saturday Mass in honor of the Blessed Mother, lectures to the community, personal interview by the prior with the friars, and the prior's obligation to follow the community in everything. The succeeding years saw more convents established. More formation houses were opened.

But another crisis beset the new province in July 1608 when after a series of heart-rending events that involved mainly two personalities—Father Juan de Vera and Father Gregorio de Alarcón—the Recollect province was suppressed by the papal bull *Alias dilectus filius*. After representations made by the Spanish monarch and by Recollect superiors, Pope Paul V reconstituted the province by his brief *Alias postquam* on 23 January 1610.

It was Pope Gregorio XV who issued on 5 June 1621 the papal brief *Militantis Ecclesiae* that raised the province to the rank of congregation under a vicar general. The vicar general wielded the highest authority in the new congregation. He was authorized by the papal decree to create provinces according to the geographical distribution of the convents. The general chapter took place in November 1621. The thirty-five chapter delegates elected Father Jerónimo de la Resurrección as vicar general. Four provinces were subsequently created: Saint Augustine, Our Lady of the Pillar, [then] Blessed Thomas of Villanova, and Saint Nicholas of Tolentino which was missionary in nature and had all its houses in the Philippines.

Three important documents were then legislated: *Constitutions* (1631), patterned chiefly after the *Forma de vivir* and the Augustinian constitutions of 1625; *Ceremonial* (2nd edition in 1664); *Ritual* (1639-1640). The following three books of significance to the Recollection were authored by the Colombian Father Andrés de San Nicolás: *Historia general de la Orden* (1664), a Recollect commentary on the Rule of Saint Augustine (1656) and a collection of papal documents related to the Recollection (1664). The fourth book *Teología mística* (1644), a “practical and systematic work which focused the ascetical and mystical directions of the Congregation for some decades.” More houses gradually dotted the Peninsula. In the first twenty years of the Recollection, nineteen convents and two hospices were established. Eight more convents were set up. In the 1638-1688 period, however, only two convents and one hospice were founded. The concentration of the corporate effort on the organization and consolidation of the convents were some causes of the slowdown of the efforts of

the congregation to found more houses. Added to these were the growing economic hardships of the nation and parallel opposition posed by the government and existent religious communities to the proliferation of new houses of friars, especially in cities already saturated with such religious convents.

The *Forma de vivir* (7, 1) seems to restrict the apostolic activity of the friars when it bans “going out for burials” and confessions “unless those of the sick.” It is clear that its norms tend to create a way of life with a strongly contemplative character wherein asceticism, silence, solitude and prayer prevailed over the apostolate. However, these did not exclude it nor much less established some incompatibility between those two poles of Augustinian and mendicant life. Neither group attendance at burials nor confessions outside the convent which were the two topics that could astonish the modern reader were well seen at that time. The very Constitutions of the Augustinians, despite dismissing the apostolic aspect of the Order in a few words, did not forget to regulate confessions, “especially those of women.”

The first Augustinian Recollects did not see any contradiction between what was proposed in the *Forma de vivir* and the apostolate. The conventuals of Talavera de la Reina Convent had devoted themselves to preaching, to the confessional and to spiritual direction. At the foundation of their very own first convent (Portillo, Zaragoza) in 1590, they made commitment to the assistance of the dying in the town, to hear confessions inside and outside the confines of the convent and to deliver Lenten sermons and other sermons and in adjoining towns. Seven of the ten conventuals would especially devote time to preaching and to the administration of sacraments. This same position was later adopted in the succeeding year in its second foundation at Nava del Rey. They were heirs of the Augustinian tradition, which as a mendicant order granted great importance to apostolic activity. They did not ignore that Saint Augustine had repudiated the flight to the desert as a temptation (*Confessions* 10. 43, 70) and had exhorted the monks to propose their own *otium* to the needs of the Church (*Epist* 48, 2).

The Philippine Missions

The First Mission

The Philippines played a very significant role in the history of the Augustinian Recollects. The Southeast Asian archipelago has been since time immemorial one of the main evangelization fields of the Order. In 1590 and 1596, barely two years and six years, respectively, after its birth the mission territories already appeared in their plans. But the Philippine missions were not the only field where the pioneering Recollects practiced their Augustinian ideal of *amor diffusivus*. But definitely this Spanish colony was the principal field of their apostolic fervor.

The apostolic spirit, including the missions, was intimately related with the reformed life. Discalced and Reformed Franciscans were all over the New World in the 15th century. Saint Teresa of Jesus sent Discalced Carmelites to Mexico and the Congo in Africa. Of course, we cannot forget the Augustinian ideals during the days of Saint Thomas of Villanueva (†1555). When the Recollect provincial voiced out to them the mission plan in 1605, there was an enthusiastic response from Spanish communities.

No convent in Spain was totally without any form of apostolate. All the monasteries had churches or chapels open to the public. There was a great number of religious who devoted their time to the pulpit, to the confessional and to the assistance of the sick. The annals of history record the names of the friars who spent years and years in the confessional and in spiritual direction. There were likewise confraternities and pious associations supervised by the Recollects. In 1592 the Portillo convent sought permission to erect the *Cofradía de la Correa* [Confraternity of the Cincture, Confraternity of our Lady of Consolation]. Later the same confraternity sprang up in various parts of Spain. Such associations as Confraternity of *Cristo del Desamparo* (Christ of the Abandonment) were set up in Madrid in 1658. The Confraternity of the Guardian Angel was founded in Valencia, and that of *Nuestra Señora de los Remedios* [Our Lady of the Remedies] in Zaragoza. In Valladolid, the Recollects established the confraternity of the Sacramental of the Souls in honor of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino.

The foundational accords of the pioneer convents of the Augustinian Recollection stipulated that friars delivered sermons in Lent, Advent and other festive days in order to encourage people to contrition and repentance. Preaching was an occupation that no convent could do without. The pioneering Augustinian Recollects were further assigned to hear confessions regularly, visit the sick and assist the dying in the vicinity of the monasteries. The help extended to their parish priests ordinarily took the form of confessional duties and protracted sojourn in abandoned towns to minister to their inhabitants' spiritual and sacramental needs. In one town the friar taught the rudiments of education to young children. In Barcelona, the religious had varied ministries: to attend to people in the death row, preparing them for a good death. The hospital apostolate and prison ministry were also common tasks. In 1647 and 1651, a good number of religious lost their lives in the plague that decimated the towns of eastern and southern Spain. In Valencia, they took care of some districts. The epidemic decimated 40% of the population of Sevilla where thirty religious in the Recollect convent perished. There were three friars who were fatalities in Madrid as they assisted the plague-stricken people.

The memorials addressed to authorities in the Peninsula and penned by the Augustinian superiors Mateo de Mendoza and Francisco de Ortega petitioned Recollect friars from Spain. These religious aimed at reviving the Augustinian missionaries' apostolic zeal they viewed as having lost its fervor. The dearth of personnel was the main reason. Many other causes like the incomplete juridical structure of the Province and more urgent needs hindered at that time its establishment in the Philippines. Towards the end of 1603 the idea of traveling to the Philippines gained more ground and more adherents. The Recollects were goaded to dispatch a letter to the Spanish monarch. King Philip III found the opinion of the Council of the Indies favorable: "Your Majesty would be best served and you can grant license to allow them to pass to the Philippines and establish themselves in those islands where there is great need for ministers of the Gospel, and these religious would be exactly on new ground for the poverty and austerity that

they profess.” The monarch gathered the opinion of his officials and replied on 23 December 1604: “This religious group wishes to send religious to the Indies; inform the superiors and see to it that they are men of letters and age.”

In April 1605, the provincial chapter approved the Philippine mission project “with universal applause,” considering it “a great service to God” (*Crónicas* 1, 397-399). The outgoing prior provincial Father Juan de San Jerónimo was designated head of the missionary expedition since he was its chief originator, planner and negotiator.

The first Augustinian Recollect mission under Father Juan de San Jerónimo consisted of the following thirteen religious: Andrés Cánovas de San Nicolás, Jerónimo de Cristo, Miguel Bombau de la Madre de Dios, Diego de la Anunciación, a former prior provincial, Pedro Argentaes de San Fulgencio, Rodrigo de San Miguel [also known as Rodrigo Aganduru Móriz], Francisco de la Madre de Dios, Francisco Bautista, the theology student Andrés del Espíritu Santo, and the four brothers Juan de San Guillermo, Jerónimo de la Madre de Dios, Simón de San José and a namesake Juan de San Jerónimo. They arrived at Sevilla in different groups, having to travel from Madrid across La Mancha and Andalusia on foot for weeks and months. In their journey to Sevilla, they wore the habit of black sackcloth that covered down to the ankle, with short sleeves and interior clothing. Father Juan de San Jerónimo arrived last as he had attended the provincial chapter in Madrid.

In May 1605, Father Juan met his thirteen missionaries in Sevilla in the convent of the Augustinian Observants and on 12 July they lifted anchor at Sanlúcar de Barrameda and embarked on their journey to Mexico. On board the ship *Santa María del Juncal*, each missionary was provided with a habit, bed, blanket, pillow and food provisions.

The transoceanic odyssey was most unpleasant and harsh. They fed themselves with cured meat, hardened biscuits, fish and hardly potable water. The unbearable heat was taking a toll on the poor passengers. They never interrupted their mental prayer

of two hours daily and the choral recitation of the Divine Office. In appropriate time of the day and week, they maintained their prayerful silence, fasting and discipline. If there was more than enough time for their holy practices and devotions, they would go out and preach and take care of the sick whom they served with what was necessary. Thus they earned the admiration and respect of the crew, fellow passengers and the ship captain. The mission reached Veracruz after two months and hiked to Mexico City about eighty leagues [roughly 440 kilometers] away. From there they proceeded to the port city of Acapulco.

After a two-month sojourn in Acapulco they boarded the galleon *Espíritu Santo* on 22 February 1606 for the last phase of their voyage. The maritime odyssey was marred by two almost fatal mishaps: a fire on board that might have triggered a tremendous explosion as it nearly ignited the gunpowder room and the ship nearly hit an islet that was not recorded on the map. The crew and passengers had in sight the Marianas Isles [Guam] when the saintly Father Andrés Cánovas de San Nicolás finally passed away following a brief illness, the first of the innumerable missionaries who were not able to view the land of their dreams. Against the wishes of the passengers, they cast his lifeless body into the ocean.

The ship reached San Bernardino Strait on 10 May 1606. The Recollects debarked at Cebu two days later. In the Visayan capital they were received in the convent of their confreres in the Observance. The Augustinian bishop of Cebu, Pedro de Agurto, led the religious contingent in welcoming the weary Recollects. The prelate observed that the habit they donned was the same one he had received in the reform convent years before. *A Te Deum* was intoned upon reaching the church, and before the altar they gave thanks to Almighty God for the safe arrival of the first Recollect confreres.

The new missionaries completed the quintet of the evangelizer orders of the Philippines. For three centuries the Augustinians, Augustinian Recollects, Dominicans, Franciscans and Jesuits worked in the conversion and civic-Christian formation of the Philippines. The work was hard on account of distance, the

hot climate and the geographical condition of the archipelago, the multitude of languages, the scattered and distant population centers and dearth of missionaries. These obstacles impeded their effort, even to the point of compromising the normal development of Christian life, although they never rendered it fruitless. Towards 1665 the conversion of the natives who settled in population centers could be deemed complete, almost all of them along the coasts or in the plains in the interior regions of Luzon and Panay. Nevertheless, the Muslims in the south and the numerous groups of marginalized indigenous peoples—the ancestors of the actual cultural minorities—who wandered through forests and mountains of the hinterlands—continued with their beliefs. “Apart from the very small islands, rarely were they reduced in resettlements except those along the beaches,” writes Father Tomás de San Jerónimo. The former still persevere as faithful to the Muslim religion today. The latter began to be attracted to Christian religion and to its Western customs only in the second half of the 19th century.

Conventual life in Manila

To organize the conventual life was their main concern when they arrived at Manila. They did not have to wait long in finding a decent residence for the thirteen religious. A generous man offered to the pioneers a small house and garden outside the walled city. It was in that small dwelling made of wood in Bagumbayan where the Recollects set up the first community. The religious orders in Manila invited them to their convents. An invitation they refused. The ailing friars first lodged at the Dominican convent but later transferred to the Convent of San Pablo of the Augustinian confreres.

On 24 July of the same year, they moved to the first convent and courtyard likewise in Bagumbayan, part of modern-day Luneta. Governor-General Pedro de Acuña had ordered them built. The friars named it in memory of the great Augustinian thaumaturge Saint Nicholas of Tolentino. Father Juan de San Jerónimo then expressed the idea that a new prior should be elected by the community. And it was Father Jerónimo de Cristo

who was unanimously elected prior. The icon of *Nuestra Señora de la Consolación* [Our Lady of Consolation], long revered in the Augustinian family, was installed there since the beginning of the Philippine ministry.

Another Marian icon *Nuestra Señora de la Salud* [Our Lady of Health], a gift of the Carmelite nuns of Mexico City, was taken down from the galleon in 1634, carried in solemn procession and finally enthroned at the Bagumbayan church. The Marian devotion gained numerous adherents through the centuries. The friars saw to the safety and the spiritual needs of the populace who were left out when the gates of the Intramuros were closed for the night. In subsequent years it was the residence of the provincial and renamed San Juan de Bagumbayan in honor of Saint John the Baptist. Governor Corcuera would—later in 1642—demolish the stone church and convent for security reasons. In the wake of a petition by the Recollect provincial, the temple of worship was rebuilt at the personal expense of the governor general himself who indemnified the friars with the sum of ₱25,000.

A bigger convent was erected in Intramuros in 1608. Next came the convent in Cavite Puerto built in 1616. The two convents of Cebu and San Sebastian were canonically erected in 1621. The Cavite convent always had resident priests who knew how to preach the Word of God in Spanish and Tagalog for the numerous native and Spanish residents at the Puerto.

In 1621, Vicar Provincial Rodrigo de San Miguel—noted for his sanctity, apostolic zeal and scholarship—thought it in his best judgment that the estate and house of Calumpang donated by Don Bernardino Maldonado del Castillo and his wife Doña María Enríquez were a fitting place for convalescence and retirement for missionaries after the muchneeded improvements on its sanitary conditions. Father Andrés del Espíritu Santo, his confrere and contemporary, would later recall in 1650 that it was set up

as a house of solace where religious, already fatigued by the labors of their ministry, desirous of seclusion from all noise and wishing to enjoy consolation with the permission of their superiors, might have solace.

Missionary activity

The fields of evangelization in the Philippines were all too inviting. The first Recollects had not abandoned the cloisters in Spain only to live a life of reclusion in the convents in the Philippines. Here we can say that their new charism—a strictly apostolic, missionary life—had commenced. Their number was considerably increased by Calced Augustinians who joined the new Congregation in Manila.

As early as September 1606, the Recollects took charge of the mission in Mariveles, situated in the actual province of Bataan. A little later they extended their mission towards the north, in the actual provinces of Zambales and Pangasinan, where they either founded or restored among others the missions of Bagac (1607), Masinloc (1607) and Bolinao (1609). In 1622, thanks to the reinforcements that arrived from Spain and to the novices who professed in Manila, they could accede in 1622 to the requests of the bishop of Cebu, Pedro de Arce, who at that time was looking for evangelizers for the island of Mindanao, which with its 95,000 sq. km. is the second largest in the archipelago, and a group of minor islands, of which the most important were Palawan and Cuyo where they arrived in January 1623. Years later, the spiritual administration of a mission in the island of Negros was accepted in 1626. They received mission territories in Negros (1626), Romblon, Banton, and Tablas (1635). In 1679 the huge island of Mindoro went to their hands, then Masbate in 1687 and some parishes or *doctrinas* in eastern Luzon.

The Augustinian Recollect apostolic field was doubtless the hardest, most risky and extremely inhospitable. A mere overview of the map shows that the Augustinian Recollects—the last to arrive in the Philippine missions—got to evangelize the remotest regions. All of them had earlier been somewhat abandoned by the government—so isolated from Manila and with hundreds of kilometers between them, and very exposed to frequent raids by the Moros. None of these regions were included in the distribution of mission territories that King Philip II had implemented in 1594. All of them therefore lacked regular spiritual services. Besides

their population was very scarce and more dispersed than in other areas of the archipelago. All these factors contributed greatly to the increasing administrative hardship. In effect, the scattered population posited a great number of missionaries and the small number of Christians was not enough to sustain them because the stipend of the religious depended on the number of the faithful under his supervision.

In 1682, all the ministries administered by the Recollects—only those of Romblon and Taytay—reached five hundred tributes or families. The others ranged between eighty and three hundred. Consequently, their stipends were exceedingly low and with such amounts they should attend to their sustenance and to the needs of their churches because nothing could be asked of the natives—at least in the province—who could not give anything.

A church historian has acknowledged this exceptional character of the evangelization done by the Augustinian Recollects. The Dominican historian Pablo Fernández in his *History of the Church in the Philippines (1521-1898)* has this to say on the Recollect territorial assignment:

To honor these truly self-denying religious, let it be said that it fell to their lot, in general, to minister to the poorest and more hazardous islands, and that they were able, at cost of much sacrifice, to keep them for Christ and for Spain. Their special glory lies in this, that they were able to overcome the sectaries of Islam, with the enthusiastic cooperation of their Filipino faithful and the dedication of their religious who lost their lives in the effort.

Table 1. Resident religious in the Philippines

Year	Religious
1610	16
1618	20
1660	32
1682	45*
1691	70

* Approximate number. The priests numbered 38.

The provincial chapter of 1683 entrusted the study of the *arancel* [stole or church fee] to a commission of five religious: the recently elected provincial, three former provincials and the prior of Cebu. Their report was unanimously accepted. The destitute people would not be charged but as alms and the minister may dispose of the candles in accordance with what was ordered by the *Modo de Administrar* [Manual of Administration]. With the rest, the *arancel* should range between half a peso for the burial of a child, two pesos for the “solemn burial of an adult,” and eight pesos for that of the *principales* who wished to be buried with a coffin.

Table 2. Mission expeditions in the 17th century

Year of Arrival	Religious	Year	Religious
1606	13	1645	16
1613	3	1653	24
1618	5	1662-1663	20
1620	12	1666	24
1622	24	1676	25
1623	14	1685	38
1634	13	1694	36

Source: Francisco Sádaba. *Catálogo de los Religiosos Agustinos Recoletos de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino de Filipinas desde 1606, en que llegó la primera misión, hasta nuestros días*. Madrid 1906.

Generally, two religious resided in every ministry. They should take turns in assisting the needs of the inhabitants of the *población* and those in numerous villages that depended on them.

Zambales and Bataan Missions¹

The first mission fields of the Augustinian Recollects comprise the actual provinces of Bataan and Zambales as well as the western part of Pangasinan, located northeast of Manila. These regions had already been partially explored. Dominican and Augustinian missionaries had even gone over there in the initial years of the evangelization and colonization of the Philippines. Their attempt, however, was sporadic and occasional. No authentic evangelization program was ever developed for those regions. In 1591, the Augustinian Agustín Miño was slain by the inhabitants.

According to a 1615 document, the mission was finally abandoned. The reasons cited were unhealthy climate, the natives' inordinate attachment to their traditions, and the courage and determination with which they defended such traditions. On 12 December 1606, a group of clergy justified the war against them for "the robberies they have perpetrated and continually commit and for being indomitable people, from whom no change can be humanly expected, if it is not through chastisement they are deemed so deserving of."

Rather than scaring the Augustinian Recollects, these precedents enkindled their zeal. They were thus pleased to accept the *encomendero* Hernando de Avalos' invitation. The only religious in 1606 who could communicate in the language of the place were Miguel de la Madre de Dios, Pedro de San José and the religious brother Francisco de Santa Mónica. The latter two had joined the Augustinian Recollection in Manila. Their activity was astonishing. Unmindful neither of the inhospitable terrain, nor of the scarcity of food nor the vaunted ferocity and bellicose nature of the Zambals, the unfazed missionaries crossed rivers and creeks, and climbed mountains and hills. They reduced the widely dispersed natives in order to impart to them the rudiments of the Christian faith more effectively and to prevent endless skirmishes.

¹This section on the Recollect missions of Zambales and Bataan was edited, annotated and translated from the Spanish *Historia de los agustinos recoletos I* (Madrid 1996) 374-378. This same section is published in Emmanuel Luis A. ROMANILLOS, *The Augustinian Recollects in the Philippines. Hagiography and History* (Quezon City 2001), 117-124.

The Recollects, moreover, had learned to recognize the snares of active life. They had come out of religious houses where contemplative life greatly flourished and, consequently, they were very aware of the folly of their undertakings, were they not to anchor them on God's loving kindness. Hence, the missionaries adopted a lifestyle that was exceedingly austere and wholly directed towards God: two hours of mental prayer every day, daily discipline, midnight matins, meager meals and lowly quarters.

A chronicler and missionary Andrés del Espíritu Santo discloses to us that the early ministers resided in shanties they constructed with their own hands. They subsisted almost solely on rice and vegetables. It is not strange then that their physique would be harshly affected, and death would come for them sooner than expected. In the case of Miguel de la Madre de Dios, death was hastened by a shower of stones hurled at him by furious natives. Though he did not die on the spot, he has always been revered as the Order's proto-martyr.

Humanly speaking, their work was deemed a failure. But their confreres in Manila completely identified themselves with the mission and zealously supported their endeavors. The superiors paid no heed at all to the objection posed by some lay friends. They encountered no problem in finding replacements for the fallen confreres of Mariveles. Foremost was Father Rodrigo de San Miguel.² He was very soon followed by Andrés del Espíritu Santo, Jerónimo de Cristo and others. It was their happy lot to reap the copious harvest sown by their predecessors. Within a few years they succeeded in pacifying the region and evangelizing the inhabitants. Peopled by these inhabitants, a dozen towns, including Bagac, Subic, Iba, Masinloc, Casborran, Agno and others were set up or bolstered.

²Also known as Rodrigo Aganduru Móriz. More information about him in Victorino CAPÁNAGA, *La semblanza de un gran misionero*, in BPSN 18 (1927) 82-88; Miguel APARICIO, *Tras las huellas de un religioso descalzo. Vida, obras y andanzas de Fray Rodrigo de San Miguel*, in *Mayéutica* 15 (1990) 29-53; Felipe E. JARANILLA, *The Life and Works of Father Rodrigo de San Miguel (1584-1626)*, in *Recoletos Update* 6 (1993) 14-17.

In 1618, the royal officials of Manila took cognizance of the profound transformation the province had undergone since the advent of the religious: “They had reduced the province of Zambales to the political life and to the fold of the Church, as the first conquistadors of these savages who had earlier slain all those who arrived in their territories and who—through these fathers’ hard work—are now among the safest in these islands.” The provincial chapter of 1626 decreed the establishment of a new ministry in Playa Honda.

The most vexatious period of the mission was no doubt the rebellion of Andres Malong³ (1660) in Pangasinan, supported in Zambales by Sumulay and a considerable number of people. Agustín Pamintuan, grandfather of the Talangpaz sisters who in early-18th century would give life to the Augustinian Recollect *Beaterio de San Sebastián*,⁴ took part in the uprising. The prudence and courage of some missionaries—Juan Blancas de la Madre de Dios, Bernardino de la Concepción and Luis de San José—contained the ill effects of the rebellion while reinforcements from Manila were on their way to the beleaguered towns. The Recollects, however, could not avoid the serious damages inflicted on almost all the towns. Sigayan was completely abandoned. It would be restored well into the 19th century near the Santa Cruz River.

During much of this time, there were only six priests in Zambales: two in Mariveles, two in Masinloc and another two in Bolinao. For some time a pair of missionaries took up residence

³Andres Malong was a native of Binalatongan—present-day San Carlos City—Pangasinan, and a Filipino master-of-camp in the colonial army. He rose in arms against the Spanish government in the islands in December 1660. He was arrested by a joint Filipino-Spanish force and executed in his hometown a year later. See Gregorio ZAIDE, *History of the Republic of the Philippines* (Manila 1987) 150-151.

⁴For the detailed life, times and travails of the two holy Recollect foundresses, now Servants of God, please refer to of the first volume of *Amor Diffusivus. Augustinian Recollect Icons and Biographies*, 335-358; Luciano P.R. SANTIAGO, *Stars of Peace: The Talangpaz Sisters* (Manila 2001); Maria Lirio L. GUILLERMO, *The Congregation of the Augustinian Recollect (A.R.) Sisters Since 1725* (Manila 2008).

at Sigayan, Santa Cruz today, but they were withdrawn by their superiors: first, in 1645 on account of the aggression suffered by Father Alonso de San Agustín and the subsequent burning of the town. Then in 1661 the missionaries were finally recalled due to the uprisings led by Francisco Maniago⁵ and Andres Malong.

One of the two missionaries—sometimes both of them—would periodically leave the central mission residence and visit other communities and settlements that dotted the shoreline and mountains where majority of the people continued to reside. The missionary sallies organized between 1666 and 1668 successfully reduced more than 1,500 upland dwellers. In 1655, six Recollects worked in Zambales.

The mission gained new impetus with the promotion of Cristóbal de Santa Mónica to the office of prior provincial (1668-1671).⁶ He strengthened the undermanned mission by assigning three more priests to intensify the work of pacification and evangelization of the mountain settlers. He himself took part in the evangelization undertaking every now and then. But the moving spirit of the whole enterprise was José de la Trinidad who, first as vicar provincial in 1668-1671, organized and supervised the mission. Later he carried on with the whole missionary enterprise as councilor (1671-1674) and afterwards as prior provincial (1674-1677).

In 1670, more than 2,000 mountain dwellers had already been reduced. Some of them were uplanders throughout their life. But a great majority had been former residents who had gone up to the hinterlands in the wake of past political and social disturbances. All of them settled in Cabangan, Iba, Subic, Morong and other towns.

⁵Francisco Maniago, a native of the town of Mexico, Pampanga, he led in 1660 his fellow Kapampangans to revolt against the Spanish colonizers. He successfully obtained redress for his grievances. See Gregorio ZAIDE, *History of the Republic of the Philippines*, Manila 1987, 149-150.

⁶The first time he was elected prior provincial was in 1656. After spending most of his lifetime as missionary in Bataan and Zambales, he died in Manila in 1693 at age 81. See Francisco SÁDABA, *Catálogo de los religiosos agustinos recoletos de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino de Filipinas desde el año 1606, en que llegó la primera misión a Manila, hasta nuestros días* (Madrid 1906) 89-90.

In Iba and Bagac, the Order assigned four religious who ministered to their spiritual needs. The missionaries of Bagac moved not long after to Morong.

According to Recollect chroniclers, their endeavor was a resounding success. It might have aroused the envy of the Dominicans who administered the eastern side of those mountains. For some decades now, they had wanted to replace the Recollects in Zambales. Now they took advantage of the promotion of their prior provincial Felipe Fernández de Pardo (1676) to the archbishopric of Manila in order to redouble their efforts. The Dominican friars finally acquired what they craved for in 1679. The Recollect provincial José de San Nicolás yielded to the joint decision of the archbishop and the governor general. Towards the end of 1679, he withdrew his friars from Zambales and accepted the administration of Mindoro as compensation.

The exchange did not please the Recollects at all. The Recollect provincial chapter of 1680 reversed the provincial superior's earlier decision and declared such "abandonment" null and void. It further mandated the new prior provincial to take every necessary measure so that its former possession would be returned to Saint Nicholas province. The generalate did not view the exchange with approving eyes. After some hesitation, it decided to uphold the resolution of the provincial chapter and submitted an appeal to the Council of the Indies.

In 1682, the Spanish monarch took cognizance of the appeal of the Recollects. In 1712, after decades of litigation, the Recollects could return to their "beloved ministries in Zambales, first-born offspring of their spirit." During all these years, the provincial chapters backed up by an interpretation of the general chapter of 1690 never failed to appoint superiors to these ministries.

The missionaries no doubt performed the enormous dual task of civilization and evangelization. They pacified the region, induced thousands of nomads and Negritos to settle in towns. They further consolidated the few existent towns and revitalized new ones. Juan Blancas, Bolinao parish priest in 1656-1662, promoted primary education and set up a big group of Augustinian Recollect

tertiaries who distinguished themselves through their piety, charity and social work. We likewise owe to Juan Blancas the foundation of the municipality of Anda from a group of resettled people who had earlier fled to the hinterlands. In 1649, Francisco de San José was victorious in his defense of the people of Masinloc from recurrent raids by Moros.

Nonetheless, it would be naive to think that their work was perfect or that upon their departure they had left behind a solidly founded political and Christian community. Neither time nor the number of missionaries would have consented to that. In 1686, Dominican missionaries unearthed several superstitions in the outskirts of Bolinao and in the uplands of the central part of the district. The friars did not hesitate to impute it to the superficial character of the Recollect evangelization effort. According to them, the religious assigned in Zambales had always been very small in number. They did not reach many parts of the mission except twice a year. Charges of immorality against some of them were not wanting.

Mindanao and Palawan

In 1622, the congregation considerably widened its missionary horizon. The reinforcements that arrived from Spain in 1618 and vocations to the novitiate in Manila already made the opening of new fields of work possible. Towards the end of 1620 their superiors approached the bishop of Cebu requesting for new *doctrinas*. Bishop Pedro de Arce very gladly acceded to their petition. On 1 March 1621, he entrusted to the Recollects the whole northeastern portion of Mindanao, from Butuan to Cateel and Caraga, as well as the islands of Dinagat and Siargao. On 27 August of the following year the same bishop further handed over to them the Calamianes and Cuyo which was vacated by the diocesan priest Juan de Santa Cruz. The first missionaries arrived in Cuyo in January 1623.

Mindanao as well as the Calamianes archipelago had been visited by some missionaries. The secular clergy, Augustinians and several Jesuits from Bohol and Cebu had worked in Mindanao

between 1596 and 1612. The decrees of the bishop unraveled the names of some clerics who worked in Mindanao and Cuyo. In a letter dated 6 August 1628 the procurator general of the Recollects, Father Alonso de San Bernardo, recalled and acknowledged all these efforts. But as in Zambales, the attempts were so isolated, discontinuous, and too sporadic to be effective. There was a lack of steadfastness and a clear and concrete program of action. Father Alonso de San Bernardo spoke of sterile effort of the Jesuits during the year when they stayed at the fort of Tampacan. Not for that, however, one can discount those efforts. Without the predecessors' hardships, the Augustinian Recollects' activity could hardly turn out so fruitful. The southern part of Mindanao had not been visited by any missionary.

On 6 February 1624, the governor general Alonso Fajardo split the island of Mindanao into two big divisions. The northeastern regions across an imaginary line that ran from Punta Sulauan down to Cape San Agustín were adjudicated to the Recollects. The Jesuits would take charge of that territory southwest along the same imaginary line. On 12 July 1628, his successor Juan Niño de Tabora confirmed the division. However, the misunderstandings and miscomprehensions between the two orders lasted for several years, partially favored by a certain volubility of the bishop of Cebu. In 1637, acceding to Tabora's decision, the bishop declared his 3 March 1625 decree null and void in favor of the Recollects. Two months later, in May 1639 in another partial change of opinion, he again ceded the ministry of Bayug to the Recollects.

There were eight missionaries assigned for the evangelization of Mindanao between 1622 and 1623. In succeeding years, more were added almost uninterruptedly until 1898. Four ministers arrived in Palawan in 1623, and their work was continued by other Recollects until 1987.

The first missionaries applied in Mindanao a method similar to what was experimented in Zambales. At the outset, their activity—supported by the fort of Tandag—was according to a roving plan, traversing shores, rivers and swampy areas in search of natives who were dispersed in the fields and farms. Afterwards

they founded some communities and put up in every one of them a simple church made of cogon, wood and nipa, the parochial house or *kumbento* and began to settle in them the few natives who came after abandoning their farms. Customarily, it was only after that time when they administered the sacraments.

Only two of the eight missionaries stayed in Tandag. The rest spread out to the north. A small group probably composed of three religious headed for Butuan, and thence they proceeded to Cagayan and Linao which was situated upstream of Agusan River. Another small group traversed the coasts north of Surigao, which gave life to the *doctrinas* of Gigaquit and Bacuag as well as to those of the adjacent island of Siargao.

The work of the missionary was not easy. The region was not yet pacified, and its inhabitants viewed all the Spaniards with suspicion. With the exception of the Butuan people, we can say that they did not meet any Spaniard except soldiers who since 1609 had set up a threatening fort at Tandag, as well as the *encomenderos* and tribute collectors. It was not at all too easy yet for them to make a distinction between the Church and the missionaries of the conquest and the *encomenderos*. The missionaries had to cope with the obstacles of a psychological and religious sphere, such as the polygamy of the caciques, the possession of slaves and inordinate attachment to their rites and religious traditions. The violent death of the two pioneering religious shows in a tragic manner the significance of these obstacles.

In 1623, Father Juan de la Madre de Dios ended his life in Datu Suba's hands. The datu was irked by the insistence of the missionary who sought the liberation of a slave girl. The Moro leader pierced his body with a lance. The following year Brother Juan de San Nicolás was killed in a sinking incident provoked by the natives. In 1628, the some natives in the vicinity penetrated Cagayan and killed many people there and took with them more than sixty young boys and girls as captives. "Raving mad, they arrived at the convent and robbed everything they found of value in the church and sacristy, murdered eight Christian natives found there. They entered the room of a priest to slay him, but the latter,

aware of his fury and of what a terrible weapon the *kampilan* was and how they could tear everything to pieces, came out of it miraculously without anyone of them seeing him.”

In spite of everything, their fatiguing efforts did not end up fruitless. They fell on fertile land and bore fruit in abundant harvest that nevertheless was impossible to quantify yet. The statistical figures compiled by Father Toribio Minguella in the past century—repeated so many times by subsequent historians—posit a more in-depth analysis.⁷ As of today, we can only affirm that they baptized some thousand natives who had given new encouragement to some already existent towns and founded some: Tandag, Butuan, Cagayan, Gigaquit, Bacuag, Jabonga, Tago, Bislig, Linao, Siargao and others.

It is not easy to cite the causes of this success. The religious conversion was developed in the sanctuary of the human conscience and, without denying the strong influence of environmental factors, depended in the final analysis upon the very free will of God and in human collaboration. We cannot doubt the influence of the conversion of the old paladin of the opposition to anything Spanish, Datu Inuc of Marihatag, who surrendered to the apostolic determination of Father Juan de la Madre de Dios. We can as well single them out in the gradual cracking of the psychological, social and religious securities of the natives before the pressure by the new rulers, by the undeniable religious zeal of the missionaries and perhaps even by the existent rivalry between the natives and the Islamic believers of Cotabato, which constrained them to seek the Spaniards’ protection.

This first phase of the evangelization which we deem relatively tranquil, remained brusquely interrupted by the revolt of the natives in July 1631. Within a span of a few days they sacked the towns, razed the convents to the ground, desecrated the sacred vessels and murdered four missionaries—Jacinto de Jesús María, Juan de Santo Tomás, Alonso de San José and Pedro de Santo

⁷Toribio MINGUELLA, *Conquista Espiritual de Mindanao por los agustinos recoletos. Cuadros estadísticos*, en *La Ciudad de Dios* 9 (1885) 24-32, he fixed the figure of 21,300 baptisms performed by the Augustinian Recollects during the year 1622 and part of 1623.

Antonio—and captured two, namely, Lorenzo de San Facundo and Francisco de San Fulgencio. These two saved their lives, thanks to the unexpected protection of Mangabo, one of the leaders of the revolt. Traditional historiography deems these religious as martyrs. But perhaps the motives that aroused their wrath and raised the arms of rebellion were not entirely religious in nature. Along the cadavers of the religious, we find those of various soldiers and encomenderos, and during the exaction of the tribute there were small boats owned by Recollects full of rice.

Table 3. Religious killed in the 17th century

Name	Year	Place	Manner of death
Miguel de la Madre de Dios	1607	Zambales	Stoned to death
Alonso de San Agustín	1612	Zambales	Lanced
Juan de la Madre de Dios	1623	Mindanao	Lanced
Juan de San Nicolás	1624	Mindanao	Cast to the sea
Jacinto de Jesús María	1631	Mindanao	Stabbed to death
Juan de Santo Tomás	1631	Mindanao	Lanced
Alonso de San José	1631	Mindanao	Beheaded
Pedro de San Antonio	1631	Mindanao	Lanced
Francisco de Jesus María	1636	Palawan	In a battle
Juan de San Nicolás	1637	Palawan*	Hanged
Alonso de San Agustín	1637	Palawan*	Stabbed to death
Francisco de Santa Mónica	1638	Palawan	Lanced
Francisco de la Madre de Dios	1638	Palawan	Struck in the head
Juan de San Antonio	1640	Jolo	In prison
Martin de la Ascensión	1645	Jolo	In prison
Agustín de Santa María	1651	Mindanao	Lanced
Alonso de la Madre de Dios	1650		Lanced
Diego de Santa Ana	1652	Palawan	Died of hunger
Antonio de San Agustín	1658	At sea**	Lanced
Francisco de San José	1668	Romblon	In a battle

* A Palawan missionary, he died in prison in Mindanao

** On his return from a visit to Palawan

Sources: *Estado general de la Orden 1936, Madrid 1936, Introducción*; *SÁDABA, Catálogo*.

With a small fleet organized in Cebu, Captain Juan de Chaves restored order, but not peace. The natives continued their restiveness for several years. In 1635, they put to death the commander of the Tandag fort and laid ambush to his successor. Referring to this same year, the Recollect chronicler writes that “tranquility was nothing” (*Crónicas* 3, 364). Not long afterward, the Dutch panic forced the government to intensify the fiscal pressure, with the ensuing discontentment of the natives. In Linao they assassinated Father Agustín de Santa María (1651) and in Camiguin they repeatedly affronted their parish priest. In 1659, the priestess Salud attracted a good number of Cagayan residents whom she urged to rise in arms against Spain and the missionaries. Another priestess shortly afterward appeared in Bislig. Towards 1679, Montano and his followers reduced the *kumbento* of Cagayan to ashes.

The relationship with Spanish authorities, moreover, was somewhat tense because of the different ways of dealing with the Indios. Pedro Rojas de San José (†1651) defended them against the abuses of the mayor of Tandag. In 1651, *Padre Capitán* sped up the liberation of a good number of Caragas and Manobos who had been reduced to slavery on account of the past revolt. In 1657 and 1658, the provincial authorities negotiated similar decrees against the monetary penalties imposed upon the Indios and against excesses of the encomenderos. The cacique Montano likewise owed his freedom to the missionaries’ intercession and his journey back to Cagayan (1713). Such humanitarian interventions by the missionaries were not to the liking of the encomenderos who contrived some kind of revenge. In 1647, they obtained through misleading information the demolition of the church and *kumbento* of Tandag, and immediately afterwards (1651) came the solemn rebuke by the king, which accused the religious of having vehemently opposed to such demolition and of having favored the flight of the Indios to the mountains (*Crónicas* 3, 135-137).

These revolts and confrontations made the missionary effort fraught with hardships. They did not however paralyze it. It is rather surprising to know the speed with which they restored the *doctrinas* ruined during the revolt and reconstructed the churches

and convents that had been earlier razed to the ground. More laborious was the restoration of the social and religious fabric.

The children and the *principales* took a privileged position in the ministers' daily activities. The missionaries in the Philippines immediately took cognizance of the importance of attracting *principales*. Juan de Medina, a missionary for twenty years (1610-1630) in the neighboring island of Panay, took note of it with total clarity: "Our religious saw how great it was that the *principales* were baptized because since all the Indians hearken to them, it was for them [missionaries] a matter of great edification to view them embrace the law that we were imparting to them." They had already felt it in Caraga at the outset. The conversion of Inuc (1622) had paved the way for the baptism of hundreds of unbelievers. Towards 1670, the conversion of another principal, Puig Matanda, would facilitate that of the Manobos of the mountains of Agusan (*Crónicas* 3, 345-346). The children had always been the fast route to reach the hearts of parents. Moreover, they offered the unique virgin field where the seed could sprout without the risk of being suffocated by malice. In order to win their wills over, they made very especial use of catechesis, school and songs.

Catechesis did not bother completely with theoretical basis of religion and it almost exclusively rested upon the repetitious recitation of some prayers and the fundamental truths of Christianity. The magnificence of worship—especially during Holy Week, Feast of Corpus Christi and the fiestas honoring the patron saints of every town, the chanting of the Passion and the Rosary, the groups of flagellants, the activities of some *cofradías* and eventually the mock demonstration of the helplessness of their old gods—brought about its efficacy. Somewhat frequently the religious further resorted to more violent means, such as the strict vigilance by the *fiscales*, the reading of the register during Sunday Masses and even public bodily chastisement. Tomás de San Jerónimo (1682) had words of praise for Juan de San Felipe (†1690) who in Calamianes had recourse more than once to floggings in order to promote attendance at Sunday Masses. Eugenio de los Santos (†1681), first Recollect minister of Naujan

(Mindoro) was attacked by a principal whose conduct he had rebuked in public (*Crónicas* 4, 389).

Sacramental life was somewhat feeble. At the outset, all the natives were excluded from the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The uniqueness of the minister of Confirmation and the immensity of the dioceses in the Philippines made its reception practically impossible. In 1668, the Jesuit Ignacio Alcina disclosed that in the thirty years of his sojourn in Samar he had not seen any bishop at all. During the first half of the 17th century Negros Island had experienced one sole episcopal visit. It is not improbable that Palawan or Mindanao had suffered the same plight.

The administration of the Viaticum gave rise to a very protracted controversy among missionaries and civil as well as religious authorities. The former, out of respect for the Blessed Sacrament, demanded the transfer of the sick to the church and the latter censured such practice which they branded as inhuman. It is necessary to say that the missionaries' attitude prevailed, which after all was the only way possible. Some provincial chapters at the end of the 17th century as well as the very *Modo de administrar* (1709 edition, 20-21) gave the impression that they bowed to the will of the government, but in reality the missionaries persisted in their convictions. In 1665 and 1668, respectively, the missionaries of Butuan and Cagayan erected the hospitals in two towns to attend to the sick and thus to facilitate the reception of the Viaticum. None of the two, however, had any major success. Father Cristóbal de Santa Mónica (1647-1650) earlier constructed another hospital in Masinloc. Rather more frequent was the Unction of the Sick, on which the missionaries exerted more effort.

Annual confession and communion were conscientiously implemented, and the missionaries took pains to prepare the faithful with utmost care. Those confessions and communions out of devotion were a privilege for some chosen souls who ordinarily belonged to the Confraternity of the Cincture or to the Augustinian Recollect Third Order. The chroniclers recount the lives of some *mantelatas* or *beatas*: Clara Clariman (†1639) and Isabel (†1646) in Butuan and Rosa de la Cruz (†1647) in Surigao. These *beatas*

attended the Divine Office, devoted time for mental prayer, read pious books, some of which were written or translated by the religious themselves, received communion thrice a week and served the poor and the church as teachers, nurses or extraordinary catechists (2 *Crónicas* 2, 296-297, 371-372). In a majority of the *doctrinas* the Blessed Sacrament was not kept. In 1582, Father Tomás de San Jerónimo wrote that only in six *doctrinas* of the Order there was “a continuous repository of the sovereign Sacrament of the Eucharist.” In Mindanao they had one in Tandag, and probably another in Butuan.

During this period the number of outstanding missionaries in Mindanao rarely surpassed ten. In 1655, there were ten missionaries distributed in five residences, from which they administered some 10,000 Christians, scattered in thirty towns and several square kilometers away. The two religious of Tandag likewise administered the *presidio*⁸ of the place and people of Cantilan, Tago, Marihatag and Lianga; those of Butuan served Jabonga, Arwayan, Linao, Hibong, Odiongan and the reduced Manobos; those of Cagayan reached Iponan, Tagoloan, Compot and Camiguin; those of Siargao were responsible to Sapao, Cabuntog, Bacuag, Gigaquit, Bolor and Surigao; and those Bislig attended to Hinatuan, Cateel and Baganga. All of them had under their jurisdiction groups more or less numerous of unbelievers and undocumented people.

In 1671 the provincial Juan de San Felipe assigned a missionary to Cateel for the sole purpose of promoting, in collaboration with the *doctrineros* of Bislig, the evangelization of the neighboring unbelievers. In a few years they succeeded in reducing more than a thousand (*Crónicas* 4, 2888-289). These unbelievers shared with the Christians the same hatred against the Moro, who had begun to upset their daily lives. Nevertheless, the systematic raids by the Moros against Caraga would only start several lustrums later.

The first four missionaries of Palawan debarked at Cuyo in 1623, and from there they at once spread out to Agutaya, Dumarán, Linapacan and in the north of Palawan Island. The news from the chroniclers were very confusing and it is not easy to determine the

⁸Garrison, fortress.

parameters of the labor of these first evangelizers. The names of all the missionaries are not even known. Recollect chronicler Luis de Jesús mentions Fathers Juan de Santo Tomás (†631) who was their first superior, Francisco de San Nicolás and Diego de Santa Ana (†1652) and a religious brother whose name is not known (*Crónicas* 2, 36-37). He was probably Brother Francisco de la Madre de Dios who died in Cuyo towards the year 1638 (*Crónicas* 2,295). We can least hope to identify the places they had visited, the towns they had founded, the hardships they had encountered. The method should not be farther from the one used in Zambales and Mindanao, and it likewise produced here excellent fruits, especially in Cuyo and Agutaya whose population was converted *en masse*.

The 1624 provincial chapter appointed the priors of Cuyo and Linapacan. This fact suggests these two islands were the main centers of the missionary activity. The 1627 chapter separated from Linapacan the town of Taytay, where the year before two missionaries had initiated the construction of a small fort. The three centers lasted until 1636, a tragic year for the mission history of Palawan. The construction of the fortress in Zamboanga irked Kudarat, sultan of the Maguindanaos and by then chief of all the Moros of Mindanao. He justifiably saw in that fort a grave threat to his interests in regions which he deemed under his exclusive influence. In 1636, Kudarat dispatched a squadron that followed the orders of his brother Tagal against the defenseless islands of Calamianes. Tagal did not meet any resistance and razed to the ground the islands of Cuyo and Agutaya, set the towns on fire, murdered children and old folks and held captive all those he considered fit to work. Among them were three missionaries: Juan de San Nicolás, Alonso de San Agustín and Francisco de Jesús María. None of them would come out alive from captivity.

Two years later Ache, datu of Jolo, invaded the islands and sowed desolation and death. Father Francisco de Santa Mónica was surprised in his prayer and without mercy he was pierced with a lance thrust. Juan de San Antonio was held prisoner and taken to Jolo where two years after he would meet his death (*Crónicas*

2, 294-295). Those were the first links of the tragic chain that prolonged the bloody rings until the 19th century. In 1638, a Chinese merchant injured Brother Francisco de la Madre de Dios. Few years later Father Martín de la Ascensión fell into the hands of Jolo natives while he was on his way to the mission station and he met his death in their midst. In 1652, Father Diego de Santa Ana dashed forth to freedom in the mountains of Busuanga during the Moro raids. He died, however, a victim of hunger and deprivations (*Crónicas*, 4, 141).

These violent deaths gave rise to the second period of these missions. Its characteristics were likewise shared—albeit to a lesser degree—by the missions in Mindanao, Romblon and Mindoro. It was a long period marked with terror, which lasted until mid-19th century when the Spanish forces successfully restored the calm and safety of the southern seas. It was only towards the close of the 17th century and at the outset of the 18th century (1680-1719) when they came to know a relatively long phase of peace and tranquility.

During those two centuries, the missionaries and the faithful would be easy and constant prey to the raids by Moros. The proximity to its centers of power, total abandonment, isolation and reduced number of its population centers transformed them into continuous target of their raids. These circumstances conditioned profoundly the work of the missionaries and conferred on them an extraordinary character that could easily upset hurried readers. I am referring to the military or warrior nuance that distinguishes the Augustinian Recollect missionary in the Philippines. The frequency of the Moro raids and government apathy towards places where his Christians lived forced them to take personal responsibility for their defense. That is the origin of the small forts and palisades they constructed in Cuyo, Agutaya, Culion, Linapacan, Taytay, Linao, Cateel, Surigao, Romblon, Banton, Mobo and many more. That was the ulterior motive of the military feats of Agustín de San Pedro (1599-circa 1660), more popularly known as *Padre Capitán*, and Juan de San Severo (†1697) in the first century of Recollect evangelization, or Valero de San Agustín (1732-1788) in the second century, Pascual Ibáñez (1821-1851) and Ramón Zueco (1828-1889) in the 19th century.

In spite of the constant danger wherein they lived, the Recollect missionaries carried alongside their Christians, and only in extreme circumstances the superiors felt obliged to withdraw them. Often their presence was the sole guaranty the superiors had in being able to repel the attacks by Moros, since they were only ones capable of properly organizing the defense. When their defense turned out impossible, they accompanied the Christians to the mountains which were always their most secure refuge. A curious case—revealing, however, the isolation wherein those missionaries lived—is the appointment of Father Valero de San Agustín as vicar provincial of Caraga issued in Manila two months after his death. This took place still towards the end of the 18th century.

These repeated misfortunes moved the province to compassion and goaded it to search for means that would increase the security of its children. Unfortunately, their gestures with the Manila government did not produce the desired effect, and the means that the province could provide turned out insufficient. Little by little the idea to abandon Palawan was getting favorable response. The idea had already flourished in 1626, the provincial chapter of this year turned it down decisively: “Let not the convents of Calamianes; rather, they must be kept for the welfare of those souls, but the governor must be addressed so soldiers would be dispatched” (*Chapters*, 11). The latest events constrained the chapters of 1638 and 1641 to momentarily close the convent of Cuyo and to assemble the missionaries together in Taytay whose fort seemed to guarantee their security. Nevertheless, the 1644 chapter already deplored such decision and restored the convent of Cuyo.

In 1655, five missionaries worked in Palawan. They attended to some 7,000 Christians. Two resided in Cuyo where they also administered Agutaya and other small islands nearby. The other three friars lived in Taytay from where they spread to the islands of Dumarán, Linapacan, Coron, Busuanga and the entire northern Palawan from Barbacan up to Bacuit.

The chapters of 1656 and 1657 showed signs of renewed interest for the missions of Palawan when they appointed a prior for the old convent of Linapacan. But the Recollects were already using up their last energies. In its 1659 chapter Saint Nicholas Province took note of the desperate situation it was in and it was forced to invert the tendency, charging the province to put forward the renouncement of “the ministries of Cuyo and Calamianes, for lack of religious as well as for the hazards posed by the enemy and the religious they have taken captive and who have died in different occasions” (*Chapters*, 84). In 1660, the Recollects were replaced by two priests of the secular clergy who fixed their residence in Taytay and Cuyo. But apparently the abandonment was total, or at least, took one more year to take effect. Towards 1666 (*Crónicas* 4, 170) during a raid by the Moros, we find Father Carlos de Jesús (†1668) in Busuanga.

In November 1680, the province again took charge of these missions at the request of the towns and of the authorities in Manila. The first three missionaries established themselves in Taytay and Dumaran. With the arrival of thirty-six new missionaries from Spain in Manila in August 1684, the superiors were able to send some reinforcements and widen the missionary horizon. In 1686, a new doctrina was set up in Tangdon with territorial jurisdiction separate from Taytay, transported shortly after in Culion. In 1695, another was erected in Dumaran and in 1698 the old doctrina of Linapacan was restored. In 1691, there were seven Recollects stationed in Palawan.

At the return of the Recollects, Taytay and the entire northern Palawan was in the greatest spiritual and material disarray. The greed of the provincial governors had dispersed a great number of natives, and one sole cleric who besides being bed-ridden for two months could do very little to put a stop to the exodus. The Recollects continued to push deeper into the mountains, and despite the abuses of the provincial governors—one even went to strike Father Domingo de San Agustín (1648-1707) as he was donning the vestments for the celebration of the Mass—they succeeded in drawing several thousands of *remontados*. In 1683,

the new reduced ones already ballooned to 2,000. In subsequent years, they continued to increase. The 4,500 faithful they found in Palawan in 1680 surged to 16,600 (*Crónicas*, 4, 398-402).

There are no exact news on the catechesis followed by the missionaries of Palawan. But it could be rest assured that it had not greatly digressed from what was developed by their confreres in Mindanao. Since 1625 all the Augustinian Recollect missionaries should pattern their work to one sole *Manual of Administration*, approved in provincial chapters. From the examination of the few concrete available data it can be deduced that in Palawan they likewise availed of the assistance of the principales, they took special care of the youth and counted on the collaboration of some chosen souls, belonging to the confraternity of the cincture. The chronicles recount the lives of three of these collaborators in the ministry of Taytay.

José Bagumbayan was the son of a principal of the place and since he was a child he was educated in the kumbento. He became a man of prayer and penance. He wore the hair shirt and practiced the *disciplina* frequently, devoted two hours every day to mental prayer and never missed the three parts of the rosary. He would have liked to enter the Recollection, but the comprehensible prejudices of the period obliged him to be contented with becoming a member of the Confraternity of the Cincture and with being admitted as a spiritual brother of the reform [...]. He often visited the sick, helping them in everything he could, especially at the hour of death, for which he prepared a notebook of exhortations in their own language, with which he tried to move them to sorrow for their sins and directed them along the path of eternal beatitude. He strove to mend feuds and keep away from discords. [...] Many times he would go up to the mountains, exposed to every hazard, he would persuade a number of mountain people and even the unbelievers to return to the Catholic fold and accept the Catholic truths. For more than fifty years, he performed the important job as teacher of children, teaching them with great vigilance and careful effort, not only to read but to read, write and count, but also organ music where he was very dexterous, for the greatest solemnity of the divine rites. (*Crónicas* 4, 400)

Very similar was the life of the couple Bartolomé Ligón (†1696) and Magdalena (†1692), both disciples of Father Alonso de San Agustín (†1694). Their work as well as that of other native collaborators facilitated the deepening of Christianity in those towns and explained the fidelity of the people at the hour of persecution and martyrdom.

Romblon, Mindoro and Masbate

The three territories (Zambales, Mindanao and Palawan) were sufficient to drain all the apostolic energies of the province. But the yearning to settle in a more secure area, the resolve of the government and the machinations of the Dominican prodded them to take up the administration of other regions that it was not in a condition to properly attend to. Furthermore, they had characteristics similar to those of Mindanao and Palawan.

In 1635, the Recollects exchanged the doctrina of Binalbagan in Negros Island—where since 1626 two or three confreres had been working—for the district of Romblon which had a very small population and included at that time the islands of Romblon, Banton, Tablas, Sibuyan, Simara and other smaller ones. In that same year the first Augustinian Recollect missionary Father Pedro de San José arrived, he was greeted at once by Muslim pirates who razed the town to the ground and burned down both *kumbento* and church. He was able to save himself thanks to the proximity of the mountain. In 1644, Father Miguel de la Concepción, who after ten months of incarceration in the dungeons of Jolo, was exchanged for a Moro leader (*Crónicas* 3, 242-244).

Between 1644 and 1650, Padre Capitán lived in Romblon. With his distinguished skill in the art of war and in military fortifications, he put an end to the Moro raids. It was not that the Moros had forgotten all about Romblon but until mid-18th century all their attempts proved futile. The Moro raid of 1668 of caused the death—though indirectly—of Father Francisco de San José (*Crónicas* 4, 164). Ordinarily, the Saint Nicholas Province maintained two or three missionaries in Romblon in spite of one stipend. In 1655, there were two Recollects who served some 4,000

souls distributed in ten towns and five islands, separated further by canals of grueling navigation. In 1691, the missionaries were three: one resided at the *cabecera* and the other two went around in “continuous movement, occupied with the administration of the six dependent churches” (*Crónicas*, 6/2, 204).

The entry of the Recollects into Mindoro was not the outcome of their own choice. It was a simple decree of the government and that of the archbishop of Manila, which the province did not know how, or was not able to resist. The government was not satisfied with the work of three secular priests who administered the island since 1665. In addition, the archbishop took advantage of the occasion to indemnify the Recollects for the high-handed behavior that was perpetrated against them in Zambales. In 1679, seven Recollect religious replaced the secular clergy in their curacies in Naujan, Baco and Calavite. All of them scoured the mountains of their respective jurisdiction, doing a great labor of reduction and evangelization. Such undertaking bore fruit in the baptism of thousands of unbelievers, in the erection of the doctrina of Ilin (1683) which was moved to Mangarin (1683) and in the foundation of a dozen towns.

In 1685, the archbishop offered them Lubang Island but the province refused it for lack of personnel. The curacy of Naujan was located in Bangcuro or Bancurro, more towards the interior than its present location, along the right bank of the river downstream of the lake that bore the same name. There the Recollects built a church-fort whose ruins still continue to draw the tourists’ curiosity.

The 4,000 Christian families that the Recollects found upon arrival in Mindoro rose to 8,000 in 1692 and to 12,000 in 1716. The first decades were calm, and therefore, suitable for the normal development of missionary activity. Only poverty affected it negatively when the province was obliged to reduce sometimes the personnel in the evangelization. In 1682, there were only five, “these had hardly enough what was necessary in order to survive” (*Crónicas* 6/2, 204).

In May 1687, three religious took charge of the islands of Masbate, Burias and Ticao, administered until then by only one

secular priest who furthermore was in a very advanced age. This explains the state of abandonment of the population. Of the one hundred and eighteen deceased in the last twelve years solely four had received the last sacraments. Its population was exceedingly scarce and the majority were people who were parvenu and turbulent, given to plunder and brigandage. In 1687, there were one hundred and eighty-seven families who were inscribed in the registries of the Royal Treasury.

Our missionaries were compelled to start almost from zero. They scoured the mountains and gathered their inhabitants to settle down in towns. They succeeded in bringing down hundreds of *remontados* and upland people. In 1691, they had already reduced sixty families and in 1720 there were 525 families who regularly paid tribute to the State. Among the missionaries of the first period was the distinguished Father Ildefonso de la Concepción (†1700) who founded the town of Darag and builder of the first road that ran through the island of Masbate from east to west (*Crónicas*, 4, 550-559).

In 1658, the Congregation received from the Franciscans the ministries of Casiguran, Baler and Binangonan, which are located in the present-day provinces of Aurora and Rizal in Luzon, and they stayed there until 1704. Their tremendous penury, their remoteness from the rest of the ministries of the province and dramatic scarcity of personnel brought about by seventeen years (1694-1711) of total vocation drought in it had compelled their return to the Franciscans. Ordinarily the province maintained from six to eight religious in them. In 1691 there were eight who were found in a desperate economic situation. "During most of the year," wrote the provincial, "they have no rice and it is necessary to send it to them from Manila [...] I do not refer to what it costs the province to keep those ministries but it may not seem incredible because what they do and suffer for God is not disclosed" (*Crónicas*, 6/2, 204. In this place the missionaries set up the Third Order. Juana de Jesús, who died in the odor of sanctity in 1703, was the most renowned *mantelata*" (*Crónicas*, 4, 35).

The Martyrs of Japan

The Philippine Islands did not completely comply with the first missionaries' apostolic yearnings. Since 1602 the Philippine Church was wholly committed to the evangelization of Japan where she had written a glorious and blood-drenched page of missionary heroism. The Augustinian Recollects—reeling from meager finances and lack of personnel—could not join at the outset such glorious task and follow its development with holy emulation. Thus, hardly when the plight improved with the July 1622 arrival of the fifth mission composed of twenty-four religious, they happily joined the enterprise. Between 1623 and 1634 they organized six expeditions to Japan. Unfortunately, only two reached their destination.

The first Recollect expedition lifted anchor at Bolinao in April 1623 with the Spaniard Francisco de Jesus and the Portuguese Vicente de San Antonio. After a sea journey replete with hazards and misfortunes, they reached the shores of Satzuma (Kyūshū Island) on 20 June. On 14 September, they entered Nagasaki and were separated shortly after. Father Francisco headed to a nearby mountain where with Father Bartolomé Gutiérrez, a Calced Augustinian, he stayed until 5 January 1624. Then he dedicated nine more months to learning Japanese. On 23 September 1624, he “began the administration with great effort and not the least scrupulous for being handicapped in the tongue” (*Bullarium* 2, 703). From that date until April 1626, he exercised his mission in the environs of Nagasaki and in other regions of southern Japan.

In 1626, Father Francisco de Jesús trekked to northeastern Japan with three Franciscans. After seventy-five days of arduous travel, he settled alone in Oshu, in the northernmost part of Hondo [Honshū]. There he worked for two long years. He effectively baptized over 800 Japanese. In September 1628, he headed south where he stayed until 18 November 1629 when he was denounced by a farmer and earlier subjected to torture. He was seized and incarcerated at Omura. Days later his confrere Vicente joined him in jail. His companion never left the south. Thanks to his compatriots' great human qualities and support, he could always

perform a fruitful apostolic work. Thereafter, their lives ran along parallel lines. Both were torched alive on 3 September 1632, after having been subjected many times to torture in the sulfuric waters of Mount Unzen. They were beatified by Pius IX in 1867.

In their preaching the two martyrs zealously promoted the Third Order and the Confraternity of the Cincture. In October 1630, Father Francisco estimated the martyred confraternity members to be about three hundred. "Since my companion and I arrived in the land, over three hundred members of our confraternities had suffered martyrdom. This figure does not include countless more of our observant fathers" (*Bullarium* 2, 675). Father Vicente provides us the names of the sixty-seven confraternity members martyred on 28 September 1630.

Some confraternity members were catechists, guides or guardians. All of them were valuable collaborators in apostolic expeditions. The most famous of them all was the virgin Magdalena of Nagasaki, a model of apostolic zeal, courage and fortitude. For eight years she indefatigably scoured the mountains and fields of the environs of Nagasaki. She consoled the sick and strengthened her persecuted brethren's faith. In September 1534, she voluntarily gave herself up to the persecutors who tortured her in horrendous ordeals. First was the water cure where they made her engulf great amounts of water they then forced her to throw up violently. Afterward they punctured her fingers between the nails and the skin with pointed objects. And lastly they hung her upside down with her feet tied to a noose over a hole in the ground closely shut. The tortures of this heroine of the Faith, canonized by Pope John Paul II in 1987, lasted thirteen and a half days.

Her martyrdom was observed by numberless witnesses. No less than forty-one witnesses had declared under oath in a process that took place in Macao in February and March of 1638. The Augustinian Recollection has always looked upon this undaunted Japanese virgin with special predilection. In 1638, it promoted the already mentioned process in Macao. Shortly afterward, Father

Andrés de San Nicolás chanted her life in 1,076 iambic verses.⁹ In 1681, Luis de Jesús defended her Augustinian identity with solid documentary proofs (*Crónicas* 2, 276-278). Thirty years later, Juan de la Cruz in a book on the Augustinian Recollect Third Order presented her as the brightest rosette.¹⁰ Eight years earlier the friars of Granada commissioned Atanasio Bocanegra to paint eight pictures with several scenes of her life and martyrdom.

The second expedition of eleven religious from five different orders left Manila in early August 1632. The Augustinian Recollects were Melchor de San Agustín from Granada and Martín de San Nicolás from Zaragoza. Their stay in Japan was very brief. Betrayed by the same Chinese sailors who brought them, they were seized at Nagasaki on 2 November 1632. Forty days afterward, they were burned alive in slow fire. John Paul II beatified them on 23 April 1989.

The province showed continued interest in Japan for some years. The 1635 provincial chapter assigned the provincial to set up a house in Formosa “to facilitate entry to China and Japan” (*Capítulos*, 32). That same year Father Juan de San Antonio (†1663) debarked at Osaka but the vigilance of the authorities forced him to go back to Manila. That same vigilance foiled other projects of the same priest and other confreres. In April 1640, the provincial, in accord with the fellow provincials of the other orders, agreed not to send “to the kingdoms of Japan any priest or religious being things that way.” At the start of the 18th century, the province again expressed its wishes to go to Japan and even petitioned the king’s assistance.¹¹ Manuel de San Nicolás de Tolentino († circa 1729) embarked on a journey to Japan in the company of the famed Italian abbot Giovanni Battista Sidotti (1668-1715), but neither he could make their plans a reality.

⁹ANDRÉS de San Nicolás, *Proventus Messis Dominicæ Fratrum Excalceatorum Ordinis Eremitrum Sancti Augustini* (Roma 1656) 136-170. The Spanish version is done by M. Briceño, in *Thesaurus* 42 (Bogotá 1987) 413-438.

¹⁰Isacio RODRÍGUEZ, *Historia de la Provincia Agustiniense de Filipinas*, XX 400.

¹¹AGI, *Filipinas* 297; AGOAR, Box 64, Bundle 2.

When the doors of Japan were completely shut, the Recollects in the Philippines turned their sight on China where they tried many times to establish a residence from the 17th to the 18th century. In 1636, the provincial council promised to send missionaries to China when the first opportunity came. They made serious gestures in 1650, 1680 and 1705. In 1650, and maybe in 1680, they sent a missionary to the continent. In 1705, the king of Spain gave assistance to six Recollects bound for China. But the dearth of personnel, the shortage of economic funds, the opposition posed by Portugal and by the Manila government itself as well as the absence of a fitting “safe haven” thwarted all those attempts which perhaps never became a reality.

The Augustinian Recollects in the Philippines in the 18th century: Triumphs and Travails

Ángel Martínez Cuesta OAR

I. The problem of personnel

The dearth of personnel was the most difficult problem of Saint Nicholas Province during the 18th century. On a few occasions its religious were able to cover with certain ease the vast field of their ministerial apostolate. Only the debarkation of exceptionally numerous missionary expeditions from Spain like those of 1711 and 1768-1769 momentarily alleviated the situation and permitted it to face the future with minimum tranquility. Ordinarily, the “missions” that arrived from Spain could hardly fill the vacant positions caused by illness or death. “It is a continuous experience,” wrote Father Juan de la Madre de Dios in 1691, “when a shipload of religious arrived from Spain, a few times the number is reached to fill in parish vacancies caused by deaths since the previous arrivals” (*Crónicas*, 6/2,205). The mission of 1750-1751 consisted of forty-one religious, four less than the number of deaths since its recruiter (*i.e.*, commissary provincial) had departed from Manila. After their incorporation to the province, this was discovered

“with more need for workers” than what had been petitioned.¹ The phenomenon was repeated in 1768 and 1797, when their cries for help did not find any echo in the Spanish convents. During the last quarter of the century the province really underwent uneasy periods.

The Rejection of Native Vocations

These hardships partly had their origin in the clear flaw of principles. Like in the other four religious orders existent in the Archipelago, the Augustinian Recollects went on completely impervious to native vocations. The natives were victims of the some distrust that stemmed from the Mexican experience and cultural primitivism of the Filipinos and justified during the 17th century, and they did not notice that time had dislodged them from the true reason until this justification had been transformed into mere racial prejudices. In June 1680, the prior provincial wrote the monarch that the promotion of Filipinos to sacred orders was unwise because of their lack of culture and uncouthness and, therefore, he could not comply with the 2 August 1677 royal decree.² A century later, the friars’ attitude had not altered at all. With tenacity and consistency worthy of a better cause, they kept the doors of their convents very tightly closed to Filipinos and impugned the timid openings by the ministers of Carlos III and Carlos IV.³ The highest state the natives could aspire for was that of *donados* existent in mid-17th century.

The Creoles themselves were viewed in a bad light and, only in isolated cases and examples of highest intelligence their admission was tolerated. “We know well the sons of this land,” the provincial council wrote in 1751, “for their pusillanimity and little strength for their work and great burden of administration. But the great need for religious have moved and constrained us

¹ *Reseña*, in BPSN 34 (1944) 278.

² AGI, *Filipinas* 82.

³ Horacio DE LA COSTA, John N. SCHUMACHER, *The Filipino Clergy. Historical Studies and Future Perspectives*, Manila 1979, with Father Martínez Cuesta’s notes published in *Missionalia Hispanica* 40 (1983) 331-362; Luciano P.R. SANTIAGO, *The Hidden Light. The First Filipino Priests*. Quezon City 1987.

to grant those habits to them, so we could have someone to help us in the observance at the convent of Manila and could assist those subjects who would serve at least as companions of the priors of our *doctrinas* and ministries and of the missionaries of the active missions” (*Cartas* 1, 42v; cf. 2, 100v). The opposition of the general curia was still more radical. For it, the Philippine province was a mere offshoot of the Spanish provinces, with which it should nourish without the need of resorting to other means. In 1730, 1736, and 1760 it ordered that no candidate should be admitted in any way to priesthood “without obtaining a written permit for it from our father vicar general.” (*Acta Ordinis* 8, 451). The Spanish *peninsulares* successfully acquired a slightly more favorable treatment, only thanks to the repeated requests of the provincial council. In 1736, only three applicants were admitted in every triennium, and this number was cut in half in 1760. It was only 1784 when the curia general shelved the impediments and authorized the provincial to give the habits without any restriction to applicants coming from Spain (AO 10, 234). Consequently, the number of religious who joined the province in Manila during the 17th century was very small: twelve for the clerical status and eight for the state of lay brother.

In search for volunteers in Spanish convents

All the other religious made their profession in Spain where the commissary or procurator general of the province recruited them according to accepted procedures. The system was not very satisfactory and in this period it displayed its limitations and shortcomings. It was long, complicated and costly, and most of all it was prone to a series of loans which made it highly vulnerable.

At times the commissaries prolonged their recruitment activities. For not less than 25 years Father Rafael de San Bernardo (1698-1725) and Father Juan de San Ignacio de Loyola (1774-1789) stayed in Spain, and neither of the two personally conducted their missions to Manila. Father Anselmo de San Agustín left Manila in 1741 and did not return to the Archipelago until 1755. The wars, the conflicts with the vicars general as well as the politico-

religious situation in the Philippines coupled with the composure, self-sufficiency and obstinacy of the main protagonists, explained the extraordinary delays. Father Miguel de San Marcial died in Acapulco during the trip *en route* to Spain (1751). Manuel de Santa Bárbara failed twice. The first time he fell into the hands of the British (1761) who handed him over to Manila as captive; the second time, he fell ill in Mexico (1764) where he was fortunately replaced by Father Juan García Ruiz de San Agustín.

In other times economic hardships surged. In 1722, José de San Miguel obtained from the government a mission of 45 religious, but “for lack of funds for passage” twenty of them remained on land. José de la Soledad, on the other hand, requested about twenty religious and could only obtain half the number in 1724. Furthermore, their wait in Spain and Mexico could be desperately long. The twelve religious of the 1727 mission sojourned in Cádiz for 397 days. Those assembled by Father Anselmo set sail from Cádiz on 13 February 1749 and the majority of the members of the mission reached their destination only in October 1752. Some did not debark at Manila until 1753 and 1754.

The response of the Spanish religious was not always that enthusiastic. After months of the year 1754 Miguel de Santo Tomás de Villanueva gathered a huge group of 90 volunteers, of whom only 51 were able to arrive in port. Of the 122 assembled by Juan de San Ignacio and Manuel de Jesús María between 1787 and 1795, only 85 arrived in Manila. Anselmo de San Agustín could make a good selection process among the countless candidates who volunteered: “He does not take anyone who has been known to possess bad habits or living a life less regular. All those who repented after having enlisted have been left behind. No one has ever complained that he would be brought, and on the contrary, there are many who have resented their not being brought.”⁴ Even the convocation of Juan de San Agustín resounded favorably in the convents. Between 1767 and 1768 he was able to assemble a mission of sixty-six religious.

⁴*Letter of the vicar general to the provincial*, 22 August 1750, AHPM, leg. 82, no. 3.

Other commissaries, however, encountered enormous obstacles and opposition. In 1722, the vicar general bewailed the lukewarm attitude in Spanish convents toward the missions and he attributed it to the disputes that during the past decade had troubled the peace of the Philippine province: “On account of the numerous letters, slanderous libels that for some years have come to these provinces from the sons of that province, the splendor and reputation of the former have made the enthusiasm and fervor of the latter so lukewarm to help them and assuage them in their strenuous tasks and fatigues.”⁵

In very uncertain circumstances Father Juan de San Ignacio had to move around. Above all, he had to interpret the perplexing—if not contradictory—directives from his own Saint Nicholas Province. On the one hand, he was ordered to hasten the recruitment of missionaries and, on the other, he was dissuaded from doing it by speaking highly or exaggerating the risks of canonical collation. For over ten years the dispatches from the province oscillated from the desire to welcome more religious who would guarantee its survival to the fear of seeing them become parish priests who would be irremovable and independent from their superiors. In 1778, for example, he ordered the commissary general to assemble the mission “at the shortest time possible” and dispatch it “without failure” on the first available occasion. “Your reverence, do not dishearten” the volunteers, “as our father vicar general, who disillusions them, writes us”; rather, “for God’s sake, strive to inspire in them confidence and tell them that you have received letters from the province in which your reverence guarantees that there is no novelty in the administration and that there is no anxiety here as your reverence had surmised.” In 1781, 1782 and 1783, he received the same orders several times because “we are in the limits of our affliction and despondency” (*Cartas* 2, 66v). But immediately afterward, he exhorted him to proceed with the “request for the renunciation of curacies or *doctrinas* created by this province,” and “in case the renunciation cannot be done, that it can be preserved for us in the old privileges and, at least, that

⁵AHPM, leg. 82, no. 2.

we can be exempted from accepting the canonical institution, thus the province may retain the faculty of transferring the religious *doctrineros* through their provincial and private chapters.” Without those conditions it was not convenient to recruit any religious: “Do not spend not even half of the finances of the province in order to get those religious who may come with such burden [...] it is less evil that this province would perish for lack of religious than that they may come here deceived and may despair of it.”⁶

Father Juan de San Ignacio could not move about with confidence in this maze of orders and counter-orders and, motivated by his own profound and personal repugnance for canonical institution, he gave more weight to the restrictive directives than to the positive ones. As a consequence, he acted more as one who discouraged the missions rather than one who endorsed them. The same province was forced to recognize it that way, but in spite of everything, it never withdrew its confidence in him and still went out in his defense in opposition to the vicar general. He did not forget the different conditions of the place where he was doing his job.

The Spanish provinces were experiencing exhaustion and low spirits on account of Carlos III’s meddling with their internal life. For five years—from 1769 to 1774—their novitiate houses had remained closed and in subsequent years their professed religious failed to compensate for the decline caused by deaths. During the 1779-1782 triennium, twenty-four novices professed in Castile, while the number of deaths went up to sixty-two. In a 30 June 1782 memorial, Juan de San Ignacio estimated that between 1769 and 1782 the provinces of Castile and Aragon had lost two hundred and forty religious. The death of religious from twenty to thirty years of age was particularly sensitive, they were those “who regularly signed up for the Philippines.”⁷

The wars likewise delayed and, worse, prevented the departure of some missions to the Philippines. The War of Succession to the Spanish throne gave Father Rafael de San Bernardo a valid excuse

⁶*Letters* 14 December 1778, 19 December 1783 and 18 September 1784, AGI, *Filipinas* 1052; *Cartas* 2, 85r and 96v.

⁷AGI, *Filipinas* 1052.

to delay their departure. The War of Succession to the Austrian Throne, coupled with the Anglo-Spanish colonial conflicts (1742-1748), hindered Father Anselmo de San Agustín's efforts. The War of Succession towards the end of the century further made Father Eugenio Sesé give up in July 1797 the embarkation of nine religious he had earlier recruited and that was approved by the Council of the Indies. None of them would head for the Philippines.

The commissaries' success depended largely upon the collaborative effort of the vicar general. As a general rule, the latter understood the significance of their effort and had no qualms in lending them a hand. But there was no dearth of misunderstandings and conflicts that at times diminished or compromised their effectiveness. During the term of Father José de Santa María (1687-1693), a so-called "financial scandal" took place in Madrid, whose exact nature could not be determined, and since then the commissaries dealt with the vicars general with a ten-foot pole and distrust. They strove to conduct their business with the greatest degree of autonomy possible. That very attitude hurt the sensitivity of vicars general and it gave rise to not a few confrontations.

The well-known tiffs were between the commissaries Rafael de San Bernardo and Juan de San Ignacio on the one side, and the vicars general Diego de San Buenaventura (1700-1706) and Bernardo de San Ignacio (1778-1784) on the other. Father Diego accused Father Rafael of negligence and went to the extent of putting him on trial and casting him in prison (1703). A mission of thirty religious which was granted permission since 1699 could not set sail because Father Rafael had loaned the funds of the province to a merchant from Mexico. Father Bernardo denounced before the Council of the Indies the lukewarm attitude and machinations of Father Juan de San Ignacio and attempted to remove him from office. Neither easy were the relationships of the vicars general Alonso de la Magdalena (1734-1736) and Francisco de Guadalupe (1748-1754) with the commissaries Francisco de la Encarnación and Miguel de Santo Tomás de Villanueva. Such legal questions as the wish of the province to be represented in the general chapter as well as in the general council, and the debate on the property of

their hospice in Mexico, or such related details as the destination of the 6,400 pesos from the despoilment of assets of Father Diego de San José (†1734), kept that mistrust alive all throughout the century.

All these stumbling blocks notwithstanding, the commissaries were able to gather 440 religious and lead them to Manila in thirteen expeditions. All these missions arrived practically intact in Manila. Only one or two friars had preferred to stay behind and hide in Mexico or had passed away during the incredibly long journey across the Atlantic and the Pacific.

Table 1. Missionary Expeditions in the 18th century

Arrival in Manila	No. of missionaries	Commissary
1711	59	José de Santa Gertrudis
1718	18	Diego de San José
1723	26	José de San Miguel
1726-1730	43	José de la Soledad
1737	53	Juan Francisco de la Encarnacion
1750-1755	42	Anselmo de San Agustin
1756	51	Miguel de Santo Tomás de Villanueva
1768-1769	66	Juan de San Agustin
1786	20	Juan de San Ignacio*
1790	17	Manuel de Jesús y Maria*
1792	13	Manuel de Jesús y Maria *
1795	14	Manuel de Jesús y Maria*
1797	18	Manuel de Jesús y Maria *
		and Eugenio de la Sma. Trinidad

* Missions assembled by the commissaries indicated, but were taken to Manila by their vice commissaries.

SOURCE: SÁDABA, Catálogo, 156-384.

Customarily, the volunteers were priests or theology students from twenty to thirty years old. In 1711 and 1718, novices who were admitted for their appropriate intellectual and moral qualities signed up. The province would rather have religious who had finished their formation and studies because in the Philippines there was no way of preparing them in a worthy manner. “Even if we want it,” Father Mateo de la Encarnación warned in 1754, “it is not possible for them to acquire a perfect formation because there was strictly no way of teaching them properly.”⁸

Carlos III’s reign of Enlightenment shared the same opinion and on 29 January 1767 the king passed a royal cedula which limited the recruitment of religious to ordained priests and with their studies completed. But the decree did not produce major effects. Those were already crisis periods, and the commissaries could not permit themselves the luxury of splitting hairs. There was no remedy left for them but to accept everyone who responded to their call which found response only among philosophy and theology students. In January 1789, Juan de San Ignacio came up with eighteen volunteers, only three of whom complied with the requirements. When he presented them before the Council [of the Indies]: “Despite the necessary measures taken [...], he had found until now—neither with other qualities—no one else but those represented on account of so insurmountable dearth of religious suffered by all the thirty-two convents which the congregation only possesses in these three provinces in Spain.”⁹ And in identical plight were found his successors in 1790, 1792, 1795 and 1797.

In theory, it was the State that defrayed all the expenses of the missionaries in the expeditions. But its contributions hardly shouldered half of the costs. In the missions of 1711, 1737, 1751 and 1768-1769, the province invested more than 20,000 pesos. In 1751, the transport expenses of every religious cost the province the sum of ₱600 (*Crónicas* 7, 604). In 1768, the government—alerted by a complaint filed by three friars who resided in their Madrid convent—started to be skeptical about the poverty of the

⁸AGOAR, c. 1977, leg. 3, no. 42, f. 3r.

⁹AGI, *Filipinas* 1053.

Recollects. It contacted Mexico and Manila and demanded reliable information on the true state of their finances. While the information requested was on its way, it continued defraying the missionaries' expenses, but only in the form of an advance. Under exactly the same condition, the government approved the recruitment of three new missions in 1785, 1791 and 1795, with a total of one hundred and twenty-two religious.

Table 2. Expenses of Some Missions in the 18th century

Arrival in	Commissary	No.	Total	Extraofficial	State	Alms	Province's
Manila			Expenses	Expenses	Subsidy		Contribution
1711	José de Sta. Gertrudis	58	60,104	3,000	26,0000	4,709	25,874
1716	Diego de San José	18	26538	7,055	6643		12,840
1723	José de San Miguel	26	29, 929	2,400	9,109	1,557	16, 863
1726-1730	José de la Soledad	43	41,015	1,000	19,981	2,735	17,298
1737	Francisco de la Encar.	52	49, 092		19, 098	3,062	29, 949
	Totals	197	P206,678	P13455	P80, 813	P12, 063	P99,824

SOURCE: *Crónicas* vol. 6 /part 2, 350.

The province refused to comply with these orders because its fragile economy could hardly support the missionary expeditions. It presented the corresponding recourse, thus giving way to the very long administrative dossier that lasted during several lustrums and that not even the royal cedula of 29 December 1805 had successfully solved. That royal cedula forced the province to reimburse the State with "half of the expenses spent and to be spent in the provisions and transport of the religious who had embarked and still to embark for the expenses of the three missions [1785, 1791 and 1795] granted to your province." In the future the province should set aside every year ₱3,000 from the produce of the Mexican haciendas and ₱2,000 of those estates in the Philippines and should deposit them in royal coffers. With that amount, "it could defray the expenditures of the timely dispatch of five religious every year, who may subrogate an estimated equal number of deaths or incapacitated religious in the same period of time over one hundred who compose the province."¹⁰

¹⁰*Recollectio* 6 (1983) 356.

Hounded by illness and death

The mortality and illness rates of the religious were always very high. In 1750, Father José de la Concepción estimated that during every triennium fifteen to eighteen religious died, that is, about 6% every year.¹¹ The seventy religious who passed away between 1737 and 1751 completely substantiated his estimates. The dwelling, nourishment, and sanitary conditions did not match the efforts and troubles imposed by their multiple tasks. As a result, their physiques were quickly debilitated and they became incapacitated for pastoral work. “With the numerous difficult tasks,” a prior provincial wrote the vicar general in a letter in 1722, “it was impossible for them to comply with their duties because of ailments.”¹²

Half of the religious died before reaching the age of forty-five. Of the 358 religious who passed away in the 17th century, one hundred forty-three died before turning forty, and thirty-five between ages forty to forty-five. The remaining one hundred eighty lived up to more than forty-five years old but only a few reached fifty-five years of age.

The Moro nightmare

The shipwrecks and endless raids by the Moros were the other two causes of deaths and illnesses. Between 1720 and 1750 thirteen succumbed at the hands of the Moros: “one died by spears in Linapacan; another was poisoned and perished in Taytay; another by a gunshot at the fort of Taytay; another captured in Mindoro and brutally killed in Tirong; another mercilessly treated and was ransomed for eight-hundred pesos; and eight perished due to hostile conditions in their escape to the mountains” (*Crónicas*, 7, 552). The subsequent decades were no less catastrophic. Between 1752 and 1754, the Moros captured sixteen religious,

“of whom six were ruthlessly killed, three died a natural death in Moro captivity and others were rescued after huge ransoms were paid. The last one they seized and taken captive, in 1784 [...] was able to flee from them, but so injured and weakened for the pains

¹¹*Reseña*, in BPSN 34 (1944) 278.

¹²AGOAR, c. 72, leg. 2, no. 11.

he suffered that upon regaining his freedom, he had the consolation of dying among Christians and receiving the holy sacraments of our holy Mother the Church, for having died in a town of religious folks of Leyte Island, where he luckily escaped [...] Many other ministers who had been freed from captivity suffered a great deal in other circumstances, constrained several times to take refuge in the bowels of the mountains, laden with needs, miseries and nakedness, totally losing their health and becoming a mere relic of their usual ailment [...] Others drowned in the trip from one ministry to another” (*Crónicas* 8, 411-412).

Table 3: Religious Killed by Moros in the 18th century

Year	Name	Place
1720	Manuel de Jesús Maria	Linapacan (Palawan)
1723	Benito de San José	Cateel (Mindanao)
1723	Juan de la Purificación	Taytay (Palawan)
1734	Antonio de Santa Ana	Taytay (Palawan)
1735	José de San Agustín	Calapan (Mindoro)
1735	José de los Angeles	Mangarin (Mindoro)
1737	Juan de la Virgen del Moncayo	Palawan
1740	León de San José	Ililim (Mindoro)
1741	Francisco de San Benito	Ilog (Mindoro)
1753	Francisco de San Miguel	Calatan (Palawan)
1753	José de la Virgen del Niño Perdido	Siargao (Mindanao)
1754	Manuel de Santa Catalina	Ticao
1754	Antonio del Sto. Cristo de Burgos	Bislig (Mindanao)
1754	Francisco de San Miguel	Ilog (Mindoro)
1754	Andrés de Jesús Maria	Calapan (Mindoro)
1755	Antonio del Sto. Cristo del Desamparo	Tandag
1760	Francisco María de San Antonio	Batán (Panay)
1764	Esteban de San José	Bislig (Mindanao)

Year	Name	Place
1770	Diego de Santa Inés	Sorsogon
1770	José de Santa Teresa (Casper)	Surigao (Mindanao)
1775	José de San Agustin	Calapan (Mindoro)
1776	Tomás de Santa Constanca	Batan (Panay)
1806	Alonso de San José	At Sea

* Died due to deprivations arising from the raids

** Died in captivity

Some religious were subjected to indescribable tortures. The Moros dragged Father León de San José along the shore, then they tied him to a post and afterward mutilated him in a most horrendous manner. Slowly they chopped off his legs, arms, nose, ears, etc. and later hurled his corpse to the sea. In 1736, the Moros disinterred the cadaver of Father Diego de la Virgen del Camino, *doctrinero* of Mangarin (Mindoro) and cast it to the sea. Years after, Father José de la Virgen del Niño Perdido was ripped to pieces.

Table 4: Religious held Captive: 1700-1800

Year	Name	Place
1740	Hipólito de San Agustin	Pola (Mindoro)
1753	José A. de la Santísima Trinidad	Gigaquit (Mindoro)
1754	Manuel de Santa Catalina	Ticao
1755	Rodrigo de los Dolores	Surigao (Mindanao)
1761	Francisco de Santa María	Taytay (Palawan)
1765	Manuel de la Concepción	Balingcaguin (Zambales)
1769	José de de San Joaquín	Butúan (Mindoro)
1775	José de la Virgen del Carmen (Estévez)	Ticao
1778	José de la Virgen del Olmo	Calapán (Mindoro)
1790	Joaquín de San Jose	Inabanga (Bohol)

SOURCES: SÁDABA, 211-212, 246-248, 291, 295, 307, 321, 329; *Crónicas* 8, 24-25.

In the last fifteen years of the century not a single religious perished at the hands of the Moros, and the number of captives lowered dramatically. In 1785, one friar was taken captive. He was quickly rescued but he could not overcome the privations he suffered and died as soon as he was set free. Father Joaquín de San José, seized at Inabanga (Bohol) in 1790, was more fortunate.

The devastation of their towns, nonetheless, went on unabated year after year. The letters from provincials seemed war chronicles. At one time or another they spoke of deaths and captivities, of the need to exempt the natives from tribute, of the damage on their dwellings and farms, of the construction of bulwarks and forts, of the distribution of arms, clothing and food supplies, etc. A 12 June 1796 letter attests to one hundred and fifty fatalities and four hundred captured during “these two years [...] in the towns under our administration.” In the succeeding years the brutality of the attacks somewhat diminished, but from July 1797 to the same month of 1797, the death of eighty people and the captivity of two hundred others had to be deplored.

The war commenced in 1719, after the restoration of the fortress at Zamboanga, thereby bringing to a close an interval of peace that started in 1680. It set off a new era of terror, desolation and death. The Moros who were irked by the reopening of the stronghold, renewed their raids against the Christian communities in the Visayas. Year after year, Joloans, Maguindanaos, Maranaos and Tirons embarked on their fast sea craft and raided the defenseless Christian towns, spreading devastation and death.

The worse misfortune befell on the Recollect *doctrinas*—small, helpless and so near the Moros’ natural bases of operations. Palawan, Mindanao, Mindoro and Romblon were endless targets of their forays. In some areas of Romblon, Palawan and Mindoro they even set up permanent bases.

In 1720, as soon as the fort of Labo (Palawan) was dismantled, the Moros commenced their gruesome raids. They burned the Linapacan church down, razed the town to the ground, seized a huge number of natives “and inflicted a cruel death to Father Manuel de Jesús María.” In 1722, they pillaged Agutaya (Palawan) and

Manao (Mindoro) and laid siege on the fort in Cateel (Mindanao). In 1730, they landed at Taytay, *cabecera* of Calamianes, defying the fort there which did not otherwise hamper them from taking over the town. After twenty-one days of siege and setting fire to the church, the *kumbento* and all the houses, “they withdrew contented and laden with captives and spoils.”

In 1731 and 1732, it was the turn of Culion, Dumarán and Calatan, wherefrom they headed towards the shores of Mindoro. In 1734, they went to attack the fort of Taytay again and, when they saw “they could take over said Royal Fort, they set the town hall and its adjacent buildings afire, razed the plants and farms and seized over six hundred Christians.” In the skirmish a bullet hit the heart of Father Antonio de Santa Ana, and three other religious perished “as a result of the incalculable deprivations they suffered [...] when they trekked and fled to the mountains, naked, barefoot and burdened with chalices and sacred vessels, after feeding on wild herbs for some days” (*Crónicas*, 3, 371).

In the ensuing years Palawan was at the mercy of Moros, “who enter and go out as if they were in their own house, without experiencing the least resistance. [...] The natives had all ensconced themselves in the mountains and so dispersed were they that not even the ministers know where their sheep had gone, nor do the fathers know the whereabouts of their children, nor do the women have knowledge of their husbands’ whereabouts.”¹³ In August 1764, the missionary of Taytay confided to the father provincial in a letter: “May your reverence, as father of the province, gaze at us with eyes of mercy, for it has been two years that I have not gone out to administer the sacraments on account of the Moros, and many adults who have been taught catechism in Paragua (Palawan), I do not know where they are now” (*Crónicas*, 7, 304). In 1738, only 1,800 settled families have been left in the entire Palawan. The number of Palawēños that fell into the hands of the Moros between 1720 and 1737 rose up to two thousand (*Crónicas* 7, 375).

In the years that followed Mindoro was the most chastised. In October 1739, a squadron of sixteen to eighteen caracoas

¹³José DE LA CONCEPCIÓN, *Memorial de 1738*, AGOAR, c. 77, leg. 3, no. 29.

invaded the island and devastated the towns of Bulalacao, Ililim and Mangarin. This last town was reduced into miserable place of twenty inhabitants. In April of the next year, they stationed at the most strategic points in the island and choked the trade of the Visayan islands with Manila. In 1746 the Moros went on “laying waste on the towns and provinces and capturing all kinds of people.” In provinces administered by Recollects the dead and captives already rose to more than 10,000 souls (*Crónicas*, 7, 443).

In 1749, they reached up to Zambales where “they could not play havoc because all the towns were armed with great vigilance,” and Caraga, “which we considered to be much secured. [...] In that region, they torched seven towns: Gompot, Guinsiliban and Balinguan, annexes or *visitas* of the district of Cagayan; Gingoog and Tubay, *visitas* of Butuan; Sapao and Cabonto, *visitas* of Siargao. All the *kumbentos*, churches and houses of said towns were reduced to ashes, and they seized more than three hundred persons in the whole province of Caraga” (*Cartas*, 1, 27r).

The decade of the 1750s was still most tragic, especially from 1752 to 1755. With the incarceration of their kind in the early part of 1751, and perhaps because of it, the Joloans abandoned their long period of neutrality and united with the fellow believers. The old raids, always headed by the Tirons and other marginal groups, became a sort of holy war that brought to ruin a great part of the Recollect ministries. In that same year the first alarm sounded. In November 1751, they attacked Mindoro and stayed in the island for several months. “For the fourth time they burned down the *kumbento*, church and town of Calavite, robbed all what was there, even the sacred ornaments; they had left the island so devastated that only two towns of the island were left: Naujan and Calapan” (*Crónicas*, 7, 612).

For three subsequent years, the Moro attack acquired alarming proportions. At one time or another they scoured Palawan, Romblon, Maestre Island, Masbate and Mindoro and the powerful blows fell on Mindoro and Caraga.

Mindoro, already brutally chastised, was razed. In 1753, the Moros reached even Calapan, whose parish priest was taken

prisoner and taken to Mindanao and from there to Jolo where he died. A good part of its inhabitants fled to the islands of Luzon, Marinduque and Panay. The rest took off to the mountains, where for some months Father Tomás de Santiago gave them company. In July 1755, not a single church was left standing.

The Moros burned Caraga down in Mindanao where they desecrated the Blessed Sacrament and devastated the districts of Siargao and Butuan with its ten barrios. In Siargao they made forts to explore the mines with the captives' labor and took advantage of the strategic situation of Surigao that gave control over the maritime movement of the area. The doctrinas of Tandag and Bislig were incommunicado. These invasions proved fatal for some religious who either lost their lives or freedom.

The behavior of some religious was heroic. Dozens of religious stayed with their faithful, sharing day by day their perils and anxieties, living in bamboo and nipa dwellings, nourishing themselves with root crops and taking charge of their defense. They were aware that they were the only ones capable of gathering forces, joining together their resources and organizing defenses: "When there are no religious in the town, there is no more control nor advice for the defense against the Moro." When the defense was impossible, the ministers escaped with them to the mountains which were at all times the safest refuge. Their valor and the military expertise of some religious guaranteed the survival of not a few towns as well as the perseverance of the people in the Faith. In the period of greatest abandonment, the prior provincial was able to assure the vicar general about the fidelity of his religious to the mission committed to them:

"Despite the fact that we have no more houses nor churches nor towns in Mindoro Island and in other districts [Caraga and Masbate], every religious minister acts like a soldier of Christ Jesus, standing guard in his assignment for the spiritual consolation and solace of the few Christians left. [...] *Heb* 11:34-35. This doctrine now serves the only palliative to our pain for having made us in a way similar to the primitive teachers and preachers of the Faith" (*Cartas* 2, 117v-118r).

Shipwrecks

Our mission stations and parishes being located in various islands of this archipelago, it seemed natural that we hear news of shipwrecks and drowning. Towards the end of 1726 the sea-craft that carried the provincial Juan de San Andrés and his secretary Diego de San Gabriel was shipwrecked in the Visayan Sea. And the two religious vanished forever as they were engulfed by the gigantic waves. The same tragic fate befell upon Father Manuel de Santo Tomás de Villanueva when they crossed a river between Mariveles and Cabcaben towards 1731. In 1759, three religious also got drowned when they went to visit the provincial who was waiting for them in Tandag. In 1759. The religious brother Gabriel de Santa Ana drowned in the waters of Romblon. In 1765, Father Jose de San Simpliciano got drowned in a river in Sorsogon. In 1776, the same misfortune befell on Father Carlos de San José near Taytay. In 1793, three young Recollect priests were drowned near the shores of Panay on the way to their workplaces.

Some were able to save their lives and could recover their health. The prior provincial Ramón de Santo Tomás suffered a shipwreck in 1786 in Masbate while on a provincial visitation there. In 1751, Father José de la Concepción wrote that so far four religious had perished at sea. In 1773, the sea craft of Diego de la Virgen del Pilar had hit a coral reef on the way to Bohol and he was in so injured that he could not pull through anymore.

State of constant want

This dearth of religious personnel affected the entire life of the province. Since the last years of the 17th century it was forced to assign various offices to one religious. In the middle of the 18th century, there were hardly any ministries that had a pair of priests. Against the express mandate of the vicar general (1756), even the provincial councilors were charged with parish ministry.

With the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1768 and the consequent take-over of sixteen ministries, the quandary was so desperate and unsustainable. Ex-provincials, councilors, the procurator general, the secretary provincial, the vice priors of Manila and even the

priors of Cebu and Cavite had to leave their positions and work in the vacant ministries left by the Jesuits in Bohol and Mindanao.

The arrival of forty-one new religious from Spain in 1768 and of another twenty-four religious temporarily alleviated the situation. In 1774, the plight got worse and the ailing religious and those in dire physical predicament had to lend a hand. In 1779, there were six vacant curacies and the cries of old priests who deserved retirement could not be heard.

In 1784, the decrease of ministerial work could no longer be prolonged. Finally, the provincial council firmed up their decision to abandon the ministries of Mindoro and Zambales. A few days later, the provincial made the formal renouncement of these parishes in the hands of the Archbishop of Manila. With arrival of reinforcements in 1786, however, the province was able to overcome one of the most vexed years of its history and was able to keep for some more years all the rest of the ministries under its jurisdiction.

2. Religious Coexistence and Discipline

The friars of the Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino were Spanish. And naturally it was in Spain where they received their initial formation. The spiritual substratum of Spanish convents had formed and nourished their religious ideals as well as their traditions, customs and practices existing in them and had clothed them with such definite socio-cultural apparel. The trip to the Philippines and the sociological conditions of the archipelago could modify these forms, rarely could they transform their basic inspiration. This was the same one they had absorbed in their Spanish convents, even though those local conditions had not stopped imposing different manifestations by fomenting some tendencies and repressing others.

Consequently, we see that in the Philippines a drop in the religious level toward a certain marginalization of characteristic practices of the Recollect spirit like individual and communal poverty, prayer and penance, towards a gradual secularization of the concept of authority with the detrimental consequences

on community life, and toward an exasperation of individualism and regionalism. Some of these manifestations were not common in Spain. Geographic isolation that ruined intercommunication inevitably froze the concern for common things and consequently the passionate participation in domestic fights. At other times the missionary fervor and ruthless pressures of daily life minimized their significance. On the contrary, individualism, secularization and keeping of personal money were more rampant and more serious in the Philippines than in Spain.

a. Decline of common life

Regionalism, penchant for power, authoritarianism of some major superiors and unhealthy awareness of one's own rights frequently beset the life of Saint Nicholas Province, causing suspicions, tensions and confrontations that reached hostile manifestations in provincial chapters. During some periods, this anger seemed to diminish and the embers seemed extinguished and inactive, but it was enough for a small breeze to set them aflame and provoke conflagration. Sometimes the election of superiors, at other times the sending of commissaries to Spain, still at other times the interpretation of a new regulation from Madrid; at other times the personal rivalries of ringleaders, at other times, the infringement—more or less unintentional—of a provision of a complicated election law, or at length, the appointment of a mere vice prior or the discontentment of a particular religious, fostered the tensions and caused new dissents, troubles and feuds to erupt.

The first decades of the 18th century were the most tumultuous. In 1702, the vicar general exhorted the superiors to maintain the peace and harmony. He reproached them for the troubles inflicted upon their subordinates and further threatened them with sending a commissary to hear their complaints. The following year he insisted on the same censures and once again rebuked their disobedience and authoritarianism:

With respect to the old feuds, I have written and responded many times and too much. I do not know if the superiors' order for the consolation of religious has already been implemented, because

here we have received information through various correspondence that [such orders] are not obeyed if they do not sit well with the superiors. For that reason, it is my intention for now that a visit is made to remedy it by either sending visitors from within the religion or dispatching somebody from outside, which is most effective.¹⁴

His successor Pedro de Santiago had harsher words. In August 1707 he openly rebuked their disrespect towards the highest authority of the congregation, their lack of affection for the Spanish provinces and their internal dissensions. “Not just one but a great number of letters have arrived here, letters that exaggerate that all endeavor is focused on elections, as to who can manage with tact and moderation and those who can and those who cannot, or those from their own province who govern or, those from another province who do not.” Four years after, he used more conciliatory terms, and it was not for it that he abstained from decrying their individualism and dissensions afflicting the province.

From the cliques and dissensions they had, all the damages and losses of control of so many and the loss of peace. All of it is not well and it is not the good reputation nor esteem [of our religion as well as of our holy habit...] This is a very deplorable thing to travel 5,000 leagues only to be lost.¹⁵

Time would be tasked to show the futility of these accusations. These were plain threats that did not tackle with the root of evil and they reached Manila already stripped of their coercive force.

In July 1711, an expedition of fifty-seven friars disembarked in Manila. Unfortunately, majority of them were tainted with regionalism which in those days divided the Spaniards into two opposing political factions. They were get during their journey when some misunderstandings arose between the thirty-nine friars from Castile and the fifteen from Aragon, who with three from Andalusia composed the mission. But it was in Manila when the apotheosis of regionalism erupted in all its force, unleashing a storm that for six years violently assailed the entire life of the province. The clashes were so violent; the conflicts had never been seen before in the province.

¹⁴AHPM, Legajo 8, 2.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

The Castilians did not view well the hegemony which, thanks to their numbers, was exercised by the Aragonese in the province. And they made ready to contest it. They denounced before the government the alleged dynastic disloyalty of four friars from Aragon, including the commissary himself Father José de San Gertrudis from Catalonia. Afterward, in a secret meeting they took upon themselves the chapter offices vacated due to lack of religious. They did not acknowledge the chapter that was convoked in accordance with law. They proceeded to celebrate a parallel chapter in San Sebastian Convent. Thus, on 26 May 1713, Saint Nicholas Province had two provincials. Two days later, there was a pair of superiors in every house.

The intervention of the governor general Count of Lizarraga in favor of the legitimate provincial Father Antonio de Santa Mónica seemed to have solved the problem. But it was merely false hope. Assessed by the councilor Gregorio Manuel de Villa, the governor general started distrusting the friars from Aragon. He refused to back the authority of the prior provincial. Little by little, he took sides with the friars from Castile. With his assistance, twelve young Castilians established themselves at the convent of San Juan de Bagumbayan with the legitimate prior provincial failing to conjure it since the governor had prohibited all control over them. With the death of the Count of Lizarraga in February 1715, the situation started to change. His successor José de Torralba took the side of the legitimate provincial. On 8 June 1715, by force he dislodged the rebels from their redoubt and placed them in San Nicolás Convent under the direct orders of the provincial.

It was the first significant step along the path of justice. Fortunately, the protagonists agree to give what followed. The rebels acknowledged their mistake and the provincialate accepted them “with mercy [...], as fathers yearning for peace in their province and for unification of all.” On 17 June 1717, the generalate approved the acts of the provincial, pardoned the still pending censures and exonerated “all the guilty from every punishment, excommunication or deprivation of active and passive voice,” and admitted to the sacred orders those theologians “suspended

by sentence” and put an end to all quarrel because “it is our mind and intention that no one shall be unqualified for what happened in the past.”

This verdict was received in the Philippines as an authentic liberation. On 26 August 1718, the community in Manila listened to the reading of the sentence and all its members complied with it and signed it willingly. On the 27th the community of San Sebastian followed their example. In subsequent months the religious assigned in Zambales, Mindanao, Mindoro and Palawan did the same.

The storm had come to pass. Slowly the minds were getting calm and a relative prosperity once again reigned in the cloisters, despite the fact that the provincial Father José de San Nicolás, chief of the Aragonese, was not the most suited person to guarantee and consolidate it. His personal life was far from exemplary, and his administrative procedures were neither very orthodox. He did not divulge the appointment of a visitor general from the province, which was issued in Madrid in August 1718 in favor of Father Antonio de Santa Mónica. Furthermore, against the express order given by the general curia, he did not rehabilitate the censured friars nor did he burn the papers pertinent to past conflicts. Fortunately, the prestige and good sense of Father José de la Soledad complemented some of his defects. In the 1719 chapter he obtained the rehabilitation of the censured friars. The chapter of 1722 decreed the successful burning of corresponding proceedings.

This 1722 chapter marked a significant phase in the pacification of the province. Then Father José de San Nicolás disappeared from public life and Diego de San José, an educated, zealous and strange to the past conflicts, took over the reins of the government. “For the purpose of completely establishing the public peace of this province,’ the chapter introduced the practice of “the alternating the office of prior provincial” from among the religious of the Spanish provinces. In the first triennium the provincial should be elected from among the religious of Castile, and later according to rigorous shifts, between the Aragonese and Castilians.

In 1724, the general council ratified this act and fixed the number at twelve as the minimum number of religious that a province should maintain in the Philippines in order to take part in these shifts. This condition, confirmed by a papal bull dated 24 September 1729—although it was reduced to ten religious in 1734—forever excluded from administrative positions the Andalusians who were not so many in the archipelago. In July 1730, the general council extended the alternative to all the other positions in the province. This practice continued since 1734 when the offices were always distributed equitably and meticulously among the sons of Castile and Aragon. Occasionally, some secondary position was set aside for the sons of Andalusia.

The strict procedure of alternating positions was beneficial for the province. It patched up deeply rooted abuses, tamed the strong passions of the period and held back the unjustified supremacy of one group over another. But *per se*, it was a less refined remedy which implied an annoying degradation of religious values and their substitution with purely human values. At times it closed the door for eminent religious, and at other times, it fueled tedious and endless casuistry. In clear contrast to constitutional provisions on the qualities of *doctrineros*, it favored the promotion of mediocre religious who sole merit lay on the place of his birth. There were likewise occasions when it got in the way of the timely adoption of an urgent measure. The substitution of Father Juan de San Ignacio was not implemented in 1784 because it was not clear as to which province should his successor belong. In 1750, it blocked the provision of the priorships of Butuan and Taytay, for which two religious of the two factions aspired.

In some ways, the alternative system contributed likewise to strengthening and perpetuating regionalism. Some superiors exerted effort to uproot it either by exhortations to unity, peace and harmony that should prevail on every Augustinian community or by banning every expression of regionalism. The intermediate chapter of 1738 severely condemned the factions:

In our convents in Manila, San Juan, San Sebastian and Cavite since these are main convents and as origin and source from which

effects of good breeding, no public or secret conversations are permitted, wherein phrases like *mine*, *yours*, *Aragonese* or *Castilian*, are mixed directly or indirectly, nor by way of chance some religious would be hurled with similar words nor indirect expressions on this regard or another that could give rise to derision, sentiments, complaints or dissensions which may perturb slightly or seriously the religious peace, unity, fraternal charity, as the same children of one same province, children of one same father, of one same rule and constitutions (*Capítulos*, 395-396).

Those orders and prohibitions, however, were mere whims. When the time came for preparing chapters and holding elections, the place of origin of candidates also held a decisive weight. It even reached the extent of requesting the commissaries that in the recruitment of missionaries they should take into account their region of origin in order that no province would prevail over the others.

In the middle of the century, the province traversed another difficult period, partly due to the impertinence and baseless suspicion of two meritorious religious: the ex-commissaries José de la Soledad and Anselmo de San Agustín. The self-reliance and arrogance of the latter kept the province on edge until 1755 when he returned to Manila until his death in 1764. The death of the provincial Francisco de la Encarnación in 1749, the blindness and substitution by another one Mateo de la Encarnación in 1759, the ill-advised behavior of the visitor general Esteban de Santo Tomás de Villanueva between 1761 to 1764 and, above all, the suppression of eight chapter votes promulgated by the generalate in June 1747 at the petition of the same province, were among the so many other sources of conflict in the community. The coincidence of the complaint lodged by Father Anselmo who had been stripped of his privileges for having sojourned too long in Mexico, with the reduction of votes infuriated the spirits and put the 1758 chapter in danger. The unwanted presence of the governor general hurt the pride of the chapter delegates, but it prevented outrage and confrontations, contained the hot-headed personalities and encouraged the ringleaders of the factions to draw up and sign an agreement that guaranteed the peaceful development.

Towards 1730 the apostolic value—not always well understood—began to prevail over the community life. The provincial chapter held in 1731 took advantage of a precarious “number of religious” by assigning them on a fixed basis in twelve *visitas* of Zambales, Romblon, Mindanao and Calamianes (*Capítulos*, 362). In the intermediate chapter of 1738, some complaints against the centralized administration of Caraga and exhorted the provincial that religious who were not needed in the *cabecera* be distributed in all the towns of the district (*Ibid.*) The chapter fathers of 17340 and 1743 shared the same ideas and ordered that religious be assigned to Casborran, Cabangan, Banton, Ticao, Surigao, Calagdan, Cateel, Linao and Camiguin (*Ibid.* 410, 416). And, at the end, the 1746 chapter delegates institutionalized these provisional measures and, “for the rapid growth of towns and spiritual comfort of their residents,” partitioned these districts, creating six vicariates out of them and putting in them an equal number of religious in them. In the following year, all the religious of the province were all alone. In 1749, it was only in Cebu and Masinloc where two religious resided (*Cartas*, 1, 9v, 16r, 21v-22r).

At the outset these vicariates stayed under the jurisdiction of the prior of the *cabecera*, and its ministers were his mere delegates. But it did not take long for them to give rise to new self-governing ministries. From this seed so gladly sown, sprouted among us the classic figure of the Filipino parish priest of the 19th century. The province planted it without compensating enough for the communitarian character of the congregation and in the risks that the solitude would extend to the religious. Neither did those of Madrid warn about their significance. On 30 October 1747 the vicar general deemed all these measures very timely because through them the “faithful would be given more assistance.” The persistent dearth of personnel exacerbated the solitude of missionaries and hindered the adoption of opportune measures.

Such measure was unwise and it did not take long in showing the deep fissures. In 1750, the provincial Father José de la Concepción showed evidence that the religious could not even give confession on time. Some had to “walk ten leagues, and

others twenty.” Five years later, the situation reached alarming proportions:

Almost all the ministers were alone in their ministries because no companions could be given to them, that is why a long period of time passed without being able to confess. For two years the father vice prior of Manila could not go to the mountains of Mindoro to hear confessions on account of Moro persecutions. In order for them to reconcile, the ministers in the provinces of Cagayan, Caraga, Albay, Calamianes and Mindoro need to hike several leagues by land and by sea in search of their comrades, but easily in a half-day travel they could communicate with each other.

Relationship with the curia general in Madrid

The relationship with the general curia was neither always that easy. At times the generalate did not take into sufficient consideration the diversity of the province and promulgated orders that were hard to implement in the Philippines. In 1724, the general chapter banned re-elections without taking into account the dearth of religious in the province nor of the characteristics of its “convents” which seemed the same as those found in the Peninsula, but only in name. For the same reason, it revoked in 1756 an act of the provincial chapter of the preceding year on the assignment of provincial councilors in ministries. In 1760 it demanded that all candidates for the lay state served the convents as *donados* for six years, without considering that in such condition they would be completely banned.

In the Philippines, the lay brothers were Spaniards and the *donados* Filipinos, and “wanting the Europeans to associate with the *indios* and *mestizos de sangley* before admission to the religious state is impossible.” Since 1743 the province had banned from any kind of assignment anybody who had not passed the examination in the native tongue proficiency. In 1791 the general council added that from that time onwards nobody could exercise any capitular office with first having served for ten years a curacy or live mission.

In theory, such measures seemed very reasonable, especially the last one, which in the mind of the general council was a simple

consequence of the apostolic character of the province. However, when the council disregarded its real and concrete situation, oftentimes the measures ended up unjust and counterproductive. The last decision was very badly received in Manila. In a very lengthy letter dated 7 July 1793 and addressed to the vicar general, the provincial highlighted its myriad inconveniences and requested its immediate repeal (*Cartas*, 2, 142v, 132v-139v). It can be said that the same judgment was applied as well to the norms affecting the Calced Augustinians, on the prayers for the departed and several practices of piety of the Order.

Luckily, the general curia was almost always inclined to acquiesce to the complaints of the province. In 1725, it revoked the appointment of a commissary. It exonerated the province from contributing to the expenses of the general chapter and left in their hands the number of hours that should be devoted to meditation in Manila. In 1784, it withdrew its ban on granting the habit to candidates born in Spain. In 1797, it repealed all the most disputed 1791 provisions on the conditions required for fulfilling the capitular offices.

The very constitutions granted the provincial the faculty of suspending the compliance of whatever superior decision he deemed untimely, until the time when—the vicar general having been duly informed—he might confirm or revoke it (*Constitutions* 1664, 165; *Constitutions* 1745, 157). In 1690 the vicar general Miguel de San Agustín got rid of this last condition and practically submitted the ordinances of the general curia to the complete will of the intermediate chapter of the province (*Capítulos*, 69). The province—so used to the right to petition which was so generalized in civil jurisprudence in the Indies—abused this very extraordinary prerogative, without giving much weight to the frequent and severe rebukes by the vicars general. In a lengthy letter dated 11 November, 1759 Martín de la Virgen del Niño Perdido censured the most visible excesses and re-established the constitutional statute.

Furthermore, the mistrust and autonomy with which the province tried to conduct their business in Madrid annoyed the vicars. In 1726, José de la Soledad went to the extent of requesting

Rome to exempt the commissaries from the jurisdiction of the vicar general (*Bullarium* 3, 482-489). Perhaps it might be Father Pedro de Santiago who might best express the sentiments that such suspicions would arouse in the curia general. The penchant for “evading the dependence on their vicar general,” he wrote in 1707, induced the province to abuses of authority and lack of tact and decency which did not produce any benefit at all. His letters were oozing with insolence and brazenness which only the distance could prevent him from punishing them as deserved. With his instructions he made the commissaries “absolute owners” of the money of the province, without considering that in that manner they would hamper the recruitment of missionaries and would increase its expenditures. The rejection of doctrinas being administered “in case they subject us to the bishops,” repeated once again in the 1704 chapter, was null and void because the ministries belonged to the congregation and only the congregation through its legitimate representatives could reject them.

In the Philippines, however, some of the most representative religious believed that the province exercised complete power to accept, abandon or exchange ministries even without giving due notice of it to the curia general: “in order to abandon or exchange some doctrinas solely the consent of the patron [the king] or vice patron [the governor general of the Philippines], and not of the vicar general of our congregation, who has complete jurisdiction over everything pertinent to the spiritual and temporal monastic administration of all the religious of this province and its convents or monasteries which are those of Manila, San Juan, Cavite, Cebu and San Sebastian, but with respect to the doctrinas and their administration, they depend on the royal patronage.”

The disputes during the preceding years had brought the curia general into conflict with the province. They can help explain the harshness of this letter written by Father Pedro de Santiago. The general chapter of 1700 promulgated three acts of great interest for the province. One of them raised to ₱1,000 the annual amount which the province should give to the general council to indemnify the hospice in Mexico. Another act created two more general

councilors. One of the two would always represent the Philippine province and, in case he would by chance be in Spain during the chapter some substitute worthy of the office should be preferred to any other candidate. The last act granted the commissary of the missions the title and preeminent positions of former provincials. The first two ordinances did not sound well to the ears of the province. It had not asked for them and considered them onerous. It did not comprehend with it had to pay for some amount for one thing that had always belonged to it. In the end, it was agreed to pay ₱400 annually, but only in concept of gratitude for the continuous benefits it had received from the Spanish provinces. “This province had not dispatched the annual amount of ₱400 by way of justice because our father vicar general has ceded the hospice of Mexico in New Spain to it [...] This is generally believed in these provinces, but never has it been believed in the Philippines, in whose archive [...] are found authentic writings and juridical instruments which prove with evidence that the hospice of Mexico was established by Father Pedro de la Resurrección in the name of the province of the Philippines and with its money it gradually underwent construction and refurbishment later on.”

The expansion of the general council and the possibility of having access to it neither did make them enthusiastic at all. In all of it, the province saw—and history would be in charge of proving it true—as an honor for the Spanish provinces and a burden for itself. In fact, it had to wait for 1783 when the representation would be in the hands of its son and would be truly effective.

Likewise it was annoying in the Philippines that the general curia would easily pay attention to hearsay of the malcontents and would interfere in trivial matters of the province without previous consultation with the superiors. In 1757, in the name of the proximid José de la Concepción complained in a special manner about certain decisions of the vicar Alonso de Guadalupe (1748) on the custody of the keys of provincial deposit, the employment of native scribes in the writing of memorials which could compromise the good name of the province or some of its members, and the transcription in the province’s official books of the letters and adopted rulings.

He further dared to recommend to the vicar that he should not go down to so insignificant things:

For all of that I devotedly beg your Reverence to deign instruct your venerable council, and then your successor, not to send rulings on matters that are irrelevant, mechanical and of little significance, but that you disregard as they deserved to be. When they deal with substantial matters of religion or response to whatsoever consultation or inquiry by the province, it is very fine that you would send it to us everything that in your opinion would be convenient. But for notices or petitions through other channels, I do not find any ruling that is convenient, because—though it may seem all right to your Reverences—it serve nothing here but worries and annoyance of wills and consciences.

But we would lose direction and fake the reality if we insisted on these misunderstandings between the general curia and the province, which rarely dealt with vital matters. Mostly they were momentary clashes which did not rip apart constitutional harmony, much less did they threaten their intimate spiritual communion. By and large, the misunderstandings sprang up from the geographical and spiritual distance of the Philippine province, which did not permit the vicars general from having an exact idea of its real needs. It was only logical that the measures were not always right and good. At times there was a lack of the will to rectify the impugned measures, and neither was there the possibility to do it on time.

Many vicars general viewed the province as the most precious flower of the congregation, and all of them were concerned—with greatest or least tact and effectiveness—about its spiritual and material well-being. The countless correspondence with the superiors of the province attested to the undeniable interest. In their letters the personal admonition alternate with unequivocal order and even threat. But the purpose was always the same: the spiritual and material welfare of the province. Above all, they tend to strengthen the unity of the province over all egoism; to keep the religious observance, with frequent references to prayer, cloister, poverty and to the uniformity of apparel and footwear as well as to arouse their apostolic and missionary zeal. Several times they recommended the opening of a mission field in China.

In Spain the vicars general were their most effective representatives and defenders. They intervened in the recruitment of missionaries with an enthusiasm that at times surpassed that of the commissaries themselves. They defended their rights at the Council of the Indies, supporting through their authority the great number of petitions that the province had to channel through it. I mention some examples. At the start of the century they set in motion their administrative protests about the ministries of Zambales. In 1757, they impeded the finalization of the exchange of the towns in the district of Cagayan (Mindanao) with those of Silang and Cavite el Viejo, which was mandated by Governor-General Arandia against the wishes of the Recollects. Three years earlier they supported the issuance of a cedula wherein the king manifested their “especial gratitude [...] for the zeal with which the religious of that province devote themselves with Christian emulation to the expansion and conversion of Christian communities” (*Crónicas*, 8, 123).

The constitutions mandated that a visitor be periodically sent to the province. The visitor customarily should be a member of Saint Nicholas Province. At one time or another, “rarely,” the appointment would be given to religious in Spain. The general chapter of 1700 (AO 4, 301) reminded the vicars general about this constitutional mandate. Diego de San Buenaventura (1700-1706) thought of implementing it, and his successor Pedro de Santiago (1706-1712) even threatened the province with entrusting the visitation to the archbishop of Manila. In reality, the vicars did not believe in the effectiveness of these visits nor did they have any interest in them. Apparently, only in three occasions they agreed to designate visitors. Three times they had recourse to religious of the province and in all occasions they reaped very minimal fruits.

It is not clear that Father Manuel de Santo Tomás, appointed visitor by Juan de Jesús in 1713, was able to receive his appointment, despite having been confirmed by a royal decree issued on 20 October of 1713. Antonio de Santa Mónica who was designated visitor and commissary in August 1718 came to know about his commission only in 1721 when Father José de San Nicolás ended

his term as provincial, who with utter lack of consideration had ensconced the appointment for almost one whole year. Esteban de Santo Tomás commenced a bit better. He journeyed from Mexico—where at that time he was superior of the hospice community—to Manila in May or June 1761 and was welcomed “in the same manner, with the same courtesy and veneration that our holy statutes ordain that our vicars general be received the first time they come to our convents.” But here ended the simple path. The prior provincial added in his letter that the province expected from him chastisement of the guilty ones and healing of the recent wounds. In reality, the province did not want the visit nor did expect much from it. In June 1758, Pablo de San Agustín commented in a letter to the vicar general about the obstinate opposition of the province to the visit. And nine years earlier, the provincial Francisco de la Encarnación had highlighted its futility:

What a zealous and prudent provincial may not remedy in the Philippines, though how well and with how much love and charity he acts, no superior will be able to remedy anything, especially one with no experience at all in this land and with no knowledge of its temperament, which generally may be modified upon his arrival in the Philippines. And for all of us here, it is the greatest impossibility since all of us are affected by the generalities of the law and there is no one who is deemed the most prone to protests and most offended among the others [...]. It has been for thirty-one years in the province and has also found all who have governed it of the same opinion, and it is one of the chief directives given to father commissaries.

Father Esteban did not evade this law. Through his lack of tact and his demands for honor he made the little leeway for the trust that the provincial was ready to accord to him vanish in a few weeks. On 19 September 1761, the provincial council gave a highly reduced interpretation to his powers. He would enjoy solely the privileges of the office—foremost position in the province—in the exercise of his ministry—“when he actually performs his functions”—and would not be able to visit but the convents. Father Esteban could not accept this interpretation and vindicated his right to visit the whole province and to go before the provincial “until the visit of the whole province is done.” The pretensions—

albeit basically just they might be—put him at odds with the provincial and jeopardized the success of all his activities. His decision to accept—in accord with the vicar general's directives—the complaint of Father Anselmo de San Agustín, and the imminent British invasion ended in leaving him in the lurch. Basing upon the civil jurisprudence in the Indies requiring the presentation of original powers, the province went to the extent of denying him in 1764 the presidency of the chapter, in spite of the evidence that it was really granted to him by the vicar general.

Between 1778 and 1782, the province underwent another visit unforeseen by the Constitutions. It was Carlos III's royal visit to all the religious provinces of Mexico, Peru, Nueva Granada and the Philippines in August 1796. The king would have wanted the visitor to be an Augustinian Recollect born in Spain. But the repeated rejections by the Recollects forced the vicar general to have recourse to the dean of the cathedral chapter of Manila, who conducted it to the complete satisfaction of the king and the province.

The Augustinian Recollects in the 18th Century: Religious Identity and Conflicts

Ángel Martínez Cuesta OAR

Episcopal visitation and canonical collation

The harmony among the religious of one same district, the safeguarding of their religious identity and protection against snares that very closely lay in ambush against their vows were the three areas that principally concerned the superiors of Saint Nicholas Province. Peace and harmony were, at the same time, characteristics of the sons of Saint Augustine and essentials in their apostolic mission. In 1722, Diego de San José fervently recommended them to the missionaries in Zambales, because this was the will of Saint Augustine in the Rule and because “experience has shown that one of the means and a condition *sine qua non* to acquire all the spiritual and temporal advancement and growth that there is in that mission are unity and peace that all the religious ministers must have among themselves.”

The incorporation of the ministries in the life of the community was total. From the hands of their superior they received the mandate and in his name they administered it. The provincial was “the universal minister of all our *doctrinas*,” as a very common formula in the provincial chapters stated. He was responsible to the king for their function. He appointed all the *doctrineros*, judged

their fitness and removed them when he deemed it convenient. The ministers were delegates or representatives. Their capacity for autonomous decision was rather limited since they should give an account of everything to the provincial or to his vicar in the district. Without his permission they could not be vicars forane, nor could they set up towns, nor change the location of a *visita*, nor commence new construction projects. Their communications and reports to the civil authorities in Manila were always channeled through the procurator of the province. He continually reminded all the doctrineros they were sons under obedience and members of a community.

The archbishop of Manila tried again and again to cut and even to abolish such independence which they believed to be against the canons of the Council of Trent and against the laws of the Royal Patronage. Miguel García Serrano (1620-1629), Miguel García Poblete (1658-1667) and Diego Camacho (1697-1705) squandered their best energies in the undertaking. All their efforts came up against the unyielding and firm resistance of the regular clergy who refused episcopal visitation, canonical collation and submission to local ordinaries, finding support in the privileges granted by Pius V, which they considered to be still currently in force, the primitive state and communication problems with the Filipino doctrinas, which had no comparison at all with those of Nueva España [Mexico]: in their incompatibility with the religious state as they hampered or at least restricted the jurisdiction of the provincials over their religious; in the serious harm they would inflict on religious discipline, as the Mexican experience had shown immediately. Before consenting to their submission to bishops, they were all set to abandon their parishes and withdraw to the convents.

For the first time, the Recollects resorted to this threat which had all the characteristics of an authentic blackmail and had already appeared during the episcopal term of the first bishop of Manila in 1655. They repeated it in the provincial chapters of 1686—"In case they may require our father provincial for us to submit ourselves to the bishops, allow *de facto* the renunciation of all the ministries

under our charge to be done” (*Capítulos*, 163)—in 1698, 1700, 1704 and 1707. The vicars general of the congregation never approved it and in more than one occasion chided the province for “renouncing what does not belong to it” and for violating an express precept of the general council, which at the beginning of the century had mandated their subjection (*Ibid.*, 258). In spite of that, the province persisted in its opinion which it expressed again in 1758, when the governor general Pedro Manuel de Arandía, following the example set by the viceroy of Nueva España, wanted to introduce the canonical collation in the Philippines.

The Recollects did not do anything about it but respect the joint agreement with the other orders in a meeting that took place on 5 May 1697 at the Franciscan convent in Dilao, Paco, Manila. There they made a solemn pact never to accept the visitation and work always in one common accord:

We agree and we determine, from now on, that in case a situation comes when the local ordinary would like to visit all or some parts of these ministries and doctrinas which are under our care, or whatever religious minister, our subject, all the superior and prelates of our provinces must consider and take up this cause as their own and common, celebrating the meeting or necessary meetings to agree on the most convenient measures so that the local ordinary will not implement in all or in part the visitation that he would plan; and if, having done the means possible, it might happen that he still attempts to effectively conduct the visitation and that de facto he is about to visit, [...] in that case we agree from now on when the time comes, and we all the superiors of our provinces here commit ourselves and obligate ourselves [...] to renounce in the same way before him and by right can renounce all the ministries and doctrinas under their administration at that time.

The unyielding fidelity to that pact, combined with the dearth of secular priests, guaranteed the hegemony of the regular clergy for almost two years and, at the same time, strengthened their internal unity and ensured the quality of pastoral service. In 1655, in the whole archipelago there were only “fifty-nine suitable secular priests,” while the doctrinas administered by the regular clerics reached 252. In 1705, the Diocese of Manila had only sixty-seven

priests when there were already about seven hundred doctrinas. As long as the tandem of unity of regular clergy and dearth of secular priests continued, no attempt to implement the laws of the Royal Patronage could prosper. Not even the government nor the bishops themselves could allow themselves the luxury of disregarding them.

The panorama substantially changed in the last quarter of the century. The submission of the Dominicans to episcopal visitation in August 1767 shattered the united front of the regular clergy that had been reaffirmed on 15 July 1764 in a new meeting which was also held in Dilao. The immediate expulsion of the Jesuits reduced the group to three members: the Augustinians, Franciscans and Augustinian Recollects. The weakening of the united front happened during the most difficult moment of the battle when it had to keep in check the onslaught by the new archbishop who was backed by the governor general of the Philippines and the regalist ministers of Carlos III whose politics they were its splitting image and instrument.

Basilio Sancho de Santa Justa y Santa Rufina arrived in Manila on 17 July 1767 with the firm resolve of subjecting the regular clergy *in officio officiendo* to his jurisdiction and of implementing in the Islands the laws of the Royal Patronage. On 4 August, he addressed all the provincials declaring to them his firm intent to “comply with what his Holiness and his Majesty order in such a very important matter” and “asking their attitude on the compliance of said bulls and royal decrees.” On 25 July, the Recollect provincial replied—as the other provincials had done earlier—by suggesting to him the novelty and ill-timed character of the measure. The Jesuits expressed their disgust in most tactful terms but the Dominicans submitted to the will of the archbishop.

For some months the archbishop kept mum, and the regular clergy came to believe that he had shelved the project. But it was solely an illusion of the religious. On 3 January 1768, a few days before commencing the visitation of some doctrinas of the archdiocese, he officially requested the provincial of the Jesuits to clarify in writing their attitude. After an exchange of interlocutory

notes, the Jesuits eventually gave up the curacies under their administration in the archdiocese and placed them in the hands of the archbishop who declared again and again he had “fit secular ministers.” A few days afterward, the Franciscans, Recollects and Augustinians gave their support to the Jesuits and put the ministries they administered in the archdiocese at the disposal of the governor general whom they requested to “admit their renunciation or order not to make innovations until express edict is received from our sovereign monarch.” Simultaneously, they turned to Madrid so their superiors would start the case proceedings before the Council of the Indies.

In the absence of the Manila archbishop (7 January-15 February 1768) and the uproar in Manila caused by the expulsion of the Jesuits (17 May 1768-January 1770), the case lost its virulence and there was no innovation for two years. The arrival of Simón de Anda as governor general in Manila in July 1770 revived it. The former hero of the resistance against the British, who while in Madrid had already shown proofs of sharing his mistrust with Enlightenment advocates against the friars, came very anxious of getting even and ready to vent his ire on the regular clergy. He brought with him the royal volume wherein Carlos III ordered to arrange “the subordination of the regular clergy—in their external discipline as well as their proper submission to diocesan ordinaries in everything pertinent to the administration of the sacraments or to the management of missions under their charge.”

General Anda’s first intervention in this affair started in the early part of May 1771. On the fourth day of May, in similar letters to the bishop of Nueva Cáceres and to the Recollect provincial, he reaffirmed his exclusive right to present to the ordinary all the doctrineros of the Islands and threatened to withhold the stipends of those who might be appointed without respecting it. However, he contented himself with the threat in the meantime. He returned to the offensive months later, during the Council of Manila (May-December 1771) which discussed the problem in its fourth session that took place on 29 September 1771. It came up with a criterion that was fully in accord with the directives from Madrid. Anda did

not waste time any further. Without prior notice and basing his support upon conciliar decrees, he ordered the provincial of the Augustinians on 26 October to cede immediately the twenty-two ministries administered by his province in Pampanga to the secular clergy. Committed to the same pact and aware that Anda would not be satisfied with the Augustinian ministries, the following day the Recollect council empowered the provincial to withdraw their religious from all the curacies, “in case no other remedy would be found.’

In the meantime, the religious exerted effort in search for those remedies. They resorted to the influence of their vicar general in Madrid and of the Duke of Híjar and, in solidarity with the Franciscans and Augustinians, they sent to the Court a procurator who—thanks to the collusion with a certain captain who accepted him as a stowaway in his ship—could elude the watchful eyes of the authorities in Manila, and on 21 January 1772 headed for Mexico and Madrid. The succeeding two years were the most tumultuous. In Manila, General Anda and Archbishop Sancho—backed, at least in part, by the Dominicans and the bishop of Nueva Segovia, proceeded with their secularization program although without any major urgency. In October 1772, they stripped the Augustinians of their curacies in Ilocos and tried to force the two other orders to accept the local ordinary’s visitation. But neither the Franciscans nor the Recollects yielded to their will. Again and again they answered Anda’s repeated requests that the question was *sub judice* in Madrid, and as long as the resolution of the Council of the Indies did not come, they could not introduce any change at all in their administration set-up.

The Recollects took refuge in the poverty and the small size of their ministries incapable of maintaining a curate with canonical collation. The Franciscans shielded themselves in their inability to accept income. And both orders took advantage of the dearth of secular clergy in the dioceses of Cebu and Nueva Cáceres. Only four Augustinian Recollects broke the discipline of the community as a result of the 1773 provincial chapter. The four religious asked for canonical collation in the parishes of Bolinao (Zambales),

Danao (Cebu), Cuyo (Palawan) and Tagbilaran (Bohol), all of them being large and well-endowed curacies. The Recollect community felt betrayed and always regarded these religious as lenient, not close to the province and unworthy of any relationship with it. In mid-1782, in the wake of the submission of the parish priests of Cuyo and Tagbilaran, only José de San Buenaventura in Danao and Francisco Palacios de San Miguel in Bolinao kept their proprietary titles of parish priests. In February 1775, Juan de la Concepción, the renowned author of the *Historia general de las Islas Filipinas*, tried to acquire canonical collation in Balincaguín (Zambales, present-day Mabini in Pangasinan) but the provincial successfully blocked the negotiations.

This first phase ended with the royal decree of 9 November 1774, received in Manila in August 1775 and made for immediate implementation by Anda in subsequent months. “As they become vacant,” the religious priests must hand over all their doctrinas to the secular clergy. As reward for their labors and to facilitate the continuation of their evangelization work, they could keep in every province “one or two doctrinas, of the most lucrative,” but on the condition that “they be subjected to the laws of my royal patronage and visitation by the ordinary [bishop].” The triumph of General Anda and Archbishop Sancho seemed absolute. The Augustinians agreed to accept the will of the monarch completely. The Recollects likewise complied with royal decrees, and albeit it was much to their regret, on 9 October 1775 they presented to the vice-patron the names of forty-two religious who should administer parishes. Only the Franciscans remained firm in their refusal. The reality, however, was a bit different.

The Recollects refused to present the short list of three candidates demanded by the government and to acquire the titles of collation and they somehow managed to boycott the orders of the government with a smart conduct wherein expressions of the most abject obedience to the royal orders did not exclude a clear slowness when the time came to comply with them. In December 1775 and January 1776, they dispatched to Madrid similar accounts wherein they insisted in the classic alternative of continuing with

the privileges of Pius V or renouncing all the ministries. For the first time they distinguished between submission to the visitation which they would be able to tolerate under certain conditions, and the canonical institution which would give rise to the ruin of community life, because when it perpetuated the religious in a definite curacy, it would remove them from the demands of obedience and community life. Moreover, Anda himself began to have doubts on the convenience of secularizations. Aware that being “in the last watch of my life” and following a diuturnal meditation, on 3 January 1776, he advised their suspension before the king, “because it would not be convenient to the service of God and his Majesty ceding these Christian parishes to the secular clergy of the country.”

The voice of the governor general as well as the petitions of the regular clerics found immediate repercussion in the Council of the Indies. It is true that the royal decree of 9 December 1776 confirmed the submission of the regular clergy to episcopal visitation and the slow secularization of their doctrinas, but at the same time ordered the return of those already secularized to the religious, it placed limitations on the visitation on the bishop who could conduct it only in person or through religious of the order that was administering it, and prohibited it from exacting any kind of taxes. The decree pleased the religious who slowly stopped questioning the episcopal jurisdiction wherein they did not view any major problem. They now concentrated their efforts in the struggle against canonical institution: “Lord, let the ministries,” the provincial wrote in December 1778, “be subject to episcopal visitation, let the vice patron be acknowledged as your Majesty warns, but let not the ministries be conferred with the title that may infer perpetuity.”

For several years their efforts seemed effective. The Recollects administered their doctrinas with complete freedom. The vice patron did not have qualms with the ministers proposed by the provincial, refused to secularize the curacies and even accepted the return of some titles of canonical collation. The bishops, for their part, did not show interest in their miserable doctrinas and

when the provincials went out to visit their ministries, they did not have any difficulty in delegating to them all their faculties. Only when the provincials decided to correct collated religious, as what happened in 1780 with the parishes of Bolinao, Mambusao and San Jacinto, did they come into opposition of the governor general and the local ordinary. "With the rest of the religious," the provincial council wrote on 30 May 1781, "neither the governor nor the bishops interfere with us [...] and, although we transferred some as some had been transferred *de facto* during this triennium, said gentlemen go through everything." The *alcaldes mayores* had orders not to give the stipend but to those curates without canonical collation, but the governor general made an exception with the Recollects (*Cartas* 2, 66r).

The panorama commenced to change in 1784 as a consequence of an unpleasant letter dated 1 June of the previous year wherein the provincial had shown that he was opposed to the visitation by the bishop of Cebu to the island of Bohol. Bishop Arévalo felt offended and at once he asked his procurator in Manila to initiate a consequent dossier which did not take long in favoring the bishop. The provincial tried to dodge the blow with long and well-reasoned letters, but he could not avoid the outcome. On 16 June, after the legal triple 'I ask and I entreat' by the governor, he had to bow his head and present the *ternas* for the fifteen Recollect ministries with more than five hundred families. The remaining ministries either had less than that number of families and therefore lacked the necessary income requisite for a collated curate, or were *misiones vivas* which were not covered by the royal decrees. The game was already lost definitely. But still there was a need to overcome some moves before the collation would take shape among the Recollects. The opposition of the superiors and the poverty of majority of their ministries did not allow the friars to solicit it. In June 1785, no one had asked for collation yet. Neither was the government in a great hurry to demand it.

The situation went on unchanged until 1790 when Fr. Nicolás de San Antonio's childish vengeance against his vicar provincial again stirred the waters. "Having ironed out the difficulties for

which the collation was controlled which was their wanting to collect taxes from the titles from us against what was ordered by our sovereign (monarch), and not the rebellion and disobedience which so nefarious and so vindictive a lector has alleged” (*Cartas* 2, 124v), the provincial council authorized on 19 May 1790 said vicar provincial to acquire the titles of collation for the parishes of Bacayon, Cuyo, Dapitan, Mambusao and Surigao. In the following year, the same titles were issued for the parish priests of Cagayan, Camiguin and Tandag in Mindanao; those of Romblon and Batan in Panay; those of Bacayon, Loboc, Tagbilaran and Maribohoc in Bohol; that of Taytay in Palawan. In 1793, all the Recollect parish priests in the Philippines had received the canonical institution, and therefore, they were “proprietary curates.” All of them received that institution from the diocesan bishop and the regular prelate was stripped of all rights over them.

The decision did not boost the prestige of the bishops nor did it improve the pastoral ministry of the religious. But it contributed to lowering the level of their moral and spiritual life. The bishops were not capable of following them closely and the provincials were bereft of authority and they had rare opportunities of correcting them. The removal of a religious with collation demanded the opening of a judicial process which was not always possible and whose preliminary investigation was not easy to conduct. At times the outcome could create a scandal; at other times, its result would be falsified through the influence of the parish priest in the locality. As a consequence, a religious could perpetuate himself in a parish for twenty, thirty or more years against the will of his superior who could not even compel him to accept a capitular office. Logically, regular discipline suffered from its dire consequences, the spirit of the body weakened and, in line with this, moral and administrative abuses proliferated. A great number of religious lost their spiritual identity. In September 1807, at the request of the procurators of the four orders in the Philippines, Carlos IV restricted their autonomy and forced them to leave their curacy and accept with no excuses whatever office for which they might be elected in a chapter.

The canonical institution dismantled the juridico-spiritual structure set up with doubtless success for almost two centuries of uninterrupted work. It broke the bond of the religious with the community and it transformed him from a mere messenger or delegate into a parish priest with a mission directly received from the bishop and for whom he should personally give an account. Not all the religious were able to combine in a harmonious way such exigencies with those derived from his religious state. Several religious identified themselves with their parishes, converted these into the last horizon of their lives and shelved the duties of his religious profession in a corner.

Vow of poverty, personal money and conventual economy

The vow of chastity explained the insistence of superiors on the cloister statute. Maybe this was the canonical regulation that attracted their attention most. The doctrinero should withdraw to the convent at the toll of the *Avemarias*, he could not visit the houses of his parishioners “except in the necessary case of administering a sacrament” (*Capítulos*, 243) and in no way he should authorize the entry of women to his own residence. The 1701 chapter punished the violation of these statutes with major excommunication. The 1764 chapter chastised them with “the penalties that our father provincial may deem convenient” (*Ibid.* 536-539).

The interventions by the superiors in the area of poverty were frequent as well. They tended above all to restrict the administrative autonomy of the ministers. Between 1730 and 1740 they tried to introduce the annual divestment of property (*desapropio annual*) wherein they viewed a way of reconciling the vow of poverty with the carrying out of their ministerial duties and the consideration of the material needs of the religious. The 1731 chapter even recommended the manner to carry it out. At the start of the year all the ministers should remit to Manila a sealed paper containing the list of all their properties. In Manila that envelope was placed at the common depository where it was sealed with wax and kept until the next divestment of property when it would be burned.

But the measure must have turned out to be unpopular. The 1734 chapter annulled it and even wanted to delete the memory of it. Moreover, it was not successful. Freed from the severe penalties with which those who enacted it in 1731 had wanted to impose it, it successfully survived. By the wish of the 1731 chapter it would oblige “anything more than our sacred statutes order or oblige” (*Ibid* 414). The succeeding chapters no longer spoke of divestment of property; nevertheless its appearance in personal and official correspondence, in the *Modo de administrar* (Chapter 1, f. 76v), in the decrees of the provincials towards the end of the century¹ and in the chapters of the 18th century was proof enough of its survival.

Since 1776 the provincials must be kept carefully informed in their visits about the “silver, gold and jewelries which one might have and taking into account the circumstances of each ministry.” They collected them and forwarded what was not needed to the common depository of the province. In Manila everything was annotated in the book, with the provincial’s signature, so that “in case of necessity, the corresponding minister could claim it back” (*Capítulos*, 591).

Other directives forbade commercial activities and the use of luxury objects or regulated loans, the use of books and other common objects. They were exceptionally harsh with respect to business-related practices. Until 1740 the province persecuted them, because it deemed them scandalous and incompatible with the religious state. During those same years, Andrés de San Fulgencio, one of the most influential religious, considered them illicit. They constituted one simple negotiation that the law had always forbidden the ecclesiastics and that Clement IX had condemned in the brief *Sollicitudo pastoralis* (1669); and, furthermore, they implied a grave danger of falling into usury. Since that date the capitular ordinances did not take up the matter again. But little by little, the penury and comport of the other orders were creating fractures in the firmness of their convictions. Towards 1750, the provincialate presented a consultation on the subject matter to the

¹*Mandatos del padre Joaquín Encabo a los párrocos de Misamis* [Directives of Father Joaquín Encabo to the Parish Priests of Misamis], Dapitan, 20 March 1790, ahpm, dossier 61, no. 2, 71r-v.

University of Santo Tomás and, confident of its report, it began to take part in business. In 1753, it gave a loan of ₱5,000 to the merchants of the Acapulco galleon at the interest rate of 40%. However, the opinion of the university did not dissipate all the scruples and, for a greater security, in July of the same year Fr. Mateo de la Encarnación wanted to have recourse to the vicar general:

Our father, in view of the miserable plight of this province, in which it is putting itself and without hoping that it could recover, it has seemed convenient to submit to our father vicar general and to his venerable council, a consultation made by our Fr. José de la Concepción and approved by this University of Santo Tomás, which has been ordered to approve that the province can give every year some silver that corresponds to Nueva España. But considering it to be a delicate subject matter and, finally based upon opinions, in order to act with the security of conscience that the matter demands, it has deemed convenient to forward said consultation so that, having viewed the reasons, our father vicar general, with his venerable council, determine what may be most convenient. And in the event that you would not grant your permit, it being inconvenient, this province requests our father vicar general to obtain a bull from His Holiness for that matter, as our Observant Augustinian fathers have done (*Cartas* 1, 75r-v).

The vicar general did not believe it opportune to start proceedings in Rome for the “bull which is being requested, because that curia is not very sympathetic to regular clerics” and because it was not necessary. The favorable opinion of the theologians of the country was enough to make use “of it, not to get rich, but to acquire what was essential and needed to acquire supplies decent and proportionate to the Discalced religious and other unavoidable needs of the province and its convents.”² In accord with that opinion, the province continued taking part in the Acapulco galleon trade and later joined also the Canton trade. On 11 November 1779, the provincial council authorized the loan of ₱2,903 to a Chinese merchant at the interest rate of 14%.

Such official change of attitude could not but be reflected in the conduct of the doctrineros. Little by little the hunger for

²*Letter of the vicar general to prior provincial*, Madrid, 28 May 1755, AGOAR, c. 77, Legajo 3, no. 45.

profit was infiltrating their ranks. There was not a great number of information about their business pursuits but neither was there lack of it. In 1770, the archbishop of Manila branded Fr. Pedro de San Miguel (1726-1774) as public and notorious businessman. General Anda y Salazar who had already forgotten the services that the priest had rendered during the British invasion added that “he owned public stores all stashed with stocks.” The religious defended himself saying that he was doing it with authorization and even by order of the superiors. These business activities were not always viewed in a bad light or might turn out detrimental. Fr. Pedro himself had contributed some years back to the exploitation of pine trees of Zambales, from which he extracted resin and oils for sea-vessel fuel.³

Personal wealth was very rampant. The date of its acceptance by the province is not evident, but it is clear that it has struck deep roots in the apostolic endeavors of its members. Oftentimes it reached substantial sums of money. Diego de San José (†1734) left at his death the sum of ₱6,400, an amount enough to defray easily the fare of four missionaries from Spain to the Philippines. The despoliation of the commissary Fr. Miguel de San Marcial (†1752) amounted to ₱3,200 (*Cartas* 1, 84v-85r). In 1753, the vicar general was scandalized by the large sums of money that some religious were remitting to Spain without his permission and their source was not explained. Perhaps he was not aware that the provincial’s authorization was enough and customarily was not always lacking. In 1767, personal wealth was already so common that it was agreed to support with three pesos annually the former provincials who did not have personal money. Provincials, former provincials, councilors and other officials were authorized to celebrate two or three masses a week for their intention.

The economic situation of the province continued to be somewhat unstable. The doctrinas could hardly maintain their ministers and the income of the convents could not sustain their ordinary needs. It was obligatory for these convents to combine their earnings with the fruit of the priestly ministry, the generosity

³ARCHIVO GENERAL DE INDIAS, *Ultramar* 680.

of the faithful, the subsidy from the Crown and the assistance from the provincialate. Whatever public calamity or whatever big-budgeted construction project would throw their finances off-balance and would force them to resort to loans, to public charity or to massive assistance from the province.

Through a sworn statement made by the provincial procurator, it was evident that in 1726 the fixed income of the five convents hardly met half of their expenditures. The community of Manila needed ₱6,152 every year, while the capital yield reached only ₱2,491: ₱1,000 came from the haciendas of San Nicolás and Tunasancillo; ₱1,091 from ground-rent and rentals from leased houses; and ₱400 from alms given by the king. The earnings of San Sebastian Convent totaled ₱226 and it needed ₱800. The budget deficit of Bagumbayan and Cavite went up to ₱300 and ₱623, respectively, since their expenses amounted to ₱850 and ₱900 and they could only expect the earnings of ₱530 and ₱226. And the situation was getting worse in the pace that the century was moving. The earthquakes and the British invasion damaged a great number of their houses and urban buildings and they caused severe damages in the buildings that required frequent and costly repairs. The convent of Bagumbayan was demolished in 1762 by order of the government and was no longer reconstructed. Despite everything, the real situation of the convents of San Sebastian, Bagumbayan and Cavite was rather well-off because all of them counted on the fruits of a rather intense apostolic activity.

It was the opposite case in Cebu. In 1762, its budget seemed somewhat balanced, with its balanced income and expenditures. Later the decline of the city and the ruin of the ministries in Caraga drastically reduced their income and the convent of Cebu was able to barely survive thanks to the assistance which since 1744 it received from the parish of Danao, and afterward from those of Mambusao (1767), Batan (1767) and Mandaue (1770). At the close of the 18th century it improved once more thanks to the help from the ministries of Bohol and to the generosity of the Augustinians who ceded to it the adjoining landed estates in the city of Cebu. By that time the convent of San Sebastian had likewise attained self-sufficiency.

In difficult moments the situation of the convents turned desperate. The earthquake of 1722 forced the community of Manila to sell the hacienda it owned in Bulacan for ₱6,000 and to go out to the streets of Manila seeking assistance. In the wake of the British invasion it went to the extent of food-rationing, and the earthquakes of the last quarter of the century constrained it to incessantly seek the assistance of the provincialate which in the last years of the century used to help out with the yearly amount of about ₱2,000.

Furthermore, the economic structure of the province was very weak. Its finances boiled down to the produce of the Hacienda de Imus in Cavite, to the ₱800 annually granted to it by the king for the clothing of its religious and to the problematic assistance given by the doctrineros. The provincial chapter customarily fixed the quota that every one of them should hand over to the province, but oftentimes all remained but a simple wish. There were several occasions when it was the province that came to the help of its ministers. Towards the end of the century, when the circumstances had already improved, the contribution of the doctrinas to the common fund was about ₱1,000 yearly. The amount of ₱1,500 provided for in the collection of 1798 was reduced to ₱503.

Neither the earnings of Imus Hacienda were consistent. During the first lustrums of the 18th century, the income was constantly somewhat modest. In the middle of the century, it went through difficult years due to boundary-marking projects (*Capítulos*, 431-432), to the consequent rebellion of the tenants and to the measures taken by the *oidor* Pedro Calderón Enríquez. Towards 1750 it remitted to the province about ₱2,000, at least during the good years. During the British invasion (1762-1764), the hacienda estate-house was razed to the ground and from its beautiful herds of cows, horses and carabaos, not one head was saved. In 1766, the estate could hardly produce 35 tons of rice and these had a market value of ₱200 (*Crónicas* 8, 213). Soon afterward, its profits considerably increased, especially after the construction of Casundit Dam—the most important hydraulic project accomplished in the archipelago in the 18th century—by

Brother Lucas de Jesús María (1722-1792). At the close of the century, works of boundary demarcation, ground-leveling and irrigation projects—in those years over seventy hectares of land were irrigated—as well as the skyrocketing prices of agricultural products owing to the concentration of troops in Puerto de Cavite, boosted its annual revenues to four thousand, five thousand and even six thousand pesos.

Towards 1750 the province went into the Acapulco galleon trade and a little later it started taking part also in the Canton trade and Indonesia, investing in them its fortunes from the *obras pías* under its administration. In the beginning, the capital invested was somewhat modest: ₱5,000 in 1753; ₱4,900 in 1758. Later they rose to a bit more increased figures. In 1800, the funds from the *obras pías* amounted to ₱19,633, of which ₱11,430 were invested, on equal parts, on the Acapulco trade and the China business. The amount of ₱2,588 pesos might have been lost in the San Andrés galleon and the rest were kept in the deposit box. The convent of Manila administered ₱30,150, “of which ₱10,000 were risked on the *Magallanes* that has journeyed to the port of Acapulco; another ₱10,000 in the ship that left for Emuy, and the remaining amount is kept in the box.’ In the galleon trade, the interests went up to 40%, but the risks were extremely high. In the Canton trade the interests was around 14%. These interests should be applied to the aims and objectives set up by the founders of the *obras pías* and, therefore the province benefited from it in an indirect manner. The most significant ones covered the expenditures in the Caraga mission as well as the gathering and education of the orphaned children in Palawan. Others guaranteed the mass alms and sermons or the acquisition of the bulls for the souls in Purgatory.

The province further owned haciendas in Mexico. Between 1757 and 1763, Pedro de la Consolación invested ₱150,000 in the purchase of the haciendas of San Pedro, San José de Tejalpa and San Diego. In 1774, Blas de San Damián acquired in public auction the Hacienda of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe for ₱28,000. All of them were located in Toluca Valley and consisted of farm lands, pasture lands and a mountain. Their income did not cover the

expenses of their substantial mortgages (₱181,000) and, besides, their administration left much to be desired. The province would have wanted to get rid of it and in more than one occasion it turned to Madrid to seek the needed permission. In November 1779, the vicar general granted it, but it was revoked immediately after by the 1784 general chapter. By that time its situation was already improving. The price hike of agricultural products in Nueva España as a result of the war and the expert management by Francisco de Santiago (1776-1790), and the sale of some houses owned by the hospice allowed the drastic reduction of their mortgages. In 1799, the regent of the Audiencia in Manila guaranteed that they were already “redeemed and they acknowledged solely the rental of ₱16,000 earmarked for the pious foundations that the province has to comply with.”

With those resources the province had to pay the collection for the generalate, to pay for the upkeep of the provincialate, to defray the provincial visit to the ministries which supposedly amounted to an outlay of ₱1,000, to rescue captive religious, to give assistance to the convent of Manila and above all to contribute to the missionaries' recruitment. In the middle of the 18th century, every missionary cost the province ₱600. Then the amount rose to ₱1,000 if the trip was made through Nueva España. Through the Cape of Good Hope route, the expense was reduced to half, but the Recollects used it only in 1786 and maybe in 1790 as well. In 1753, the commissary assigned to gather the mission left for Spain with ₱20,000, and the same sum of money was likewise received by Juan García Ruiz de San Agustín in 1764, by Juan de San Ignacio in 1774, by Manuel de Jesús María in 1790 and by Eugenio Sesé de la Santísima Trinidad. With some degree of influence, the province should have turned to succor the most neglected missionaries, like those in the Marianas who spent lustrums without receiving a cent from the government and those from towns constantly hounded by Moros, which had to be provided with weapons, strongholds and other defense works.

The province was not always in a position to meet so many obligations. In 1770, it could not pay the ransom of Fr. Manuel

de la Concepción (*Cartas* 2, 2r). In 1772, it had to renounce the sending of a commissary to Madrid. In 1790, it was forced to seek a loan of ₱4,000 from the Augustinians. In 1791, it could hardly disburse the amount of ₱6,200 demanded by the government for the defense of Manila. Under these circumstances it had to confront with a tedious dossier that checkmated its superiors for over three decades.

Alerted by a denunciation by three religious of the convent of Madrid, the Council of the Indies opened a preliminary judicial investigation in Manila and Mexico for the purpose of clarifying the financial capability of the province and checking if it was qualified to defray the expenditures arising from the recruitment and trips of missionaries. In the meantime, the province should reimburse the Royal Treasury half of the expenses in the missions granted in 1775 and 1791. After a great deal of effort it succeeded in obtaining the suspension of these measures which—as the Manila governor-general himself had acknowledged—it would have supported with difficulty.

Decline in the spiritual sphere

The apostolic and missionary character of the province exerted powerful influence on the development of its religious life. The Constitutions and the ceremonial mandated ascetical and pious practices that were incompatible, or at least, hardly reconcilable with the demands of ministerial life. The nocturnal prayer of matins, the fidelity to mental prayer, the respect for detailed statutes on silence, cloister, religious poverty, devotions proper to the congregation or the uniformity in the apparel and footwear, did not have great significance in the face of the urgency of missionary tasks which frequently constrained the religious to spread out to fields and farms, far from the parish rectory or *kumbento*. The superiors were aware of these circumstances and, even when they continued reminding these precepts, they were very tolerant and accommodating at the moment of urging their compliance.

The *Modo de administrar* and the provincial chapters obligated the doctrineros to have choral prayer of the divine office,

at least at the *cabecera* (1731), mental prayer, cloister, being discalced, devotions proper to the order—*Salve, Nativitas tua*, prayers for the departed—, weekly reading of the Rule (1701, 1718), constitutionally mandated fasts, weekly conference on spiritual matters, resolution of moral cases and, starting from the middle part of the century, annual spiritual exercises (1761, 1764, 1773). But they did not support all these statutes with the same emphasis and resolve. The 1704 chapter recognized the impossibility of singing the mass and the *processio defunctorum* every week, and substituted them with a recited mass and the simple recitation of the five prayers for the dead. The 1794 chapter permitted the use of the pocket watch. The 1746 chapter allowed the wearing of shoes when it admitted its usefulness in the daily life of the missionaries and their necessity when riding on horseback. The *espadrilles*—one of the clearest symbols of Augustinian Recollect spirituality—had fallen into disuse. In 1727, Benedict XIII had authorized their substitution with open sandals made of black leather. In 1737, they arrived in the Philippines with Fr. Francisco de la Encarnación who brought with him from Spain no less than one hundred and fifty-two pairs. When the general chapter in 1784 prohibited the wearing of shoes “by virtue of holy obedience,” the provincial felt obliged to come out in defense of his religious:

The general ordinance of the recent general chapter prohibiting every religious under the formal precept of holy obedience from wearing shoes, can be observed solely in the convents of Manila, Cavite, San Sebastian and Cebu, and in the hospice in Mexico. This land is very humid and waters are copious. In like manner, there are countless swamps and small estuaries, where waters from the sea enter the territories and towns under our administration. The religious ministers endlessly travel in small sea-crafts and they go out, in their trips, to eat and take a rest on the beaches which with the ebb and flow of the sea they are very humid and at times their feet sank deep in the soaked sand. If they call for a minister to a far-off place in the town, at times he has to pass through mire and mud, and if done at night it happens necessarily that the footwear may be drenched just by the dew. Finally, if it happens—and as it frequently does over here—that a minister, harassed by the Moro, may have to flee to the mountain and along the way he finds mire and a great number of sharp

thorns and that it is inevitable that his feet and legs may be hurt when these are not well protected. The health of the religious years, our father, is worthy of greatest concern, for on it depends the fact that they can give spiritual nourishment for their parishioners, and they can furthermore make some very long trips which they usually have to do [...]. If the ministers wear shoes, as they have always worn up to now, there will be within a few years many accidents arising from so many wet occasions, what can be expected, our father, if their feet do not have this protection?

Furthermore, mental prayer and other pious practices suffered the ravages of time and adverse circumstances. Towards 1760 meditation was already a practice of major import in the missionary's life, as it was left almost completely to his own free will. Even in the regular convents themselves it had already been displaced from its place of honor allocated to it by the constitutions. The chapter fathers of 1752 ended the process and reduced its duration in the convent in Manila to half an hour in the morning and another half in the afternoon: "Half an hour of prayer in this land, for which it does to physical work, is equivalent to one hour in Spain" (*Capítulos*, 472). In the other convents—San Juan de Bagumbayan, Cavite, San Sebastian and Cebu—the reduction must have been more drastic. Since 1761 there was a need to remind their conventuals to devote to meditation even just "a quarter of an hour in the morning and another in the afternoon." In the ministries the shortening of prayer time had begun earlier. The *Modo de administrar* of 1729 already planned solely half an hour of meditation, at six in the morning.

In the convent of Manila, and even in those of San Juan de Bagumbayan, Cavite and San Sebastian, the regular discipline followed the constitutional mandate more faithfully. However, it was necessary to introduce dispensation, exemptions and privileges in those convents. All of them had satisfied their necessities with plenty of domestic helpers and assistants, but a great number of religious still felt the need to be surrounded by personal servants. The intermediate chapter of 1714 tried to extirpate such patent abuse, but it did not dare do it except to slightly trim it. From then on, solely those religious with voting privileges in provincial

chapters or with the provincial's written permission would have the right to one or two domestic helpers. In succeeding years, the topic was always on the table, yet it was not faced with sufficient decisiveness. In 1753, the employment of two servants was allowed only for provincials, former provincials, councilors, the aged and the ill. Those religious who had been fifteen years in the Order and had availed themselves of the permission granted by the provincial could have one servant. This statute essentially remained unchanged until the end of the century.

The provincial chapter of 1731 extended to religious aged 55 the privileges of the capitular fathers "for a week, extraordinary and servant." The 1737 chapter exempted the sexagenarians from joining common prayers at the choir and that of 1755 exempted those who would have already turned fifty-five. In 1738, the nocturnal prayer of matins and half-hour evening meditation were suspended in Manila. And it has already been said, the chapter of 1752 also reduced the morning meditation to half an hour (*Capítulos*, 363, 387, 392).

In other convents the reductions and suppressions were even more drastic. The dearth of personnel reduced their communities to two or three members and blurred their conventual physiognomy. Throughout the whole century they were losing importance in the life of the province. The reduced number of conventuals was its most palpable symptom. In the middle of the century, only the convent in Manila succeeded in maintaining its character: "It is the only house of observance of the province where the rigor of our sacred statutes is kept in accord with what this land, climate and disposition permit," writes José de la Concepción in 1750. The Recollect historian continues:

It [The convent of Manila] is a seminary of letters, where philosophy and theology, scholastic and moral, are taught to those who don our habit in it and to those who come from Spain without having started their studies or finished them [...] It is a house of refuge, solace and consolation of all religious who—tired, exhausted and advanced in years—cannot carry anymore upon their shoulders the very heavy weight of the ministry of our doctrinas and towns [...]. It is the infirmary of all ill friars—present and habitual—in the province

[...]. It is at the same time a strenuous spiritual ministry because the conventual religious are all—or most of them—employed inside and outside in the preaching of the holy Gospel and in frequent confession and communion in the town, and in ministering to all the sick, day and night, who continuously call for us because of the intense devotion they have for Saint Nicholas of Tolentino.

During the second half of the century the role of the convent was more obscure. The British Occupation struck a blow at the convent, from which it took lustrums to recover. The atrocious pillage lasted three days and reduced it to “a total ruin and desolation.” The provincialate had to be transferred for some time to Cavite Puerto. On 1 February 1771, an earthquake shook the foundations of the church and in subsequent years it continued to lose members and influence in the measure that the personnel of the province diminished and its economic and bureaucratic hardships worsened. In 1774, fifteen religious lived in that convent. Between 1774 and 1778 some negotiations were made before the Manila government to exchange it with the Jesuit college. The construction of the church which was initiated in mid-17th century was not finished until 1781. Its grandiose dome had been constructed—or perhaps it had been only reconstructed—between 1734 and 1737. The provincial curia and the conventual library were constructed in 1788.

The convents of Bagumbayan, Cavite, San Sebastian and Cebu had been declining little by little into simply large houses engaged in pastoral activity. The first three had been converted into a shelter of religious of some prestige. For some time the convent of Bagumbayan was the seat of the provincialate. That explained the construction of a church in a new building from 1720 to 1737. In 1726, four to six religious still lived in each of the houses. Nevertheless, in 1747 there was a plan to do away with the Cebu convent. In 1750, there were but eight religious who lived in all the houses. And the same number continued to reside in them in 1774. In San Sebastian there were three resident priests, and one of them was the provincial. In Cavite and Imus lived a priest and a brother; in Cebu only one priest. Imus had replaced Bagumbayan which was demolished during the British invasion by government

order. From 1744 to 1755 the prior of Cebu was responsible for the doctrinas of Cotcot and Najalin. In 1774, the San Sebastian convent prior was sent to administer a vacant doctrina and in 1784 the provincial thought of entrusting the town of Inabanga in Bohol, whose economy was very precarious, to that of Cebu.

The convent of Cebu substantially improved in 1781 when Fr. Francisco de la Virgen del Portillo acquired the donation of an adjacent lot from the Augustinians. With the increase of prominent missionaries in the Visayan islands, its strategic value likewise grew. Between 1797 and 1800 there were no less than sixty-four missionaries in one occasion or another.

Many of these exemptions came as a surprise in Spain and they were indicators of the alarming loss of their own identity. The religious intensity had given way to a discreet mediocrity. The practices indicative of the Recollect movement had fallen one after another into oblivion. Routine, human frailty and harshness of missionary life had torn the vital fibers apart, and the province hardly reflected on it. Their superiors assisted in the struggle without reacting to the plummeting of the Recollect ideals and the gradual marginalization of the practices that had endowed them with body and form. They adapted themselves to less demanding levels and were just contented with requiring from their religious subjects the fidelity to values which the thinking of the times considered inseparable from religious life: namely, moderation, cloister, modesty, uniformity and discretion in their apparel and footwear, respect for superiors, attention to catechesis and divine worship, annual spiritual exercises, monthly solution of moral cases, avoidance of games of chance, luxury, etc.

A great majority of the religious accepted these values and incarnated them in their lives with sufficient fidelity. Of course, transgressions, abuses and scandals were not wanting. In 1719, the parish priest of Cuyo lived in an illicit relationship with a woman. In 1721, the parish priest of Taytay scandalized his parishioners with his endless drinking sprees. The provincial of the same triennium was reputed to be dissipate, reckless in his financial accounts, deceitful in his dealings with women. Other provincials committed

faults of nepotism, authoritarianism and administrative negligence. Their financial accounts—like those of his commissaries and the superiors of the hospice in Mexico—left much to be desired. Their regionalism and penchant for bossiness gave rise to other abuses already recalled in this chapter. Towards 1735 the religious level declined in a notable manner in a symptomatic coincidence with the definite cracking of the primitive evangelization nuclei, composed of two or three religious, and their substitution through the system of one sole and autonomous doctrinero.

Even so, still in 1759 a zealous provincial of the observance like Fr. Mateo de la Encarnación showed his satisfaction and even pride of his friars:

In the convent of Manila, the regular observance with allowed moderation is kept, since the actual prior provincial [Francisco de la Virgen de Magallón] is a religious of bounteous zeal and prudence. He knows very well how to make the authority of his office understood by those who underwent less mortification and showed very tender compassion with the aged and the sick. His is such an attitude that he has made for himself a good place in the republic. The rest of the religious who are in the ministries comply with their respective obligations, about which up to now I have not had the slightest complaint. Certainly they are worthy of the greatest compassion for all the hard work they suffer, in an endless movement on account of the frequent raids by the Moros against them.

Twenty years later, the dean of the Manila Cathedral who visited the province by order of Carlos III did not find anything in it that was “deserving of reform with respect to the exemplary and adapted life which, as arranged by their institutes, was observed by their individual members. He only discovered their anomalies but, as he himself acknowledged it, none of them deserved censure. Powerful reasons of financial profitability justified the permanence of the same brothers in the Haciendas of San Nicolás and San Isidro de Tunasan. The early recitation of the matins in the afternoon hours was an exigency of the age and ailments of the conventuals of Manila. The communities of San Sebastian and Cavite were very much reduced. None of these two could even reach eight members of the community, the minimum number required by

the statutes for a religious house to be recognized as convent. But both rendered public services which justified their existence. "The first [San Sebastian] is of utmost usefulness to the faithful who flock to it out of their devotion to most holy Mary, venerated under the title of our Lady of Mount Carmel; the second [Cavite] is the hospice not only of those who are dispatched by their province to embark and travel [...], but also the hospice of Franciscans and Augustinians who do not have any convent in that port city and of the mission expeditions of one or the other who are sent from these dominions."

The cultural and spiritual mediocrity of the religious coming from Spain in the last decades of the century and the canonical collation of the religious who were parish priests in the Philippines (1784), to which the province opposed with all its force, worsened the situation.

Ecclesiastical studies

The majority of the religious of the province arrived with their formation already completed in Spain. In the colleges of the Peninsula they had attended classes in philosophy and theology for five, six or seven years and had received in them an ecclesiastical formation superior to that of the secular clergy of the period and similar to that of the other religious. Unfortunately, the ecclesiastical studies were obtained in Spain in routine, archaism and sophistry. Their formation, therefore, was rather substandard, and the chances of perfecting it were very scarce. A great number of the defects hindered the precise and proper appreciation of their gravity, and in the Philippines they were going to lack books, professors, cultural tradition and even time.

The conventual libraries were poor, and not even the books for individual use of the religious who were authorized to bring them [to the Philippines] would be enough to fully address the deficiency. Between 1683 and 1725 almost all the chapters expressly allowed the personal usufruct of books "on account of the dearth of books suffered by this province." The motivation for study was not very strong either. Within the community there

was no cultural tradition and the external motivation came very debilitated on account of the isolation of ministries. Even in Manila there was an absence of an atmosphere propitious for intellectual undertaking. The residents were religious who were aged, ill or fully enmeshed in the hustle and bustle of administration. Study habit and predilection for research were luxuries that very few had known how to preserve and nourish.

The superiors were contented with demanding from their religious the knowledge of moral theology and proficiency of a native tongue. They were the two indispensable requirements for the acquisition of the permit to administer a parish. The provincials were all-out to check them during their canonical visitations through rigorous examination. Those who failed them were evicted from their offices and withdrawn from their positions “as incompetents,” according to the strong expression of the provincial chapter of 1638. The chapters of the 18th century insisted on the meticulous compliance of this rule. “Our father provincial or his visitors,” as ordered by the 1719 chapter, “with all strictness must examine in all their visitations all the religious, prelates as well as subjects, in the language and in moral theology, on their conscience they would be put in charge” (*Capítulos*, 312). Of the same force were the ordinances of other chapters. Since 1743 no religious could “be elected to some office” without having been previously “approved in any of the languages of our administration” (*Ibid.* 422).

In 1746, a talk on moral theology to take place every week in all convents was mandated, even if there were only two religious in it (*Ibid* 443). This order unsurprisingly had no effect outside the Manila convent where it was urged with greatest continuity, and furthermore it often had a duly prepared lecturer available. The 1761 chapter took note of this reality and suppressed the conference in the parishes, replacing it with the individual solution of a moral case every month. The vicar provincial would be in charge of proposing them to the subordinates and reviewing the solutions of all of them. Thus was born a practice destined to last for two centuries.

The compliance of these norms was not deemed urgent with the appropriate intensity. The dearth of religious and other circumstances induced other provincials to interpret them with certain flexibility. In 1770, there was a need to dismiss the ministers of Masbate, Banton and Diuail for “not having passed the proficiency test in the language” (*Ibid* 559). The 1774 chapter observed the same evident defect in the ministries of Bamban and Balayan and it ordered the provincial to reprimand them for their negligence and laziness. If in the period of four months they did not learn the language “with the sufficiency that is required to appropriately administer the holy sacraments,” they ought to be replaced by other religious “more competent, in the judgment of our father provincial and his council” (*Ibid* 584).

The cultural baggage of religious who arrived in the Philippines without having completed their studies was still more precarious. In Manila they lacked the propitious ambience to finish them, and consequently they departed with the disadvantage which ordinarily accompanied them for the rest of their lives. Not even the best-endowed religious could customarily overcome it. The most prominent exception was Juan García Ruiz de San Agustín. In spite of having left Spain with his philosophical studies recently finished, he became very soon known in the Philippines, having arrived as commissary of the missions (1764-1768), provincial (1776-1779) and later bishop of Vigan (1780-1796). In June 1754, the provincial urged the vicar general to favor the recruitment of religious who had already finished their formation. Otherwise, even the best talents would be put to waste: “Even though good talents come, if they do not come from there [Spain] already trained, there is little or nothing here they can take advantage of, because even if they want it they would never acquire perfection, since that thoroughness of teaching existent there is not found here.” And it forgot to add that the provincials, hounded by countless needs, made use of them who had just turned twenty-three years of age. They dispensed the young professed from a year or two of study and dispatched them to the provinces.

In 1761, Francisco de la Virgen de Magallón spoke about not embarking “very young” [*muy niños*] religious, and three years before Mateo de la Encarnación highlighted the perils of fear on account of their tender age.

It should not be permitted—were it possible—for anyone of those who sign up to come to these islands to be given license for the same if they do not possess, at least, two years of theology, albeit incomplete, for reasons that I will say here. [...Of] those who come without having started their studies or are still in philosophy, few or none are those who become successful here, and usually those who give more than they do. First, because here the studies—though how much they are made and how much care they are kept—never can they be like those you have there, that students can take advantage of, they may be ingenious. One because the tasks are very many; the other because the professors here do not have that zeal like those who are there, for the respects that your reverence knows [...] These religious who have been two or three years in the habit, as few are the roots and these are very tender, in the trip from Spain to these islands [...] where there is more freedom than observance, though how much do the commissaries for them, when they come here they have already lost much of their virtue, for how very burdensome has been the observance of the convent of Manila, and thus it said that there is much observance there is in Manila, and that being so here, for the much work and labors [...] not everything mandated by our Constitutions is observed.

Unfortunately, the spiritual crisis and the conventual population shortage which upset the Spanish convents in the last decades of the 18th century constrained the setting aside of such very prudent counsels. A great majority of religious who disembarked at Manila between 1768 to 1797 were young professed who either were about to start their theological studies or who had not commenced them yet.

The logical consequences of such premises could be not any other but the chronic dearth of religious in position to manage the life of the province. Mateo de la Encarnación often expressed his lamentation over this plight. In June 1754, he went on to write: “I assure your reverence, our father, that there is no religious corporation in these islands so destitute of subjects, for which it

had the least admiration.” His assessments were fully corroborated by José de Santa Orosia forty years later:

[In the] small number of religious of whom this province is always composed, hardly we can find the very qualified ones for high positions in this province and other regular offices, for very rare are the religious who came from Spain to these islands with quite excellent attributes, which fact is very obvious to your reverence and to all the fathers in Spain, and that most are *coristas* with no studies or without the required formation that can be given here, because after having just turned twenty-three years old they were mandated to be ordained and were dispatched to ministries to learn the language and get used to serving the *doctrinas* [...] Any circumspect religious averagely trained in moral theology fulfills with the spiritual administration (*Letters* 2, 136r-137v).

On 13 May 1797, the provincial council dispensed from studies six newly-ordained priests and issued them authority for the pastoral ministry. On 15 June 1799, it did the same to three more priests and six professed. The ordinance did not specify in both cases either the period of time or the type of studies dispensed. Since 1791 the academic year began on Monday after the Ascension and ended on Saturday after Passion Sunday. From the analysis of all these dates it can be deduced that at least they were dispensed from a year of studies.

For some time the shortage of textbooks brought about a year of anarchy, since the convent of Manila did not have complete sets for all the students of one class. In 1794, the province requested from Spain the compendium of Berti-Bucius for theology and the textbook by José Faustino Cliquet for moral theology. “In this way all shall be uniform and we avoid the diversity of authors in same class, which serves only to confound the students and increase the professors’ work.” The defenders of probabilism were explicitly banned since 1770 (*Capítulos*, 567).

Kindred difficulties and dearth of structures did not favor the flourishing of religious who were lovers of letters, but neither were they able to totally prevent it. Never did the province fail to have three or four religious who were competent and well-qualified. Some came from Spain already well-endowed with expertise.

Juan de la Encarnación (1677-1751), Diego de San José (1681-1734), Andrés de la San Fulgencio (1674-1744), Manuel de Jesús María (1735-1796) and Eugenio Sesé de la Santísima Trinidad (1750-1803) were professors in the colleges in Spain and there they acquired noteworthy knowledge of theology and canon law which they later knew how to put at the service and disposal of the community. José de Santa Gertrudis (†1716), José de la Soledad (1688-1757), Anselmo de San Agustín (†1764) were accomplished religious and had a promising future in their own provinces before they enlisted for the Philippine missions. The eight handled tasks with responsibility in the province, represented it with propriety in difficult moments and defended its interests in the archipelago as well as those in Mexico and Madrid, where seven of them worked as commissaries for several years.

Andrés de San Fulgencio did not go out of the Philippines. But in the archipelago he held very sensitive positions in the province: prior of various convents, vicar of the Zambales missions and provincial (1734-1737). He was likewise a preacher of renown, writer of the rule of the budding Beaterio de San Sebastián and author of countless reports and canonical and administrative decisions. The others had formation in the Philippines overcoming hardships by dint of talent and resolve.

The assignment of these religious in a community was not easy. They needed good sense, selflessness and magnanimity, which very few confreres showed enough of. Oftentimes, they were presumptuous of their being indispensable, and they burdened on the others the importance of their works and their personality. They wanted to control it all, and at the least affront, they got irritated and provoked quarrels, gossips and clashes. The comport of José de la Soledad, Juan de la Concepción (1724-1786), José de San Buenaventura (1727-1806), and especially Anselmo de San Agustín during the twilight years of their lives displayed evident signs of this unhealthy psychology—which according to the testimony of Mateo de la Encarnación—was prevalent among professors. Angered by the self-sufficiency and juridical quibbling by Fr. Anselmo, he went on to the extent of petitioning the vicar

general not to send retirement paper anymore because those who possessed them turned unbearable:

As professors, there is no way of having them inquired into [...] They put on so much air and there is no one who can bear with them, desirous—as professors—to meddle in all affairs and to be followed in their judgments and opinions [...With so much vanity and pride, they look down on everyone and they seem to be all-knowing.

Fr. Juan de la Concepción was undoubtedly the most prolific and most remarkable writer of the century. His work *Historia General de Philipinas*, published between 1788 to 1792 in fourteen volumes, has been for one and half century the most detailed and faithful historical account of the archipelago. Its consultation is still useful today and, on several occasions, necessary. Beside him appears the person of Fr. José de la Concepción (1702-1757) faded and unhighlighted. Nonetheless, he also deserves a prominent place in whatever history of the Order. He shone in the pulpit, in the administration and in the letters. He governed the province for eight years, reorganized its administration and its archives, came out in defense of the life and reputation of its religious with a great number of reports and petitions to the king and to the government in Manila. He published a *Crónica* [Chronicle] of the activity of the province since its beginnings until 1750, which up to day has been unsurpassed. Death caught him by surprise when he was redacting with passion a history of the province which was preceded by a biography of Saint Augustine and an ample treatise on the “origins and succession of our Recollection since its first convent founded by Saint Augustine in Tagaste up to the present.”

Benito de San Pablo was, above all, in love with the Order and its traditions. Between 1728 and 1731 he governed the province as provincial and in shorter periods as vicar provincial. He was likewise prior of several convents. During the sexennium (1740-1746) as prior of San Sebastian Convent, he was a great benefactor of the adjoining Augustinian Recollect *beaterio*, on which he had already shown favors during his provincialate. He promoted the publication of many books and he himself had published several sermons, an opusculum on asceticism and another

on jurisprudence. He prepared further a miscellaneous volume on the convents, ministries and religious of the province, which remains unpublished.

Among those who cultivated religious literature in the native tongues, it is worth calling to mind Fr. Tomás de San Lucas († after 1726), a zealous missionary and author of two volumes of sermons, talks and instructions on confession, the *Viaticum* and the art of dying.

Two religious of the province were elevated in this century to the episcopal dignity. Juan García Ruiz de San Agustín (1728-1796) governed for three lustrums the Diocese of Vigan where he constructed the bishop's palace, "a magnificent work where he spent ₱14,000, and hardly as he got cleared of these expenses and other necessary ones, he began the construction of the cathedral."

Eugenio Sesé was summoned to govern the Diocese of Santa Marta in Colombia in 1801. But death caught him while still getting to know it. He received the episcopal consecration in Cartagena on 30 January 1803, two weeks later he took possession of his diocese and on 31 October of the same year, with a little over the age of 50, he gave back his soul to the Creator. A subsequent chapter will deal with Father Joaquín Encabo (1740-1818), bishop of Cebu in 1802-1818.

The Augustinian Recollects in the 18th century: Pastoral Work

Angel Martínez Cuesta OAR

In the traditional field, 1700-1769

The Augustinian Recollects of the Philippines began the 18th century with five convents—Manila, San Juan de Bagumbayan, San Sebastian, Cavite and Cebu—and about twenty *doctrinas* which totally covered the islands of Calamianes, Romblon, Banton, Sibuyan, Tablas, Mindoro, Masbate, Burias and Ticao, plus the entire northeastern part of Mindanao and a large portion of the eastern coast of Luzon. During the first seven decades of the century, this work field did not undergo substantial changes. The most important variations took place in 1704 and 1712. The Recollects gave up the administration of their ministries of eastern Luzon in 1704 and recovered their old ministries in Zambales in 1712. On 15 December 1767, San Sebastian Convent freed itself from the spiritual administration of the community of Calumpang in Manila. Some decades earlier, the convent of Cebu had transferred the island of Maripipi to the parish priest of Bantayan. Furthermore it was deemed somewhat relevant to open the missions of Mabalacat and Bambang in 1713. In 1744, the Recollects accepted from the Augustinians the *doctrina* of Cotcot-Najalin in the northeastern part of Cebu. The distribution of the ministries of these areas was not very stable.

The withdrawal from Luzon followed suit, so much for the dearth of religious as for the isolation and poverty of those ministries. The anxiously-awaited return to Zambales was the fruit of a happy confluence of favorable factors. On 22 October 1712, the Royal Audiencia of Manila disapproved the intrusion by the Dominicans in the region and returned its administration to the Recollects. The timely arrival of a numerous group of missionaries made them accept the missions at once. During the first months of 1713 the Recollects returned and settled in Mariveles, Bagac, Playa Honda-Iba, Masinloc and Bolinao.¹ In 1720, they transferred the capital of the province from Bagac to Morong. In 1729, they erected a mission in Subic, which was converted into a *doctrina* eleven years later. In 1736, they gathered together about a hundred Negritos in Babayan (now Botolan) along the east coast of the mountains of Zambales. In 1764, they founded the ministry of Balingcaguín (present-day Mabini in Pangasinan).

These were the civic and religious centers of Zambales in the whole century. In 1740, Saint Nicholas Province assigned fixed ministers in Casborran [actual Alaminos in Pangasinan] and Cabangan. But the missionary of Casborran moved and resided in Balingcaguín in 1764. The missionary of Cabangan was incorporated to Babayan (1746) and later to Iba. However, when personnel were available, Saint Nicholas Province strove hard to assign a religious to Cabangan. A companion priest of Masinloc used to reside in Santa Cruz and another from Bolinao lived in Agno.

Subic was a town with a long history. For some time it even had its own missionary. It was afterwards ministered to by the priest of Morong, until a local revolt and a smallpox epidemic completely depopulated it. Its inhabitants fled to the mountains or took refuge in adjoining towns. In 1728, the minister of Morong, Father Pedro de Jesús María, came in contact with a group that resided around the settlement of Uguit and persuaded them to return and resettle in the town. The next year the government approved

¹Juan de la CONCEPCIÓN, *Historia general de las Islas Philipinas* 9, 123-151; *Sinopsis histórica* 1, 35-41.

the project and the provincial of the Recollects charged Father Juan de Santa María with the task of making it a reality. Father Juan and his successors reestablished Subic with the unbelievers whom the missionaries succeeded in grouping together after their repeated expeditions to the mountains. In 1750, Subic was already an established town with the essential social services and about six hundred inhabitants. Uguit was made a barrio with three hundred and forty souls. The minister of Subic regularly visited the barrio.²

Upon the formal petitions of the Augustinian doctrineros in Pampanga and some Recollects, the government entreated the prior provincial to establish mission centers among the Negritos and *balugas* at the eastern side of the Zambales mountains. The provincial did not entertain any confidence in those upland dwellers and tried hard to turn down the assignment. In the end, however, he had to bend to the will of the government. On 13 May 1713, he dispatched to the area three religious with most competent character: Manuel de San Nicolás, Andrés de San Fulgencio and Juan de Santo Tomás de Aquino. These three religious and their successors penetrated the mountains and by dint of “imponderable efforts” they successfully reduced several hundreds of Negritos and mestizos. With these natives, they were able to create the towns of Patling, Panipoan or Bambang, Mabalacat, Dinalupihan, Talimarin and Alupay or Capas.

During the first years, the seed sprouted energetically and apparently it bore abundant fruit. Children and adults sought baptism, and the missionaries administered it to them with no trouble at all. Very soon, moreover, they became aware on the inconsistency of the Negritos and their facility to forget the commitment they made and they went back to the mountain and to their ancient beliefs. The missionaries changed their methods in 1722. From then on, they baptized only those who committed themselves to living in the town and built a small hut and tilled a piece of land.³

²AGI, *Filipinas* 243; *Reseña*, en BPSN 1 (1919) 140-143; 4 (1923) 279.

³*Instrucciones que deben tener y observar cada uno de los ministros que residen en los conventos de la misión de Zambales*, no. 5, in BPSN 55 (1965) 331.

The primitive mentality and attitude of the Negritos, their love for freedom, their indomitable character, coupled with the unhealthful condition of the place that brought about innumerable deaths among the missionaries, very soon undermined the enthusiasm of the province. Toward 1730 it just viewed them but a burden from which unfortunately it could not disengage itself. In 1734, the province withdrew three of the five religious who attended to them and grouped the neophytes and catechumens together in four settlements. It would have wanted to withdraw all of them because—as the provincial wrote in 1750—“they only served as burial ground of the religious and the only consolation we have from them is that, forced by obedience we receive and preserve them and when the missionaries are in those places they were successful in having many dying children receive the holy baptism without the revulsion on the part of their parents and of countless adults who are baptized at the hour of death.”⁴ In 1750, 750 neophytes and about 200 catechumens lived there.

The civil authorities never permitted the closure of these missions because they stopped the wanderings of the Negritos in the towns of Pampanga and assured the communication among the provinces of Pampanga, Pangasinan and Zambales. The services they rendered to the Spaniards during the British Occupation (1762-1764) confirmed the correctness of their position.

From the religious point of view, their abundant fruit was perhaps the mission of Babayan, founded toward 1735 by Fr. José de Jesús María. He was assigned to that mission in October 1734. It did not take long for him to be cognizant of the inconveniences which hampered its development. He went on to look for a more suitable place. He found it on the other side of the mountains, in the vicinity of the Fort of Playa Honda, “on the spot called Babayan, which was a beautiful plain of fine climate and many fertile lands.”⁵ Through his advice and exhortation, he succeeded in convincing 360 unbelievers to abandon the mountain and set up residence in the chosen place. Little by little the settlement took form and in

⁴*Reseña*, in BPSN 9 (1919) 112; cf. 14 (1923) 332.

⁵*Reseña*, in BPSN 13 (1922) 187-188, 23-238; *Crónicas* 7, 309-310.

1736 it acquired the approval from the Manila government. His success went on with his work coupled with the equal zeal and in six years of anxieties—that put an end to his life (1736-1742)—he succeeded in consolidating the mission definitely. In 1750, Babayan was already a flourishing mission whose population was more than 1,000 inhabitants. In its adjoining areas 530 more catechumens resided. Later the pace of the *reducciones* and conversions slowed down. In 1774, 534 old Christians, sixty neophytes and fifty catechumens resided there.

In 1744, the Calced Augustinians ceded to the Recollects—at the formal request by Father José de la Concepción—the doctrina of Cotcot and its visita Najalín. These two population centers were situated far from the shore, about four and eight leagues, respectively, from the city of Cebu. In the beginning the prior of Cebu had jurisdiction over them and he attended to them through a friar in the convent. The 1755 chapter separated them from the convent and entrusted them to the administration of Fr. Manuel de Santa Bárbara. In the preceding triennium (1752-1755), this priest transferred the residents of Cotcot to a place near the shore and established the town named Danao. In six years, he endowed this new town with a convent and church, a fortress and a fine place with urban planning. The town prospered, and the population grew from 1,500 souls in 1750 to 3,500 in 1776 and 5,000 at the close of the century.⁶

Between 1758 and 1793 the Recollects worked in two curacies in the north of Panay Island: Mambusao and Batan. Between 1761 and 1768 they had four in the actual province of Sorsogon: Sorsogon, Casiguran, Bulusan and Donsol. They received the curacies of Panay from the Augustinians and handed them over to the bishop of Cebu in exchange for the island of Siquijor. They got the curacies of Sorsogon directly from the bishop of Nueva Cáceres, Msgr. Manuel Matos, and ceded them to the provincial of the Franciscans.

⁶*Sinopsis* 1, 68-629; *Crónicas* 8 18, 59. On 16 December 1750, at the request of the town leaders of Cotcot, the governor general authorized the transfer of the parish of Buquinquing to Danao, AGOAR, Caja Cebu.

In Mindanao, their pastoral activity continued around the five ministries handed down from the 17th century: Cagayan, Butuan, Siargao, Tandag and Bislig. But the geographical area was not always the same and in periods—more or less lengthy—they had other centers of evangelization. In 1746, Camiguin Island finally separated from Cagayan and it became the sixth Recollect ministry in the region. In 1723, at the request of Fr. Juan de la Concepción, the province opened another *misión viva* among the mountain dwellers of Pinagavían and Tagoloan, in the northeastern portion of Cagayan. In 1753, the minister of Siargao transferred his residence to Surigao, which after years of hesitation and doubts, was promoted to be fixed as *cabecera* of the *doctrina* and administrative capital of the province. The 1755 provincial chapter separated Tubay, Jabonga and Mainit from the *doctrina* of Butuan, and out of them a new *doctrina* was created which survived only until 1767 or 1768. More ephemeral still were the vicariates of Calagdan and Gigaquit, erected in 1746 and suppressed three years after, in the same way with Siargao which was reestablished in 1758 and closed again in 1761. The missions of Fr. Hipólito de San Agustín (†1746) among the upland settlers of Batinay or Mobo lasted only from 1737 to 1742. The same priest had previously worked with the Muslim inhabitants in Lake Lanao (1734-1736). The province made some negotiations to establish a mission there, but the government did not allow it since it fell under the jurisdictional territory assigned to the Jesuits.⁷

The missions of Pinagavían had more hopeful beginnings. In 1725, the unbelievers already baptized numbered three hundred. But again more hindrances that blocked their development surged forth soon. The proximity of the Muslims did not favor the work of the missionaries, and the *principales* of Cagayan did not look at it with favor either, because the progress of the upland residents would go against their commercial interests (*Crónicas* 7, 191-192). In 1729, they went to the extent of incarcerating and whipping the chiefs who wanted to go to Manila to give a report

⁷*Crónicas* 8, 61-62, 96-127; AGOAR, Caja 77 legajo 2, n. 23; *Sinopsis histórica* 1, 192-342-45.

on the state of the mission. In 1740, the mission was already in crisis, and the province decided to pull out one of the religious who were ministering to it. In 1750, the province publicly confessed that the mission had “not been able to attain [...] the growth that it had offered in the beginning [...] because of the endless tattle and suspicions of those of the district of Cagayan and mountains of its district among Christians, unbelievers and Muslims of the adjoining areas.” But this does not mean that all was fruitless. From that mission, the town of Tagulanao was created. This was located three leagues upstream from Cagayan which in 1750 was home to about 4,000 Christians. On that date the mission had seventy Christians, 150 neophytes “who did not pay tribute yet” and some hundreds of catechumens.⁸

Until 1731 each doctrina was administered by a prior and one or two companions who usually lived together at the cabecera. One of them used to stay always at the cabecera while the others dispersed themselves in the visitas or annex villages. The 1731 chapter had an ordinance that ignored the communitarian character of the congregation and the apostolic fruitfulness of a secular formula, dismembered the nuclear communities to put fixed ministers in populated settlements. There is no precise news about the application of that ordinance. Probably, it was not decisively and consistently implemented because in 1738 complaints against the concentration of religious at the cabecera abounded.

Nevertheless, it had broken a tradition that was over a hundred years old and prepared the way for ordinances of the chapters of 1738, 1740 and 1746 that imposed the doctrinas of one sole personnel. During these years and in more or less protracted periods there was a resident minister in Camiguin, Gingoog, Surigao, Calagdan [now Cortes], Bayuyo [today San Agustin] and Cateel.

The evangelization work in Palawan also had three centers in the 17th century: Taytay, Cuyo and Linapacan or Culion. The first one well protected by the fort of the place covered the region from the center of Palawan to the north. The second center,

⁸*Reseña*, in BPSN 10 (1919) 103-104; 34 (1944) 250; *Sinopsis* I, 205-207.

Cuyo, administered the Cuyo archipelago. The third covered the Calamianes islands. This last ministry changed site several times. In 1698, it was transferred from Dumarán to Linapacan. In 1701, it moved to the northernmost point of Palawan. It found its permanent place only in 1729 when it was transferred to the island of Culion. There the province constructed a convent and a stone church with its corresponding fort.

In 1731 a religious with fixed residence at Agutaya which despite its proximity to Cuyo could not be appropriately attended to from the cabecera. In 1746, a religious was assigned to Calatan, a populated settlement then situated four leagues north of Taytay. When Calatan was razed to the ground by the Moros ten years later, the minister fixed his residence in Diuail in the island of Busuanga where he continued up to 1776. The attempts to open another center of evangelization south of the island failed due to lack of essential support from the government.

In the districts of Romblon and Masbate there were hardly any changes. In Masbate, there was only one event worth remembering: the creation of a second doctrina in Ticao with the jurisdiction over the whole island of the same name and Burias. The canonical establishment took place in 1746 but since 1731, and maybe since 1726, a religious from the convent of Mobo (Masbate) resided in Ticao. In 1750, it had about 1,500 souls. Much later, this doctrina had its seat in the adjoining port of San Jacinto, where the Acapulco galleon docked to fetch water. It is important to remember two events. In 1731, one of the two religious of the cabecera set up his residence at Banton from where he attended to the island of the same name, to Simara and to Maestre de Campo. In 1746, the second doctrina of the district was formed with these three islands. Two years before, the parish priest of Romblon Juan de San José (1697-1749) was able to convince a tribe of upland dwellers, who lived in the central part of the island Sibuyan, and to receive baptism. The tribe descended from some shipwrecked people from Mindoro and had lived for several lustrums without any contact at all with the inhabitants of the island. In 1744, the extreme need forced them to descend from the mountain, and

the good welcome gesture extended by the parish priest induced them to seek baptism. Fr. José settled their debts with the national treasury and founded the town of San Juan de Maylog. The Manila government approved the foundation in 1745 and Madrid confirmed it two years after (*Crónicas* 7, 547-554). In 1750, it was home for 449 neophytes.⁹

The administrative structure of Mindoro was more unstable. Until 1722 it had four doctrinas which were not always the same ones. In 1700, they were located at Calapan, Baco, Naujan, and Mangarin. In 1704, the cabecera of Baco was definitely transferred to Calapan where toward 1723 a church of solid materials was constructed. Its dimensions were twenty-seven meters long and nine meters wide. Between 1768 and 1774 Diego de San José and Alonso de San Juan Bautista put up in the church yard a stone wall for protection against Moro attacks. From 1710 to 1716 Ilog replaced Calavite as cabecera of the island's northeastern ministry. In 1722, the mission of Talasunga or Abra de Ilog was created. It had twenty-seven Christians and 250 catechumens who had been taught the Christian doctrine by Father Juan de Santo Tomás de Aquino. The administration of this mission was intensely fatiguing. No less than four religious died in that place between 1729 and 1741. The Moros razed it to the ground in 1739 and 1741 but in both cases the Recollects reconstructed it again. In 1749, they attended to three hundred and fifty Christians who lived in the cabecera and to more than a thousand catechumens scattered in the fields and nearby settlements.

Since 1722 Mindoro continued to be the target of Moro raids. The western coast was devastated. The east coast was reduced to four small villages incapable of bearing with the attacks. It was but logical that the curacies could not support themselves. In 1737, Mangarin was abandoned and the missionary moved to Bongabong, who from 1725 to 1731 had already served the ministry of Naujan. In 1753, the missionary of Talasungan had to take charge of the ministry of Calavite. In 1755, only the mission of Talasungan and the curacies of Calapan and Naujan were left

⁹*Reseña*, in BPSN 34 (1944) 23.

standing. The provincial chapters of 1758 and 1761 attempted to rehabilitate Calavite—which had been razed to the ground by the Moros in 1754—but apparently the effort was in vain. The succeeding provincial chapters did not mention it anymore and but in 1774 it was evident that it was no longer existent. In this last date the population in the settlements in Mindoro had gone down: from the 8,275 souls in 1749 it had went down to 2,730 and they were attended to by the doctrineros of Calapan and Naujan and by the missionary of Talasungan. In October 1784, the two Recollects who remained in the island were replaced by the diocesan priests, Francisco de Nieva and Miguel Pangilinan. In December 1799, the governor-general of the Philippines requested two religious to supervise the reductions which he planned to do in the island. However, the project ran into the well-known rivalry between the secular and the regular clergy. The provincial was only agreeable to sending necessary religious if the administration of the whole island would be entrusted to them. The secular chapter of Manila viewed the attempt as a divestment to which it was not ready to give consent.¹⁰

Changes in the pastoral map of the province 1768-1800.

The last decades of the 18th century were more stirred up. The expulsion of the Jesuits, the secularization policies of the government, the penury of the religious and the resolve of the province to gain foothold in the vicinity of the capital brought about notable changes in the configuration of its pastoral map. Between 1768 and 1770 the Recollects replaced the Jesuits in Bohol and Marianas islands and took charge of the whole island of Mindanao whose administration was shared by the two orders since the third decade of the 17th century. From 1768 to 1777 they also ministered to the Jesuit doctrina of Mandaue with its *visitas* Liloan and Camotes Islands.

¹⁰“Testimony of the dossier filed on the need for religious, not Indio clerics, to go to the mission of Mindanao, ceding to the former the two curacies that the latter administer in that island..”: AGI, *Ultramar*, 82.

The cessions started with the handing over of the ministries of Sorsogon, Bulusan, Donsol and Casiguran to the Franciscans towards the end of 1768. It continued with the giving up of the missions of Mindoro and Zambales—with the exception of the mission of Botolan—to the archbishop of Manila. Towards the end of November 1784 five member of the diocesan clergy replaced the Recollects in the doctrinas of Balincaguín, Morong and Mariveles in Zambales and those of Calapan and Naujan in Mindoro.¹¹ It ended in 1793 with the cession of the islands of Masbate and San Jacinto to the bishop of Nueva Caceres. In 1792, the provincial council—after giving in to the Calced Augustinians' request, granted them the favor of ceding the missions of Mabalacat and Bambang to them. The transfer did not push through. The provincial chapter a year afterward decided to offer to the bishop of Cebu the doctrinas of Mambusao and Batan in Panay in favor of the island of Siquijor.

The superiors explained all these renunciations with the dearth of religious. In reality, other motives were involved. The exchange of Mambusao and Batan with Siquijor already implied their existence. But it was in the acceptance of Imus and Las Piñas and in their wish to reach over to Bacoor, Cavite Viejo [present-day Kawit], Silang and other adjoining towns where the motives appeared very clearly. The prior provincial wrote in 1794 to his commissary in Madrid:

In view of the fact that this Province does not have any minister at all in places adjacent to Manila where it could place some religious who could be very useful to the convent of this capital in the exercise of preaching and could relieve the old friars from the sermons who for dearth of religious are constrained to preach, your Reverence shall not forget the petitions made in order to acquire the spiritual administration of Imus, Cavite el Viejo and other towns which are cited in the communications that the deceased Marquis of Cañete had carried with him (*Cartas* 2, 144v-145r).

Three years later, his successor Joaquín López del Rosario insisted on the need for the monarch to confirm the Recollects in the administration of the new curacies of Imus and Las Piñas

¹¹*Decree of the Governor of the Philippines*, 19 October 1784, AHPM, Book 84 f. 75r-v.

and he was confident that he would successfully acquire those of Bacoor and Silang (*Ibid* 147v-148r).

Above all, the province wanted some curacies near Manila in order to assign in them religious of worth who might assist it with their counsel, to give it prestige with their endeavor in education and pulpit and to promote its interests in the corridors of power. Moreover, it was the wish to strengthen its control of the Hacienda of Imus, freeing it from its possible indiscreet eyes in the vicinity.

The news about the expulsion of the Jesuits was received in Manila on 17 May 1768 and it placed the Recollects in an anguished dilemma. The kindheartedness of Governor José Raón (1765-1770) presented them with the occasion of greatly improving their situation, by offering them a great number of Jesuit ministries in the Visayas. But unfortunately, they lacked personnel who would attend to them. It had been ten years since the arrival of the last mission and they hardly had the needed religious to satisfy the obligations already committed to. The provincial spent the second half of May in a hurried search of a solution. More than once he had to deplore the sluggishness of the commissary in Madrid in the recruitment for the mission. If he had only dispatched ahead at least some members of his mission!

On the first of June it was decided to pose the question to the provincial council. He believed that the risk justified any effort. The opening of new horizons for the province demanded the collaboration of all its members. Furthermore, the effort was to be brief in duration, since the majority of the mission had already debarked in the shores of Samar. Therefore, he asked for authorization for every religious ready to lend a hand—including ex-provincials, superiors, councilors and parish priests who could be substituted in their ministries by other equally capable religious.

The provincial council was of the same opinion, and luckily the religious likewise responded to the call generously. Solely Fr. Esteban de Santo Tomás de Villanueva, excusing himself with some presumed illnesses, ignored it. On 22 June, the provincial council could already communicate to the vicar general in Spain that the province had taken charge of the nine ministries in Bohol,

six in the southwestern part of Mindanao and one in Cebu, “where the sixteen religious had gone” (*Cartas* I, 195r). Among them were ex-provincials, incumbent councilors and even the secretary provincial, the vice prior of Manila and the priors of Cavite and Cebu.

Bohol Island

The first to reach their new assignments were the religious dispatched to Bohol. From the first days of July towards the end of October 1768, eight religious headed by Pedro de Santa Bárbara, parish priest of Loboc and vicar provincial of the island, took charge of the nine curacies: Jagna, Loay, Loboc, Baclayon, Dauis, Tagbilaran, Maribohoc, Loon and Inabanga. The number could have been nine but the religious assigned to Inabanga, Fr. Carlos de San Miguel, had died two months earlier at his parish in Mobo, Masbate.

At that time Bohol was undergoing an extremely difficult period in its history. Francisco Dagohoy and thousands of his followers controlled the whole northeastern part of the island, from the actual site of Duero up to the vicinity of Inabanga. Malefactors, malcontents and victims of financial injustices kept on augmenting their ranks and with their raids they had sown terror, desolation and death in the towns. In recent years, they had even assassinated the Jesuit doctrineros of Jagna and Inabanga.¹²

The arrival of the nine missionaries, without possible previous preconditions, was a great opportunity to attempt pacification. The Recollects understood it that way. They appraised the situation, and a few weeks later Fr. Pedro de Santa Bárbara, “a religious of known dynamism, of a proven zeal and not rude intrepidity,”¹³ traveled through the mountains with proposals of peace and forgiveness. Several times he interviewed Dagohoy and his chieftains and promised to plead in their behalf in Cebu and Manila. Dagohoy was all ears to him. He allowed the missionary

¹²The slain Jesuits were Giuseppe Lamberti of Jagna and Gaspar Benito Morales of Talibon, not Inabanga.

¹³JUAN DE LA CONCEPCIÓN, *Historia general de Philipinas* XIV, 93.

to baptize, confess and solemnize marriages of hundreds of rebels and even showed willingness—as long the priest would guarantee government clemency—to lay down their arms, abandon the mountain and descend to the settlements. They even spoke of the possible creation of new towns of Canapog, Datuanan [Batuanan] and Guindulman.

Pleased with the success of his efforts, Pedro de Santa Bárbara showed up in Cebu under whose jurisdiction belonged the province of Bohol. There it was not difficult at all for the missionary to obtain the amnesty and pledge from the government to reduce the military presence in the island. Pedro de Santa Bárbara believed that there was no reason to maintain garrisons in Jagna, Loay, Maribohoc, Malabago [present-day Cortes] and Loon. However, he deemed those garrisons of Inabanga and Talibon necessary on account of the nearness of the rebel chief Ligaon who had not yet decided to dismiss thousands of his followers. A group of soldiers was indispensable in Tagbilaran in order to help the tribute-collectors. In the end, the government only acceded to the withdrawal of soldiers from Loay, Maribohoc and Loon.

The result of so much effort was rather minimal. Only a handful of rebels were reintegrated to the towns of Dimiao, Baclayon and Inabanga. Together with forty-three followers, the rebel chief Arañez established himself in the surrounding areas of Guindulman and another group headed by Pedro Baguio withdrew to the town of Maasin in Leyte.

Neither did the attempts of the succeeding years bring about any major effect. In 1792, the mountains and coastal areas of the northeastern part still ensconced about 24,000 rebels. In March of the same year, the provincial Fr. José de Santa Orosia had obtained the surrender of 1,200 rebels and hoped for the immediate surrender of the rest. Two years later, Father Manuel de la Consolación, parish priest of Inabanga, successfully brought down from the mountains six hundred rebels and resettled them in the towns of Talibon and Inabanga and in the villages of Ubay, Pangpang and San Pedro (*Crónicas* 8, 577). The hopes of José de Santa Orosia, however, did not materialize until the outset of the 19th century. In spite of

it, the population in the politico-religious framework of the colony increased from 5,810 tributes and 30,430 souls in 1762 to 11,998 tributes and 64,704 souls in 1799.

The parochial structure practically remained unmodified. The changes were minimal. In 1769, the doctrina of Loay was transferred to the town of Dimiao. In 1793, the village of Malabago was separated from the town of Maribohoc and erected into a parish bearing the name of Paminguitan (present-day Cortes). Six years later, in 1799, the old doctrina of Loay was restored.

Ordinarily, nine religious resided in Bohol, one in each parish. Only in special occasions after the arrival of a missionary expedition, when their number increased: eleven in 1769, thirteen in 1774, ten in 1776. There were instances when the dearth of religious prohibited them from filling up all the parishes. In 1784, only seven religious worked in Bohol, and the parishes of Inabanga and Dimiao remained vacant for several months. The bishop of Cebu denounced the fact before the government, with which he commenced a row with the Recollect prior provincial. In 1798, seventeen religious were working in Bohol (*Crónicas* 8, 524).

In the pastoral work, neither did they introduce major changes. In a meeting that took place a few weeks after their arrival, the missionaries—in accord with their faithful—decided to respect the traditional practices inherited from the Jesuits. They only modified the names of the Marian congregations which were changed to confraternities of the Cinture or our Lady of Consolation. For the first time, all the parishes of a region entrusted to the Order had a confraternity of our Lady of Consolation.¹⁴

The *aranceles* [stole fees] were lower in Bohol than in other regions of the vast Diocese of Cebu. On the other hand, the services rendered by the Boholanos to the church and to the missionary were more abundant. Without any salary, they worked in the repair

¹⁴In 1773, arrangements were made in Manila to set up the Confraternity of the Cinture in Balincaguín and give a juridical status to those already in existence since time immemorial” in Subic, Balayan, Iba and Agno in Zambales as well as in Bamban in Pampanga whose founding documents had disappeared, cf. *Letter of Father Sebastián de Portillos*, undated [1774], in AHPM, book45a, f. 8.

of the church and in the construction of the doctrinero's boat. They accompanied him in his missionary sallies. They did his laundry, took care of his livestock, acted as his porter, attended to the kitchen in his residence, and most of all, they watched over his personal safety. The doctrinero, in turn, managed and financed with church funds a school for boys and another for girls. The boys learned "how to read, write and the Christian doctrine. [...] Those who lived near the church attended school every day, while those who lived far attended only on Friday and Saturday." The school for girls was under the immediate direction of a teacher who did not teach anything but prayers, catechism and some domestic chores.

For seventeen years these traditional practices continued channeling the pastoral activity of the Recollects and their relationships with the faithful. In 1785, a period of antagonism and discords upset the normal development of parochial life and annoyed the daily lives of religious with hardships. Threatened by the *alcaldes mayores* Martín Flores (1785-1789) and Manuel de la Peña (1789-1792) and other protégés in Tagbilaran, Bacayon and Dauis, the Boholanos suspended their traditional services to the missionaries, a move which forced them to apply the *aranceles* in practice in the rest of the diocese. In the end, everything was in its place with the appointment of an *alcalde mayor* who was more discreet and impartial. In 1797, the bishop of Cebu, Ignacio Salamanca, found the island in peace which was well served by "parish priests who were zealous and watchful of their parish ministry."¹⁵

Table 1. Doctrinas in the Island of Bohol

	1768		1785		1799	
	Tributes	Souls	Tributes	Souls	Tributes	Souls
Inabanga	244	1,317	310	1,686	726	3,479
Loon	394	2,130	485	2,648	514	2,848
Maribohoc	727	3,998	1,210	5,702	962	5,885

¹⁵*Sinopsis* I, 660-694; Ignacio SALAMANCA, *Letter to the King*, 2 June 1797, AGI, *Ultramar* 670.

Paminguitan (Cortes)					758	4,170
Tagbilaran	763	3,668	1,296	6,305	1,344	7,447
Dauis	1,050	5,365	1,431	7,371	1,447	7,885
Baclayon	921	4,512	816	3,994	1,432	7,920
Loboc	605	3,350	1,015	5,202	1,700	8,908
Loay	482	2,470			650	3,287
Dimiao			1,016	5,105	899	4,537
Jagna	623	3,520	967	5,040	1,766	8,403
Total	5,849	30,430	8,546	45,053	11,998	64,708

SOURCES: Recollectio 6 (1983) 339-347; AGI, Ultramar 668.

Among the material benefits we must highlight the construction of the church of Dauis; the remodeling of the church of Loon and building of the magnificent staircase now connecting this town with the seashore; the reconstruction of the church and convent of Tagbilaran after the fire of 23 December 1798, the creation of the town of Panglao (1782); the foundation of the parishes of Paminguitan (1793) and Loay (1799); and the defense of the coastal areas against invasions perpetrated by the Moros. In this last field stood out Fr. Bernardo de San Agustín († 1826) and Joaquín López del Rosario († 1804) who served as parish priests of Loon from 1770 to 1782.

Mindanao

On 5 October 1768, Don Felipe Ilagorri, *corregidor* of Iligan, gave notice of the order of expulsion to the six Jesuits of the province. Three months later, on 15 January 1769, the royal cedula reached the two Jesuits of Zamboanga. Between the eight of the Jesuits, they ministered to 10,000 souls, distributed among the four military garrisons (Zamboanga, Dapitan, Iligan and Misamis) and two mission stations (Bayuc and Lubungan). Their posts were occupied by eight Augustinian Recollects who fixed their residence in the same places.

There is no news about the state of mind with which the Recollects took charge of the southeastern region of Mindanao. Apparently, they were carried away by euphoria and nostalgia, happy to assist in the realization of a long-cherished dream. Suddenly and with no pressure exerted on their part, the spiritual care of the whole island was entrusted to them again, since the whole northeastern part was never abandoned by them for a moment. In 1768, the Recollects maintained in them eight religious who ministered to 14,000 souls distributed among six parishes, namely, Camiguin, Cagayan, Butuan, Surigao, Tandag and Bislig, with their visitas or annex villages, and the mission of Pinagavian. Unfortunately, the path to reunification was sown with anti-Jesuit violence and intolerance. On the other hand, the province worked with a certain rash haste, without taking into consideration in the heaviness of the burden it had assumed.

The island of Mindanao was at the threshold of collapse. The Moros traversed its coasts freely and sacked its towns that were too insignificant and very defenseless in posing an effective opposition and resistance. Their fast sea craft made fun of the sentinels and surprised the inhabitants again and again, wreaking havoc on their harvests, destroying their houses and victimizing scores of residents. These victims felt abandoned, without any refuge except for the hardly penetrable thickness of the mountains. The missionaries did not approve of their flight on account of the politico-religious consequences it entailed. Many missionaries set up fortifications, organized volunteer corps of soldiers and used up a good part of their stipends in the acquisition of the most indispensable weapons. In 1790, the provincial Joaquín Encabo de la Virgen de Sopetrán distributed among the towns of Caraga a supply of arms: “To the town of Cantilan a cannon of four, three of two and one of one; to the towns in the island of Siargao, two falconets of two, and one of one; to the district of Bislig, two falconets of two and one of a half; to the new town of Gingoog, a falconet of one, with sufficient number of bullets and cartridge bags for the abovementioned cannons.”

Nevertheless, their opposition could not be total, and of course, turned out very ineffectual. Several towns south of Caraga—like Caraga and Bangaga—disappeared. Others became miserable villages of thirty, forty or fifty families, bereft of services of any kind.

The missionaries' fate was the same one suffered by their faithful. Majority remained exposed to the elements, without house, without church, with the faithful scattered in the mountains and farms. "The old houses of our doctrinas in the provinces of Calamianes, Iligan and Caraga," the prior provincial deplored in a letter to the vicar general on 7 July 1793, "all, without any exception, have been devastated by the Moros, and we necessarily found ourselves living in greatest need of shelter and clothing" (*Cartas* 2, 137r). The scattering of the population magnified their tasks and diminished their fruits. On the one hand, they were constrained to go in continuous movement; and, on the other hand, it was the best fertilizer for the growth of weeds and syncretism.

Far from the parish priest, from the sacraments and from the rigid socio-religious regulations of the settlement, in continuous contact with unbelievers and, sometimes with the Muslims, the religious life of the *remontados* was exposed to grave snares. Not a few times it degenerated in an ambiguous pietism, intermingled with a thousand superstitions and compromises with his ancestral Malay world. They formed a hybrid mixture of Christian ideas and pagan practices. Many were born, lived and died without the benefits of religion.

The missionaries tried to put a stop to these dangers. Once in a while they climbed mountains and penetrated their fields. But their visits were too sporadic and they did not reach all the fugitives. The missionaries baptized them, legitimized their unions and encouraged them to return to the practice of Christian life. For a more protracted and systematic teaching, rarely did they have time. In reality, the education and the Christian life of the group stemmed from the zeal and training of some pious person who fortunately was not lacking in any town. This person presided

the recitation of the rosary every Sunday, the teaching of the fundamental prayers to young children and even the administration of “baptism of water” to newborn babies.

In June 1779, in Mansalay (Mindoro) Fr. Francisco del Portillo met a community of Mangyans who gathered together inside the church every holy day for the community prayer of the rosary and the chanting of the *Salve*. There was even someone in charge of baptizing newborn children. Desirous of assuring the validity of those sacraments, the missionary asked them about the formula and the intention, and “a servant of Father [José de] Santa Orosia replied that what they said was the formula of baptism, and he recited it in Castilian Spanish; that upon pronouncing it—and not before or after—they poured water; that they did it with the intention of doing what Christ had instituted, what the Church had mandated, and what the priests had taught them. I inquire from them if in Bulalacao and Dongon there was someone who knew how to do the same thing, and they answered me there were several of them.”¹⁶

The first practice was prevalent in the archipelago. At the close of the century we have a testimony of their ritual in effect in Mindanao. The neophytes gathered by Fr. Juan de los Dolores in the barrio of Quiliog (Cagayan) met regularly every Sunday in a small warehouse-chapel to pray the rosary and to study the doctrine. The second practice should not be exceptional at all, since it was insistently recommended in all the editions of the *Modo de Administrar*. I now transcribe the provision from the 1729 edition of the *Modo de Administrar* in effect until 1792:

In every town of their ministry the minister must give the head fiscal and those who worked as midwives the formula of administering this holy sacrament in writing, advising them that they must have the intention and that when they pour water on the child the formula must be simultaneously recited. In this very important matter, the zealous minister shall put those who might be necessary so that in emergency cases there would somebody who might administer it for the welfare of souls.¹⁷

¹⁶Letter of Fr. Francisco del Portillo to the provincial, Cápiz, 17 July 1779, *Ibid.*, 51r.

¹⁷*Modo de administrar* 1729, f. 20r, AM dossier 61, no. 2.

The *Modo de Administrar* of 1729 advised the use of the formula for baptism in the mother tongue: "It shall be good that the formula shall be learned in their mother language."

To these difficulties, the dearth of ministers was added. In reality, the lack of personnel was an endemic ailment of the province, if not congenital. But at the close of the 18th century, with the widening of the field of evangelization and the simultaneous deterioration of the plight of vocations and missionary expeditions in Spain, such dearth of missionaries acquired alarming proportions. The most critical phase was prolonged from 1780 to 1786, and it constrained the province to part with the ministries of Mindoro and Zambales.

These circumstances could not but be reflected in Mindanao as well. By mid-1784 solely two religious laden with ailments were working in the whole province of Caraga. "Valero de San Agustín, 56 years of age and 26 in the administration, who was attacked by some sudden illness and had received the Extreme Unction, according to the latest news I had of him," was in charge of Tandag and its four visitas—"Calagdan, Bayuyo, Cantulinan and Lianga, with a distance of about twenty leagues away from the cabecera." José de Santa Teresa, "forty-six years of age and thirteen in the administration, always attacked by sudden ailment and continuously vomiting blood," administered Cateel with its adjoining visitas of Hinatuan and Bangaga which were twenty leagues away from the cabecera. Surigao and Butuan, with three and six visitas, respectively, had no priests. In Iligan and Zamboanga, the plight was not very promising either. In 1784, there were six priests whose residences were at Mambajao (Camiguin), Cagayan, Misamis, Dapitan, Lubungan and Zamboanga. In the following year, the number had already been reduced to four. The succeeding years witnessed a considerable improvement with the arrival of eighty new Recollects in the Philippines between 1786 and 1797. With these priests, it was possible to administer Iligan, Butuan and Surigao once again. In 1798, sixteen Recollects were working in Mindanao: two in Zamboanga, eight in the five ministries of

the province of Iligan, Camiguin, Cagayan, Misamis, Dapitan and Lubungan; and six in the four ministries of Caraga: Butuan, Surigao, Cantilan and Bislig. In 1776, there were fifteen.

Table 2. Doctrinas in the Island of Mindanao

	1770		1776		1785		1799	
	<i>Tributes</i>	<i>Souls</i>	<i>Tributes</i>	<i>Souls</i>	<i>Tributes</i>	<i>Souls</i>	<i>Tributes</i>	<i>Souls</i>
Bislig	420	1,700	470	2,100	346*		694	3,529
Tandag	500		500	2,500	706*		712	3,521
Surigao	669	2,864	669	3,345	710*		1,146	5,714
Butuan	657	2,868	657	3,285	469*		844	4,198
Camiguin	480	1,915	480	2,400	638*		675	3,058
Cagayan	560	2,280	560	2,800	570*		833	4,010
Pinagavia							140	825
Misamis	321	1,600		1,600		864	366	1,305
Iligan	300	1,200	95	75	90	2,309	246	1,118
Dapitan	603	2,810	400	2,000	381	864	740	4,957
Lubungan	300	1,700	300	1,500	200	1,138	559	2,096
Bayuc			300	1,650	128	629		
Zamboanga	328	2,010		2,010		704		3,557
Total	5,136	22,997	4,531	25,265	4,238	6,955		37,888

* The figures belong to the year 1784.

SOURCES: Fidel DE BLAS, *Labor evangélica de los Padres Agustinos Recoletos en las Islas Filipinas (Zaragoza 1910) 18-21; Recollectio 6 (1983) 331-345; AGI, Ultramar 668.*

With them, it was possible to consider even the unbelievers and *remontados*. In 1792, the parish priests of Butuan and Cagayan put themselves in contact with thousands of unbelievers who lived in the mountains of their respective districts. The prior provincial supported their activities and even proposed to the government the establishment of missions in both of them. Apparently, what became a reality was only that of Cagayan. The mission was established in the barrio of Quiliog in April 1793, thanks to the efforts of Fr. Juan de los Dolores who always worked in perfect

harmony with the datus of the region. This mission did not live up to its expected development, perhaps because it did not receive the needed attention. The illnesses and parish activities did not allow Father Juan to visit it with due regularity. In 1799, there were only eighty inhabitants who assembled every Sunday in a lowly small chapel to pray the rosary and study catechism (*Crónicas* 9, 44). There was no news anymore about the thousands of unbelievers in the surroundings of Linao, who had promised the parish priest of Butuan to settle down in a town.

The efforts of the ministers of Dapitan and Lubungan had more success. In 1798, they formed from the upland dwellers two towns with 600 and 300 souls, respectively. Fr. José de Santa Orosia had likewise successfully founded a mission dedicated to Saint John in Cape Bakulin with the Mandayas in adjoining areas. However, the planned repopulation of the old doctrinas of Caraga and Baganga with almost 2,000 Mandayas of the vicinity failed partly because of the intransigence, greed and lack of tact of the alcalde mayor of Surigao and other doctrineros de Bislig and Cantilan. But the main cause was doubtless the incapability of the government to guarantee their security against repeated raids by the Moros.¹⁸ The Pinagavían mission was attended to by the parish priest of Cagayan or his companion. In 1799, one hundred and forty families and two hundred eighty-five inhabitants lived in it. The mission of Bayuc was attached to that of Lubungan-Dipolog.

The Parish of Imus

The foundation of the parish of Imus followed the interest of the province to ensure its control over the hacienda of the same name. The first attempt to take charge of its spiritual administration dates back to 1715. Towards 1755, after all kindred steps taken by the Augustinian Recollects, the Jesuits of Cavite el Viejo tried to establish a chapel within the estate in order to attend to the growing population. The plan did not push through, but it raised an alarm in the province and made it feel the need to assume responsibility

¹⁸Peter SCHREURS, *Caraga Antigua 1521-1910, The Hispanization and Christianization of Agusan, Surigao and East Davao* (Cebu 1989) 250-267.

of the spiritual direction of the hacienda by creating in it a parish independent from Cavite el Viejo. Otherwise, it could not function with complete freedom. The project gained a new impetus following the demolition of their convent of San Juan de Bagumbayan in 1762 and the ensuing increase of interest of the province for the estate “where it has placed its hopes only.” In 1765, the Manila government accepted its offer to maintain a religious in Imus and to construct a house and church. In the early part of 1766, Carlos III authorized the rebuilding of the Bagumbayan convent there.

But these successes did not satisfy the needs of the province, since the chapel continued to depend on the parish of Cavite el Viejo and the Manila government had not yet implemented the orders from Madrid on the rebuilding of the convent. On 6 April 1778, when upon the requests of the government in Manila Carlos III revoked the permit to rebuild the convent, everything seemed lost. But the fact was another thing. When the workers were grouped together and had saved the trouble of leaving the hacienda to comply with their religious obligations, the chapel had been converted into a focus of social identification. The expulsion of the Jesuits had done away with the sole hindrance that blocked the resolution of their entire project. The clergy who substituted the Jesuits in Cavite el Viejo was not in a position to check the Recollect influence in the offices in Manila and Madrid. In 1789, the Recollects obtained permission to reconstruct at their own expense the church that had been destroyed by the typhoon of 29 September 1779 and six years later they could celebrate the triumph of their endeavors. After thirty years of ceaseless courses of action, the captain general of the Philippines and the archbishop of Manila accepted a formal petition from the municipal government. In a joint decision, they created the parish of Imus and entrusted it to the Recollects.

Imus at that time was home to five hundred families and had a parochial house and a stone church. The arrival of the first Recollect parish priest boosted the progress of the town, but at the same time it aroused the animosity of the Manila cathedral chapter, which became the source of a litigation that lasted until

early 19th century. On the other hand, the archbishop's oversight in demarcating its territorial limit gave rise to a slight conflict between its parish priest and that of its old parish matrix, a row that was fortunately solved after a short time. On 29 November 1796, they signed an agreement that a week later merited the archbishop's confirmation.¹⁹

The Parish of Las Piñas

At the close of the 18th century Las Piñas was a mean little village with hardly any resources of its own and a customary haven of malefactors. It was a mere appendage to the parish of Parañaque until 1755 when the Augustinians ceded it to the archdiocese. As it could not support a canonically-installed parish priest, the curacy was still in the hands of an interim minister. Hence it was not a parish that would whet extraordinary appetites. Nevertheless, it fell within the sphere of influence of Imus Hacienda and it was very near Manila where, given the deterioration of its convents, the province needed a place to assign some religious who would represent it in the pulpit and defend its interests in the corridors of power in government.

Table 3. Evolution of the Province in the 18th Century

Province/ Convent	1750		1774		1800	
	Religious	Souls	Religious	Souls	Religious	Souls
Manila	31		15		30	
Bagumbayan-Imus	2		2			
San Sebastian	3	366	5		5	
Cebu	1		1		1	
Cavite	2		3		2	
Mexico	3		4		3	
Imus & Las Piñas					3	5,244
Bataan-Zambales	10	10,242	8	12,363		
Pampanga	2	922	2	860	3**	4,538
Mindoro	6	12,438	3	2,830		

¹⁹The complete documentation is in AGI, *Ultramar* 682.

Romblon	4	5,808	2	3,381	3	4,084
Masbate*	3	4,500	4	8,500		
Cebu & Siquijor	1	1,500	2	5,500	4	6,297
Bohol			13	30,668	16	62,494
Mindanao	12	20,325	19	23,987	16	40,391
Calamianes	7	6,686	7	8,434	6	12,407
Marianas			5	3,010	4	3,450
Total	87	62,787	94	99,553	96	139,635

* The figures include the doctrineros and population of Mambusao and Batan (Panay).

** This includes the mission of Botolan (Zambales).

SOURCES: *Recollectio* 6 (1983) 331-345; AGI, *Ultramar* 668 and 651.

The Recollects commenced to show interest in Las Piñas in 1765 when they asked for it from the Augustinians. Once more they insisted in their request in 1790 and 1794. But apparently they made no official petitions until September 1795. The government and the archdiocese were pleased to welcome the Recollects' formal request. After swiftly completing the legal courses of action, they created the parish on 5 November 1795 and entrusted it to the Recollects.

On 26 December 1795, Fr. Diego Cera, "an intelligent, vigorous and disinterested subject," took possession of the parish. It did not take long for him to change the countenance of the town. At once he won over the trust of the people who in 1797 even placed themselves at his command in order to defend the town against a possible attack by the British. Fr. Cera re-established peace and order, attracted a good number of families to live in the *población*, that grew from 350 families in 1795 to 480 in 1799, built roads, started the construction of a temple made of hewn stone and gave splendor to church worship by organizing an orchestra of violins and other string instruments. Progress such as that in Las Piñas did whet the appetite of the diocesan chapter but at the same time it won over the unwavering support from the governor

who resolutely sided with the Recollect administration and in the famous report of 1804 vigorously defended it.²⁰

In 1797, the Recollects made new arrangements so that the king would confirm these concessions and even so that he would entrust to them the adjoining parishes of Cavite el Viejo, Bacoar and Silang as well. “Besides the usefulness that said ministries could give us, our haciendas of Imus and San Nicolás would then be surrounded by Recollect ministries and, consequently, they would be well managed in the temporal aspect.”²¹

The Parish in Siquijor Island

On 12 April 1794, the Recollects entered Siquijor after having obtained from the bishop of Cebu the island in exchange for the doctrinas of Mambusao and Batan in Panay. The reasons for the exchange are not on record despite my intense investigative effort. Perhaps the nearness of Siquijor to the Island of Bohol could have influenced their decision to get the Visayan island.

The Recollects came upon a parish in the early stages of formation. Siquijor had just separated from Dumaguete in 1780 with some 680 families distributed throughout the whole island and it had an unfinished church and convent. It was their lot to finish the construction of the two edifices. The convent was converted into a veritable bulwark capable of defending the inhabitants from the frequent raids by the Moros. In this parish Fr. Alonso de los Dolores distinguished himself; he administered the parish for thirty-six years (1796-1831) and directed the demographic, social and religious progress of the island.

²⁰Rafael Ma. AGUILAR, *Exposición [...] sobre los curatos de Santa Rosa, Imus, Las Piñas y demás que se hace presente*, 25 noviembre 1804, en W. E. RETANA, *Archivo del bibliófilo filipino* 1 (Madrid 1895) 3-22; the whole dossier is in AGI, *Ultramar* 682.

²¹*Letter of the provincial to the commissary in Spain*, 1 July 1797, in *Cartas* 2, 147v-148r; *Crónicas* 9, 309-310.

The Augustinian Recollects in the 19th Century: Turbulence and Expansion¹

Angel Martinez Cuesta OAR

Preliminary remarks

For the history of the Augustinian Recollect Order in the Philippines, the 19th century was very important. It is the century when its presence in the Islands was most widespread and intense. In previous centuries, the number of Recollects working in the country had been relatively small—around seventy in the 17th century and about a hundred in the 18th century—and their activity was reduced to frontier or marginal territories like Zambales, Palawan, Mindanao, Romblon and Mindoro.

Only in the second half of the 18th century, after the expulsion of the Jesuits, had the Recollect Order taken over some more promising territories, like Bohol, and at the end of the same century they began to get closer to Manila with the foundation of Las Piñas and Imus in 1795.

The situation in the 19th century was quite different. The number of Augustinian Recollects increased incessantly, and this growth, without betraying their historical commitment to the

¹This chapter is culled from the paper read at *Recoletos 400: National Conference on OAR History, Legacy and Culture* at Diego Cera Auditorium, San Sebastian College Manila in December 2004.

Christian communities of the Visayan Islands, allowed the Order to strengthen more and more its presence in the leading provinces of Tondo, Cavite, Laguna and Batangas.

Three different periods

However, it would be misleading to regard the whole century as a monolithic unit. Rather, it can be divided at least into three quite different periods. The first would embrace its first twenty-five years, from 1800 to 1826. It is characterized by a continuous decrease in the number of religious and the ensuing withdrawal from parishes and missions. First, the Spanish War for Independence (1808-1814) and, second, the ruthlessness and instability of Spanish politics as well as the poverty of the State, ruined by the war against the French, made the recruitment of missionaries in Spain difficult.² As a matter of fact, from 1800 to 1825 only a total of thirty-one Recollects arrived in the Philippines: seven in 1805, one in 1815, nine in 1817, two in 1819 and twelve in 1822. These meager numbers could not make up for the losses; and, consequently, the Order in the Islands was reduced from around 95 members in the beginning of the century to only 58 in 1820. Year after year, its superiors were forced to cede to the secular clergy some of its traditional ministries, or at best, to have recourse for help from secular priests. This shortage of personnel prompted some religious to think about the possibility of opening the doors to Filipino vocations, but in the end nothing was done.³

In 1808, the Recollects went out of the missions of Mabalacat and Capas in the present provinces of Pampanga and Tarlac. In 1814, the last Recollect friar who was still serving the mission post of Botolan left Zambales. In the same year they had to withdraw from the Marianas Islands and from the province of Caraga, and reduced their presence in southwestern Mindanao provinces to only a handful of religious.

²*Pobreza del Estado en 1818*.

³Nicolás BECERRA, in *Cartas* 3, f. 185: "It is not necessary to give any habit to those of this land, not even to keep the choir wearing the habit and sung masses and by obligation; if it cannot be done that way, it shall be necessary to leave those responsibilities."

In this dramatic sequence that might be surprising was the taking over of the parishes of Calapan and Naujan in Mindoro in 1805. In 1819, the mission of Irirum was added. The acceptance of the new parish of Caloocan in 1815 and the return to Marianas in 1820 took place. But all these decisions had an easy explanation: the province was anxious to get some parishes near Manila and the Spanish government wanted the islands of Marianas and Mindoro better attended to.

In 1820, the fifty-eight religious of the Province were distributed in the following manner: twenty-two were living in the convents of Manila, San Sebastian, Cebu, Cavite, Mexico (4) and Madrid (1), while thirty-six were serving as many parishes and missions in Bohol (13), Mindanao (5), Palawan (5), Mindoro (3), Marianas (3), Romblon (2) and Siquijor, Danao, Imus, Las Piñas and Caloocan, with a total of 167,000 souls. In their spiritual administration they were assisted by ten secular priests.

The second period, characterized by a slow but constant recovery of the province, lasted only about sixteen years. It would have begun in 1826, with the arrival in the Philippines of the first eight fruits of the Alfaro novitiate house, and would have finished in 1841. During these years, in spite of the turmoil following the despoliation decrees of Mendizábal (1836-1841), the province received seventy-two new religious. This number allowed her to regain some of the ministries abandoned in the previous decades and to extend her presence to other regions, with the favor of the government that was already mistrusting the political loyalty of the native clergy.

In 1833, the Recollects resumed their work in the parishes of Caraga and in 1836 in those of Zambales. Both territories were remote and poor and the authorities, both civil and ecclesiastical, were worried about their administration.⁴ At the same time, a number of new parishes began to be created in Bohol (four in the 1831-1833 biennium), Siquijor (Canoan, 1836) and Misamis (Jasaan, 1830). By 1837, the total number of the Recollects in the

⁴June 1831 visit of the archbishop: "I went at once to the miserable and far-off province of Zambales."

Philippines had reached eighty-one. Twenty-four religious resided in the convents of Intramuros, Manila (20), Cavite (2), Cebu (1) and San Sebastian (1). The remaining fifty-seven, assisted by ten secular priests, served as many parishes and missions with a population of 278,137 souls.

The third and last period commenced in 1842 with the arrival of twenty-four new religious in the Philippines and covered the rest of the century until the very end of the Spanish rule in the Islands. This period was a brilliant one, at least in some aspects. The members of the province increased from 86 in 1837 to 97 in 1842, 203 in 1850, 250 in 1867, 460 in 1891, and 560 in 1898, not including the sixty-five religious who were sent to Colombia for the restoration of Candelaria Province. Surely, not all these religious were active in the Philippines. More than one third of them were still students in the Spanish convents of Monteagudo, Marcilla in Navarra and San Millán de la Cogolla in La Rioja, while a group of about twenty-five to thirty-five priests and lay brothers was in charge of their education or employed in administrative activities in Rome and Madrid. Notwithstanding all this, the number of Recollects working in the Philippines was really high (330 in 1897) and permitted a great expansion of their apostolic undertakings. For the first time, the Recollects were able to develop a systematic evangelization of the dwellers of mountains and innermost districts of Zambales and of the islands of Mindoro, Bohol, Negros, Palawan and Zambales.

To better understand this apostolic expansion, it is necessary to take into account at least three circumstances:

- 1) The increase of religious vocations after the opening of two new major seminaries in Spain—Marcilla (1865) and San Millán de la Cogolla (1878).

- 2) The demographic increase of the Islands by leaps and bounds, which surpassed all expectations. The hardly one million and a half Filipinos at the beginning of the 19th century had risen to three million and a half in 1850, and would become more than seven million at the close of the century.

3) The ever-increasing suspicion of the colonial government officials and the Spanish community towards the Filipino native clergy. Quite evident also was the growing suspicion of the native clergy on the Spanish community. Already in 1827, Manuel Bernáldez had cast serious doubts on the loyalty of the Filipino clergy to Spain.

He who knows the active and leading part played by this class—the native clergy—in accomplishing the independence of America will not be surprised in the establishment of the Constitution of the Philippines. Native parish priests have almost all been directors of the elections in their villages and distinguished themselves by their officiousness and their pretensions against the legitimate government of the islands.⁵

Through the rest of the century, these accusations would be repeated by others, although rarely with any supporting evidence beyond the analogy with what happened in America. However, the recommendation of Bernáldez that “by mild and discreet means the vacant parishes of the secular priests be conferred on religious” became increasingly the keynote of the Spanish policy toward the Filipino.

Improvements in traditional territories

The expansion began with the foundation of new parishes and missions in the territories already administered by the Order. From their return to Caraga in 1833 until 1861, when they were ordered to cede all their Mindanao ministries to the Jesuits, the Recollects restored or created twenty new parishes, while the Christian population ministered to by them in the island increased from 71,589 souls in 1838 to 125,861 in 1861, an increase of 55,000 Christian believers in twenty-three years. A very similar expansion was experienced by the provinces of Bataan and Zambales. When the Recollects went back in 1836 to these most beloved provinces they found solely eight parishes: Mariveles in Bataan; and Iba, Masinloc, Santa Cruz, Botolan in Zambales; Bolinao, Balincaguín (Mabini), Sarapsap (Alaminos), part of the actual province of Pangasinan. By 1843 they had already restored the old parish of

⁵ BR 51, 182-273; BN, ms. 20.325.

Subic, and created that of Agno. In subsequent years they went on to establish new parishes in order to attend to the increasing population, due, among other factors, to a massive immigration of Ilocanos. No less than eighteen new ministries were established between 1843 and 1897.

The island of Bohol which at the beginning of the century was already the favorite apostolic field of the Recollects continued to be regarded with special predilection. In the 1820s, the Recollects supplied a major contribution to its complete pacification, successfully integrating into civil life of the northeastern towns of the island no less than 22,500 Boholanos who lived scattered in the mountains and who posed a constant threat to the security and normal development of the whole island. Between 1852 and 1885 they established and organized fifteen new parishes throughout the island.⁶ New mission stations also appeared in Palawan, Marianas, Mindoro and Romblon.

Beside this increased presence in their traditional apostolic fields, the Recollects began to work also in new territories entrusted to the Order by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Two of them—Cavite and Negros—require a more detailed treatment.

The Augustinian Recollects in Negros

The arrival of the Augustinian Recollects in Negros is a major event in the history of the island. Their arrival would soon come to bear on all the aspects of her life. The enthusiasm of the Recollects would contribute decisively toward the creation of a climate of optimism and progress that would soon place Negros at the forefront of the Philippine provinces.

One fact suffices to show how quickly the island developed. Whereas in 1848, it was a semi-abandoned island with no bearing on the country's economic context. In 1892, hardly forty-four years later, it came to occupy the first place in the country's exports. The exports of Negros sugar amounted in that year to 20% of the total value of the Philippine exports. Simultaneously and strongly

⁶Emmanuel Luis A. ROMANILLOS, *The Augustinian Recollects in Bohol, 1769-1937*, in *Recollectio* 21-22 (1998-99) 83-114.

intertwined with this fact, other factors came up, such as the increase of population by four times, the rapid establishment of new towns and parishes, the immigration of Spanish and Ilonggo farmers and Chinese traders, and the improvement of primary schools, health and communications. In 1896, the Recollects were even able to open in Bacolod a high school for the children of the emerging middle-class families of the island.

These changes were the happy result of a combination of circumstances, each of them contributing in its own way. The fertility of the soil and the mildness of the climate laid the foundation. Then came the high prices of sugar in the world market, the liberalization of trade, the opening of the port of Iloilo to foreign shipping, technical progress, peace and order, the insight and tenacity of a handful of men, such as Fr. Fernando Cuenca, the English merchant Nicholas Loney and the *hacenderos*—Eusebio Ruiz de Luzurriaga, Agustín Montilla, Leopoldo Gastón, Miguel Pérez, and Diego de la Viña—, the abundance of inexpensive land and labor, the incentives given by some provincial governors and the enthusiasm and experience of a number of parish priests.

For a long time, both civil and ecclesiastical authorities had wanted to replace the secular clergy with a religious order. They believed that the religious clergy, being better trained and more zealous, would take Negros Island out of its paralysis and would stimulate the development of its immense natural resources. This prevailing belief plus the dearth of priests in the Diocese of Cebu and an evident mistrust on the political loyalty of the native clergy brought about the turnover of its spiritual administration to the Augustinian Recollects.

On May 27 1848, Governor General Narciso Clavería passed to the provincials of the four religious orders, then in the archipelago, a request of the bishop of Cebu for the spiritual administration of the island of Negros by any of them. Two days later the Recollect prior provincial replied and accepted Negros Island and promised to send there six priests within six months. On June 20, General Clavería accepted the offer and entrusted “the spiritual administration of Negros to the Recollects that they may

occupy those parishes and missions that are vacant and those that in time would become vacant.”

Amlan and Siaton in the eastern coast and Kabankalan and Himamaylan in the western coast were the first four parishes turned over to the Augustinian Recollects between 28 August and 28 October 1848. The first three were then newly established parishes, separated from those of Tanjay, Dauin and Himamaylan, respectively.

With respect to Himamaylan, it had a parish priest since 1842, the well-known peninsular priest Jose María Pavón, who was transferred to the nearby parish of Hinigaran which had been founded as a parish in the previous month of February.

In the following decades the Augustinian Recollects brought about an ambitious plan which changed the religious map of the island with the creation of a great number of new parishes and missions. From 1848 to 1861 no less than seventeen new parishes were founded. After five years dedicated to their consolidation, in 1866 began what we may call the second chapter in the parochial organization of Negros, which can be extended until 1890. In these 25 years, eleven parishes came into being and the Recollects took over the five parishes that were still in the hands of the secular clergy. These were Tanjay (1866), Bacolod (1871), Silay (1881), Bago (1882) and Ilog (1889). All of them were transferred to the Recollects only when their secular priests passed away. In this manner, the spiritual administration of the island became homogenous.

The third chapter of the pastoral organization of Negros goes back to 1889 when the Augustinian Recollects submitted to the government a mission plan which foresaw the simultaneous opening of ten new missions, but actually it did not commence until 1894-1895, when, after much debate and major changes, the government approved the foundation of no less than 29 missions, and the Recollect superiors began to appoint their respective ministers in them. This project is the most ambitious pastoral plan ever made by the Recollects in the Philippines. In it, we can

see summarized all their deep concern for the impoverished and abandoned people.

The Augustinian Recollects were aware of the difficulties the plan entailed. Most of the proposed missions would rise in regions still unexplored with hundreds of deserters, robbers, murderers and every kind of undocumented people. But they were likewise conscious that among them were also thousands of simple people deprived of any civil and ecclesiastical services. Some of them were still pagan, and the religious wanted to come to their help.

In five decades the Recollects established in Negros no less than 56 parishes and mission stations: sixteen between 1848 and 1861; eleven from 1866 to 1889; and twenty-nine in the last seven years.

The Augustinian Recollects in Cavite

Very different were the origin and the development of the Recollect activity in the province of Cavite. Cavite belonged to the archdiocese of Manila. There was neither a dearth of Filipino clergy to administer the parishes, as it was the case of Negros, nor had the parishes whose transfer was now sought, been founded or ever administered by the Recollects, as it was the case with those of Mindoro at the beginning of the century.

The first move came from the Recollect procurator in Madrid Guillermo Agudo who in 1848 requested that some parishes in Cavite, belonging to the secular clergy, be entrusted to the Order, for it possessed haciendas in Cavite and needed parishes near Manila in which to place the provincial councilors so that they might be close at hand to act as advisers of the prior provincial. Upon consultation, the Recollect archbishop José Aranguren saw no reason to deprive the secular clergy of parishes that they had administered satisfactorily for the past eighty years. Nevertheless, the governor general of the Philippines, Narciso Clavería, always close to the Recollects, ignored the opposition of the archbishop and on 9 March 1849 the queen, not content with granting three parishes to the Recollects, further gave four to the Dominicans

who had not even requested them. Actually, the Recollects received only two parishes: Kawit or Cavite Viejo in 1851, and Silang in 1853. Later on, in 1856, they themselves founded the parish of Carmona.

The operation seemed, therefore, rather limited. Nevertheless, it was to play a great role in the creation of Filipino nationalism. The Filipino clergy, led by Fr. Mariano Gómez in Cavite and Fr. Pedro Peláez as the overall moving force in Manila, reacted quickly, and for the first time, they were able to organize and put forward a campaign in Manila and Madrid to show both their loyalty to the Crown and the injustice they were undergoing. Their efforts did not attain the desired end, but they were not futile. They were the first test of their real force, and served to increase their Filipino awareness and their possibilities as national leaders. Many of these ideas were to be handled twelve years later by the same leaders in what can be seen as the second stage of this unfortunate affair. In this second stage, rather than actors, the Recollects were victims. They did not seek nor want any confrontation with the secular clergy, but they were driven to accept it by force of circumstances.

The controversy began with the royal decree of 30 July 1859, which ordered the Recollects to cede the Island of Mindanao with all its parishes—twenty-seven in all—to the Society of Jesus which by this same decree was allowed to return to the Philippines. Upon receiving this decree, the Recollects remained bewildered. Suddenly, without any previous advice and any possibility of self-defense, they were expelled from the land which they considered as the “prettiest flower of their crown,” a land which they had evangelized and cultivated for more than two centuries, at first, along with the Jesuits, and afterwards, from 1768 to 1859, alone. They could not understand the real reason behind this lack of consideration which they did not believe to deserve. After all, in the last twelve years, they had established there eight new parishes and mission posts, which in 1859 amounted to twenty-seven, while the Christian population had increased from 71,589 souls in 1838 to 125,861 in 1861.

Moreover, the Recollects felt they themselves were able to cooperate in its future development. At that moment, they were coming out from the years marked with scarcity of personnel that had so heavily hampered their pastoral activity in the previous decades. After all, nobody knew the language and needs of Mindanao except the Recollects; and above all the congregation wanted to continue working there for the good of the island and its people.⁷

The passionate defense of their rights drawn up on 4 March 1861 by the Recollect prior provincial, Fr. Antonio Úbeda, did not achieve its objective which was no other than the cancellation of the disputed decree. But it moved the Spanish government to compensate the Recollects for the parishes they were deprived of in Mindanao with as many parishes in the archdiocese of Manila held by secular clergy. Between 1863, when the Recollects received the parish of Antipolo in compensation for that of a parish in Basilan Island, and 1884, some twenty parishes, most of them located in the provinces of Tondo, Cavite, Laguna and Batangas, were transferred from the hands of the secular clergy to those of the Recollects as compensation for as many parishes which the Recollects were constrained to hand over to the Jesuits.

In 1888, the Recollects were able to put an end to this unhappy affair. Overcoming the opposition of the Jesuits, led by Fr. Pablo Pastells, the famous historian, the Recollects got the partial cancellation of the royal decree of 1859 and were allowed to continue in their parishes in Misamis, while the secular clergy could retain their Manila parishes.⁸

The Philippine Revolution

In 1898, the Augustinian Recollects were completely committed to the Philippines and fully identified with the interests

⁷O. D. CORPUZ, *The Roots of the Filipino Nation* 1, 508: "The injustice of 1861 decree would nourish the seed that would become the roots of Christian Filipino Nationalism."

⁸*Petition of Fr. Minguela*, 14 July 1887, in M. CARCELLER, *Historia general* XII, 566-568; 663-564.

of the archipelago. More than the 80% of their active members were working there, and even in 1897, when the Order had already lost seventeen of its members due to the Revolution of 1896, the superiors still sent sixteen young Spanish religious to Manila. When the Spanish-American War broke out, there were in the Philippines around 330 Augustinian Recollects in charge of one million and a half souls. They were spread in four convents and 235 towns or settlements in Luzon, Mindanao, Negros, Mindoro, Palawan, Bohol, Romblon and several other minor islands.

Such unfortunate situation, a consequence of an evident lack of foresight on the part of the superiors of the province, foretold hard days ahead for the Order, which, in the probable case of being forced to abandon the Philippines, had very few contact points in other nations. In the different phases of the Revolution, thirty deaths increased the Order's bloody list in the archipelago and four others died in prison, while ninety-one fell to the Filipino patriots (forty in Negros and the others in Mindoro, Mindanao, Zambales and other places). The rest either were able to take refuge in the convents in Manila—already crowded with Spanish and American troops—the Americans occupied San Sebastian convent from August 1898 to 20 October 1899 for a monthly rental of ₱150—or were able to escape to Hong Kong, Macao or Singapore, until they found their way back to Spain. From September 1898 to August 1900 about two hundred and two religious were repatriated.

Numerous Recollects were already exhausted, sick and discouraged. They felt betrayed, victims of a hatred which they thought they did not deserve and could not understand. Some of them did not even find meaning in their priestly religious vocation anymore. They had been ordained as priests to go to the Philippine missions and the Philippines had always been the only horizon in their lives. Upon being forced to leave the country, they felt both psychologically and pastorally uprooted, without strength and preparation to start new ways, as if "... their mission would have concluded with the loss of the Philippines."

Fortunately, there were some religious, more enthusiastic and better prepared, who did not break down but did manage

to overcome the adverse circumstances. On 23 August 1898, Fr. Patricio Adell left Manila with other seven religious, and after an audacious trip via Hong Kong, Japan, Honolulu, San Francisco and Panamá they landed at La Guaira in Venezuela on 7 December of the same year. Their example spread out and in the following months it was possible to send more expeditions to Brazil, Venezuela and Panama. At the end of 1899 there were in Brazil around forty religious, and another other twenty divided themselves between Venezuela (13) and Panama (8). In this manner, the Philippine Revolution contributed to propagate the Order in America, where at present (2004) there are more than 600 religious, and the apostolic character that she had taken on in the archipelago was thus reaffirmed.

At the outbreak of the Revolution of 1898, there would be in the Philippines about 1,400 friars of various religious orders. Around 900 worked in parishes, of whom about 450 were arrested and held as prisoners for a few months. The number of friars who met a violent death was forty-seven.⁹ To this figure, we can add the twenty-four who perished in prison, who died of hunger, due to ill treatments or, simply, to diseases contracted during their imprisonment and being insufficiently taken care of.

Consequences of the Revolution

In December 1899, after the decree of the Philippine President General Emilio Aguinaldo issued on 12 December 1899, most of the friars had recovered their freedom and could take refuge in Manila. The remaining captives were set free in succeeding weeks. But to this date, hundreds of friars had already left the Philippines for Spain or for South America: 202 Recollects, 128 Franciscans, about 100 Dominicans, etc. At the end of 1899, more than sixty Recollects from the Philippines were already working in America—

⁹*The Taft Commission, Report*, 23, speaks of forty while Cayetano SÁNCHEZ, 473, quoting Pablo FERNÁNDEZ, *History of the Church in the Philippines*, 314-326, raised them to 243. For the Augustinians, cf. Isacio RODRÍGUEZ, Jesús ÁLVAREZ, *Papeles filipinos II: La revolución filipina y los prisioneros españoles*, in *Archivo Agustino* 199 (1997) 176-77.

forty in Brazil, thirteen in Venezuela, eight in Panamá and two in Colombia; and in succeeding years their presence would not stop growing.¹⁰

Many of the religious who remained in Manila would have likewise loved to leave the archipelago. But the Holy See continued relying on them and the first Apostolic Delegate to the Philippines Archbishop Placide-Louis Chapelle did not authorize their departure.¹¹ Furthermore, villages and towns began to lose fear and turned to the religious superiors in Manila for help: they badly needed friars to resume the spiritual care that had been extremely neglected in previous years. The reply of the superiors was not enthusiastic and they moved with caution since the American authorities were rather contrary to the operation. The superiors themselves got acquainted with the dangers and difficulties their religious would find in the provinces. Some volunteers had not been able to master the situation and after some weeks of insecurity, persecution and hardships, they had gone back to Manila putting a hasty end to their experiment.¹² But at last, the popular insistence

¹⁰A. MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *Los agustinos recoletos en América*, in *Recollectio* 18 (1995) 43-84.

¹¹In August 1898 the papal nuncio in Madrid had already expressed their objection to the immediate substitution of the regular clergy by the secular priests, cf. *Despacho de Nava a Rampolla*, 13 August 1898, in ARCHIVIO SEGRETO VATICANO, AES, *Spagna*, fasc. 303, ff. 21-24. Rampolla must have welcomed the opinion at once, since towards the end of October of the same year he had already expressed his judgment to the generals of the Orders, as can be deduced from a letter of the commissary general of the Recollects to the procurator in Rome, Madrid, 28 October 1898: "The provincial asks me to obtain recommendations from His Eminence Cardinal Rampolla; I replied: 'I would not dare,' since in Rome—I do not know if it may be said they are playing the violin, saying: 'Do not let the religious leave the Philippines nor abandon its parishes,'" AGOAR, box 65. On 4 January 1900, two days after his arrival in Manila, Archbishop Placide-Louis Chapelle asserted this line of conduct, prohibiting the departure of the friars from the Philippines unless due to illness.

¹²On 8 April 1899, Fr. Tiburcio Fernández was sent to Talisay to accompany Fr. Fernando Cuenca and assess the situation, to investigate whether the Recollects could be accommodated and how many in Negros and if he himself would be allowed to settle in Concepción where he had been a minister before the Revolution (1894-1898). On July 2, he was already back in Manila, AM, leg. 50 (cf. *Necrología del p. Eusebio Valderrama*; also José Luis SÁENZ, *Los Agustinos*

triumphed over the doubts and trepidations of the superiors who, little by little, changed their minds and started welcoming some requests and sending their friars to the areas deemed tranquil and safer.

By the middle of 1902 there were eighteen Recollects in the provinces, despite the reluctance of the new Apostolic Delegate, Giovanni Battista Guidi, who never believed in the possibilities of the regular clergy¹³ as well as in the poverty of parishes and the systematic opposition posed by the Aglipayans. The schismatics took advantage of the scarcity of Catholic priests. Supported by local leaders, they took over many churches and parish edifices. In 1904, the Recollects grew to twenty-nine, and in 1906 to forty-five.¹⁴

A clear sign of the renewed interest of the Recollects in the Islands was the official visit of their prior provincial who *Recoletos y la Revolución Hispano-Filipina* (Marcilla, Navarra 1998) 291-292. Valentín Utande, Bernardino García, Calixto Gaspar and Marcos Beltrán were denied permission to go back to Bohol. Juan Ruiz and Francisco Ortuoste were not allowed to remain in Cebu, cf. SÁENZ, 226; neither were those sent to Romblon, cf. SÁENZ, 232.

¹³About the return to the provinces and the reluctance of the Apostolic Delegate Giovanni Battista Guidi, cf. *Letters of Fr. Celestino Yoldi* (31 January 1903): "He always believes that nobody must leave to the provinces because of the dangers there, so much so that those who are in the municipalities are in the same condition or almost better than before: the fear and permission are chiefly found here in Manila," and Fr. Eleuterio Aranda (13 January 1903) to Fr. Mariano Bernad, AGOAR, caja 76,1 and 15 November 1903: Fr. Celestino Yoldi to Fr. Mariano Bernad: He alludes to a letter from Taft declaring that religious can go wherever they want. He spoke of parishes that could be taken over, AGOAR, caja 76, 2. He gives the list of those parishes that might be administered, AGOAR, caja 76, 1. Also letters of Fr. Eleuterio Aranda to Fr. Iñigo Narro, AGOAR.

¹⁴A. MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *Los agustinos recoletos en Filipinas, 375 años de presencia ininterrumpida*, in *Missionalia Hispanica* 39 (1982) 36-37. The first Recollects dispatched to the provinces were Fr. Fernando Hernández and Fr. Hipólito Navascués who left for Zambales in May 1901; later on, in December they were followed by Fr. Agustín Pérez and Fr. Alejandro Echazarra. In July, it was the turn of Fr. Marcelino Simonena and Fr. Javier Áriz. The former settled in Talisay with Fr. Cuenca; the latter substituted Fr. Domingo de Pablo in Cuyo where very soon (October 1901) he was joined by Fr. Pablo Manuel García and Fr. Eduardo Abaurrea. In September 1901, Fr. Cipriano Chocarro and Fr. Pedro Jiménez settled in Jimenez (Misamis Occidental); and Fr. Eusebio Valderrama and

was then based in Madrid, Spain. From 6 April to 12 June 1906, the provincial Father Tomás Roldán visited the convents of Intramuros, San Sebastian, Cavite and Cebu as well as the parishes of Negros Occidental and refrained from visiting other regions for fear of aggravating the already painful plight of the religious. In the provincial visit, he spoke with the religious, took note of their material and moral needs, gave orders to repair some houses, and decided to open two schools in Manila, the first in San Sebastian for boys and the second in Santa Rita for girls. The school for girls was to be entrusted to the religious sisters of the Beaterio de Santa Rita (indistinctly known as Beaterio de San Sebastián).

When the prior provincial returned to Spain, he gave a detailed account of the Philippine situation to the provincial council and, in agreement with that, he decided to strengthen the presence of the Order in the archipelago. In November 1906, Father Roldán dispatched eight new religious and, the following year, another seven. Six more religious would arrive in the Philippines the next year.

The life of the missionaries in the provinces was very harsh. The means of subsistence was meager. The salary of ministers—defrayed by the Spanish colonial government—was no longer existent. The people were impoverished and had been unaccustomed to cooperate in the sustenance of their priests. In some places, as in Culion and Coron, the missionaries suffered from hunger. The territorial jurisdiction of the parishes was extremely over-extended—the parish priest of San Carlos, for instance, was in charge of half the eastern coast of Negros Island—from Escalante in the north to Tayasan in the south.

Not smaller were the areas covered by Recollect ministers working in Zambales, Mindoro and Palawan,¹⁵—and to top it Fr. Angel Quintana, later replaced by Juan Lorenzo in May 1902 in San Carlos (Negros Occidental).

¹⁵Fr. Fernando Fernández was to distribute his activity as ambulant missionary: he exercised his mission among the residents of Agno—center and base of his missionary sallies—Baní, San Isidro, Dasol, Balincaguín and, sporadically, Zaragoza, cf. SÁENZ, p. 245. Fr. Pedro Pérez took charge of the area from Kabangkalan to Campomanes, 80 miles. There were ten parishes in that part of the province before the Revolution, cf. SÁENZ, 308.

all, there was hardly a town without a hostile leader who would obstruct the priests' sincere pastoral effort with a thousand tricks.

The superiors did not stop recommending patience and prudence to them. They were to take control of themselves, to avoid rush moods and any act of indiscreet zeal, and to be ready to suffer. For the time being, their first occupation should be to inquire about the situation and, above all, not to look back nor making comparisons with the past.¹⁶

Nonetheless, with the Augustinian Recollect fathers and brothers increasingly securing position and their ability to earn or regain the love of the people, anticlericalism gradually receded.

¹⁶Letter of Fr. Vicar Manuel Mateo, 22 September 1903: "Deben formarse la composición de lugar de que van a misionar tierra extraña y sin volver la cabeza atrás (a lo pasado) para no convertirse en estatuas de sal; no deben contar con más influencia que la que les proporcionen los sufrimientos, privaciones, etc.; quiere decirse que si algo más hallare, eso tendrá de más", en SÁENZ, 244. *Letter of Fr. Manuel Mateo to Fr. José Abad, Jiménez*, Misamis (5 August 1904): "Today what is really most convenient is to be very calm and to do what good may be possible at the moment; at worse, we are not to take them to heaven," cf. SÁENZ, 289; "Be equipped with patience, since the quandary on buildings—though how urgent must be its resolution—does not lie in the hands of the bishops" (289-290). This is the same advice given by Msgr. Andrés Ferrero, Recollect bishop of Jaro, in May 1902 to Fr. Pedro Pérez and Fr. Melchor Ardanaz who were going to La Castellana and Isabela, cf. SÁENZ, 299, and in 1905 Bishop Ferrero's letter to Fr. Tiburcio Fernández, cf. 309.

The Augustinian Recollects in the 20th Century: Autonomy, Growth and Stability¹

Rene F. Paglinawan OAR

Reorganization and Reaffirmation (1900-1915)

The plight of the Augustinian Recollect friars in the Philippines when the 1898 Revolution broke out is poignantly described by Fr. Ángel Martínez Cuesta in his book *The Order of Augustinian Recollects: Its Charismatic Evolution*²: from various parts of the archipelago, the friars took refuge in their convents in Manila. There they spent weeks, even months, brooding over their unexpected lot, viewing themselves as object of hatred they believed they did not deserve at all. Having identified their pastoral and religious life with the Philippines, many suddenly saw it deprived of meaning. A few, though, equipped with better formation and wider vision, were able to overcome the crisis and open other fields of apostolate. The superiors, for their part, were undecided for several years whether to continue or not with the Philippine ministries.

¹The article is culled from *Recollectio* 21-22 (1998-1999) 115-130.

²The English translation of *La Orden de Agustinos Recoletos. Evolución Carismática* (Madrid 1988; 2nd edition 2020) was published in Manila in 1994.

Things had changed much in the Philippines, and in the opinion of a great majority of friars, this change was for the worse. A new government, the American, implemented a regime of Church-State separation. Coeducation in lay schools was established. A national church had been born, and Protestant missionaries had come from abroad. Governor General Howard Taft (1857-1930), convinced that the permanence of the friars in the Philippines greatly hindered the achievement of the desired harmony, had set their departure from the islands as condition for the solution of the complex question of friar lands. The subsequent sale of the lands to the American government plus the decision of the Holy See to use part of the money to aid the poor Philippine dioceses placed the province in a very precarious financial situation.³

In 1906, Father Tomás Roldán, prior provincial (1905-1908), was able to visit the island of Negros. Back in Spain, he gave a report to the provincial council that decided to confirm the province's commitment to the Philippines. In that same year, a mission composed of fifteen religious arrived in the islands. Four years later, and as if in a gesture of backing the Recollect mission in the Philippines, the Holy See entrusted the first apostolic prefecture in the country, that of Palawan, to the Recollects.

The first three decades of the 20th century were of paramount importance not only for the Province of Saint Nicholas in the Philippines but also for the Recollection as a whole. In 1908, the Augustinian Recollect Congregation held its first general chapter, its first after almost eighty years. In 1912, the Congregation was raised to the rank of religious order. In that year, too, the Province of Saint Nicholas celebrated its first chapter since 1897, resuming thus the system of self-government provided for in the Constitutions. In the preceding two years, the two provinces of Candelaria and Saint Thomas of Villanova had held their respective provincial chapters.⁴

³On Recollect haciendas, cf. José Javier LIZARRAGA, *El Padre Enrique Pérez. Último Vicario y Primer Prior General de la Orden de Agustinos Recoletos (1908-1914)* (Rome 1990) 245-288.

⁴On the 1908 *General Chapter*, cf. LIZARRAGA, 53-95.

The provincial chapters of Manila (1916-1940)

The provincial chapter of 1913 in Marcilla, Navarra, Spain focused its concerns on vocation promotion, formation, stabilizing the province's financial situation, and clustering religious in existing ministries. It expressed the need for special attention on the missions of Palawan and Mindoro (Act 21).⁵ In Act 19, it asked the general council to return the seat of the province to the Philippines from Spain, to where, five years earlier, the council had transferred it in view of the extraordinary situation in the Philippines.⁶ The new provincial explained in his circular of October 1913 that it was in the Philippines where the province had "the largest concentration of missions and the biggest number of religious..."⁷ The following month, the provincial and his council arrived in the Philippines. From 1916 through 1940, the provincial chapters were held in Manila, except those of 1931 and 1934, which took place in Marcilla.⁸ The Philippines continued to be the principal arena of the work of the province and having the provincial seat there facilitated the needed attention to and communication with the religious.

Let us look into the concerns of the provincial chapters with respect to the islands during this period: the 1922 chapter reiterated the need for special attention to Palawan and considered the missionaries there to be working "*apud infideles*" (Act 12)⁹; the provincials were urged to foment the study of English among young religious (1922, Act 15; 1931, Act 3; 1940, Act 10).¹⁰

⁵On the 1913 *Provincial Chapter*, cf. LIZARRAGA, 194-207.

⁶Act 23, in BPSN 2 (1910) 17-18.

⁷Agustín GARRIDO, *Circular* (Marcilla, Navarra, 12 October 1913), in BPSN 4 (1913) 733-737.

⁸From 1946 onward, with the final transfer of the provincial curia to Spain, the provincial chapters were held in Marcilla, Fuenterrabía, Madrid or Monteagudo.

⁹*Actas, determinaciones y nombramientos del capítulo provincial celebrado en el convento de San Nicolás de Manila, en los días 5 al 8 de mayo del año 1922*, in BPSN 13 (1922) 377-384. The term *apud infideles* means with unbelievers.

¹⁰*Actas, determinaciones y nombramientos del capítulo provincial*, in BPSN 13 (1922) 279; 22 (1931) 285; 30 (1940) 118.

even providing that, during the year of enclosure after finishing the theological studies, these be instructed “in the mastery of language” (1940, Act 10). The 1937 provincial chapter expressed the two-fold desire of strengthening the missionary activity in the Philippines as well as seeing to it that the religious do not work in isolation. Assigning two or more religious in each ministry (Act 5) and preferring prefectures or vicariates to isolated parishes (Act 7) were the two measures deemed appropriate to achieve the objectives.¹¹

The 1928 chapter addressed the scandalous violations of the vow of poverty on the part of some religious of the province. The measures it took were: insisting on the strict observance of constitutional provisions on the matter, prohibiting religious from keeping personal accounts, and depositing in the provincial fund, on the part of the prior provincial, all remaining moneys he should find in the houses during his visit.¹² Reports of the scandalous situation had reached the Holy See’s Congregation of Religious, and Prior General Gerardo Larrondo informed Rome after his Philippine visit that the abuses had been remedied.¹³

By order of the Congregation of Religious, the 1931 provincial chapter took place in Spain.¹⁴ Meeting at Marcilla in May of that year, the chapter fathers ordered the provincial and council to reside in Spain (Act 7) and constituted the Philippines—with the China missions—as vicariate (Act 8).¹⁵ The authorities of the Province were handpicked by the Vatican Congregation the following month. In its letter to Prior General Larrondo, the

¹¹*Actas, determinaciones y nombramientos del capítulo provincial*, in BPSN 28 (1938) 213f.

¹²*Actas, determinaciones y nombramientos del capítulo provincial*, in BPSN 19 (1928) 200f.

¹³Gerardo LARRONDO, *Circular... sobre las disposiciones emanadas de la Sagrada Congregación de Religiosos en relación al capítulo provincial que se celebrará el año 1931*, in BPSN 22 (1931) 121-125.

¹⁴Sacred Congregation of Religious, no. 4922/29, issued in Rome on 14 February 1931. The prior general Father Larrondo accompanies his circular with a Spanish translation of the Vatican document, *ibid.*, 123.

¹⁵*Actas, determinaciones y nombramientos del capítulo provincial*, in BPSN 22 (1931) 284.

Congregation expressed the confidence that “the resolutions made by the provincial chapter be useful and effective for the spiritual good and re-establishment of the regular discipline of that province”.¹⁶ But the next provincial chapter decided to return the provincialate to Manila (Act 7), making Spain a vicariate (Act 8).¹⁷

The outbreak of the Second World War, however, interrupted the normal holding of provincial chapters. The assembly that was due for 1943 was held only the following year. In September 1945, the provincial council asked the prior general to decide on the manner of holding the chapter due for 1946. The general council decided to suspend the holding of the gathering, and instructed that those who had voice and vote on capitular posts send their votes by writing to the generalate. The general council canvassed the votes on 11 May 1946.¹⁸ Two days later, the full council met in Marcilla and decided officially to transfer the seat of the province to Spain (Act 1) and to create the provincial vicariate of the Philippines and China (Act 2).¹⁹ Thus, the seat of the Province was definitively transferred to Spain. Appointed by the general council to the post of vicar of the Philippines and China on 25 May 1946 was the former provincial Fr. Leoncio Sierra.²⁰

Religious in the parish ministries

From the mid-18th century through the end of the 19th century, the number of parishes or missions administered by Recollects in the

¹⁶Sacred Congregation of Religious, no. 4922/29, of 22 June 1931. Spanish translation in BPSN 22 (1931) 286-287.

¹⁷*Actas, determinaciones y nombramientos del capítulo provincial*, in BPSN 28 (1938) 213f.

¹⁸Feliciano DE OCIO, *Carta al provincial de San Nicolás sobre el próximo capítulo provincial* (Madrid, 18 diciembre de 1945), in BPSN 36 (1946) 25-27; *Comunicación del resultado del escrutinio para la elección de provincial y definidores de la provincia de San Nicolás para el trienio 1946-1949*, in BPSN 36 (1946) 126-127.

¹⁹*Actas, determinaciones y nombramientos del definitorio pleno de la provincia de Filipinas y China, celebrado en el convento de Marcilla, en los días 13 al 18 de mayo del año 1946*, in BPSN 36 (1946) 128-129.

²⁰Feliciano DE OCIO, *Nombramiento del padre Leoncio Sierra como vicario provincial de Filipinas y China*, in BPSN 36 (1946) 140.

Philippines greatly increased. As a result, the religious were spread in one-man ministries over a big geographical place, and became identified with their parish at the expense of the communitarian character of the Recollection. In the first years of the 20th century, the province still had forty-three ministries located in Zambales (3 ministries), Mindoro (5), Palawan (3), Romblon (6), Negros Oriental (7), Negros Occidental (11), Mindanao (5) and Bohol (3).²¹ According to Martínez Cuesta, in 1900, in the aftermath of the Revolution, only three Recollects were working in parishes, while ninety-one resided in convents; in 1902, that number rose to eighteen, while that of conventuals decreased to 52. In 1906, there were more parish ministers (38) than conventuals (29); this numerically superior ratio of parish ministers would remain until the mid-20th century.²²

The 1924 state of the province²³ lists 93 Recollects residing in the archipelago, of whom 37 are in convents (three convents) and 56 are pastors or missionaries (in 42 ministries belonging to five ecclesiastical jurisdictions). In 1930, we were running 45 ministries in six ecclesiastical jurisdictions: one in Manila Archdiocese, four in Lipa Diocese, 22 in Jaro Diocese (Romblon 4, Negros Oriental 8, and Negros Occidental 12), four in the Apostolic Prefecture of Palawan, and eleven in the Diocese of Cebu (Siquijor 5, Bohol 6). The total number of parish priests and missionaries was fifty-six.²⁴

Two major factors contributed to the decrease of parish ministries under Recollect administration: the increasing number of diocesan clergy and the insistence of provincial chapters that friars gather in bigger communities. In 1908, we left the Guam missions, Zambales in 1914, Mindanao in 1919, Romblon in 1933, Bohol in 1936 and the ministries of Siquijor in 1955 when the Diocese of Dumaguete was created.

²¹LIZARRAGA, footnote 147, 93.

²²Cf. Unpublished article of Angel MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *Los Agustinos Recoletos en Filipinas*.

²³*Estado de la provincia de San Nicolás*, in BPSN 15 (September 1924) 9-18.

²⁴*Estado de la administración espiritual*, in BPSN 21 (1930) 218-227.

In 1965, we see the proportion between conventuals and parish ministers already greater in the former: 54 conventuals or religious devoted to the educational apostolate in five houses, as compared to 41 religious in twenty parishes and one chaplaincy.²⁵ In 1998, as this will be treated in a more detailed manner, the Recollects had under their charge nine parishes in the Philippines: four in the Archdiocese of Manila, two in that of Cebu, and one each in the dioceses of Bacolod and Dumaguete and in the apostolic vicariate of Baguio.

Educational apostolate

The Church recognizes her role in the progress and development of education as part of her mission of “proclaiming the mystery of salvation to all men and of restoring all things in Christ.”²⁶ The missionaries in the Philippines, like those under their charge, have in general been concerned about the education of those entrusted to them. Until the 1860s, when the Philippine government passed the law on general education, it can be said that educating the young Filipino was mainly a Church concern. Recollect pastors were mandated by the *Manual of Administration* of the Order’s houses and ministries in the Philippines to establish schools in each parish, albeit imparting only basic education.²⁷

The province took a big step forward in 1896 when it opened Colegio de San José in Bacolod for students of the secondary level. Duly approved by the authorities of the Order and the Philippine government, and endowed with a rector who was recognized by the rector of the pontifical university of the Dominicans in Manila, the bright prospects of the school were alas curtailed by the outbreak of the Philippine Revolution in Negros Island barely a couple of years later.²⁸

²⁵*Relación del personal de la provincia, enero 1965*, in BPSN 55 (1965) 378-374.

²⁶Cf. VATICAN II, *Gravissimum Educationis*, preface.

²⁷Cf. Manuel CARCELLER, *Método pastoral de los agustinos recoletos en la evangelización de Filipinas*, in *Confer* 7 (1965) 499-519.

²⁸Licinio RUIZ, *Sinopsis*, 317-322.

The educational apostolate was gaining ground among the religious congregations in the Philippines. To this, Ángel Martínez Cuesta adds other factors in explaining the entry of the Recollects in the field: school communities are a way of gathering friars in bigger communities, the work would impel the religious to prepare themselves culturally and academically, and schools were a help in strengthening the finances of the province. In 1940, the fathers gathered in provincial chapter expressed their unanimous desire that, “following the spirit of our sacred Constitutions... schools of primary and higher education can be established as soon as possible in the cities or population centers that offer the best guarantees for the success of this apostolate” (Act 13).²⁹ The need for the religious to learn English was again voiced out (Act 10); religious were urged to obtain academic degrees (Act 14).³⁰

This new direction of the province was the subject of the circular letter that the new prior provincial Pedro García de Galdiano issued immediately after the chapter. Saint Nicholas Province, he wrote, “is directing herself towards other forms of love of neighbor, without prejudice to our missionary activities. In already Christian places [...] she wants to root Christian beliefs through instruction by opening schools where, hand in hand with the knowledge that constitute human science, due attention be given to deepening the Christian foundations of the students. These activities, though somewhat new for our province, are not so in relation to the ideals which, in times past, had been realized by members of our sacred Order. [...] This new direction [...] is very much in harmony with the spirit of our Constitutions.”³¹

Finally, the provincial council decreed on 19 April 1940 the opening of two schools, one in the Venezuelan capital of Caracas, and the other in San Carlos, in the island of Negros. San Carlos was considered an ideal place due to its geographical location between

²⁹*Actas, determinaciones y nombramientos del capítulo provincial*, in BPSN 30 (1940) 118.

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹Pedro GARCÍA DE GALDIANO, *Circular-Saludo*, in BPSN 30 (1940) 122-123.

Cebu and the rest of Negros island. Named Santo Tomas de Villanueva Institute, this first Catholic school for boys of Bacolod Diocese opened its doors to some 200 students in mid-June 1941.³² In this same year, the Recollects opened *Colegio de San Sebastián* in Manila. But once more, a war interrupted Recollect attempts in the field of education.

The schools of San Sebastian and San Carlos reopened their doors in 1946. The following year 1947³³ Colegio de San Jose (University of San Jose since 1984) in Cebu City started its first academic year, and in 1962, the Province bought the University of Negros Occidental in Bacolod City from the Lizares family.³⁴

In recent years, close to 40,000 students attend our schools every year. Since many years ago, the educational apostolate, more than any other ministry, engages the greater number of Recollects in the Philippines.

Second World War

Nine hours after the Japanese attack on the American base of Pearl Harbor in Hawaii in December 1941, the Pacific War reached the Philippines. The Japanese bombed the walled city of Manila. Towards the close of the war, when the American troops returned to the archipelago, the destructive fury of the Japanese increased. The Recollects of San Nicolas convent in Intramuros were forced to seek refuge in San Sebastian convent, outside the Walled City. Then the American bombs fell, leveling the motherhouse of the Philippine Recollects. Fortunately, some religious objects, sacred vessels, the provincial archives and some books, were transferred to safer grounds on time. San Sebastian convent became the place of refuge, not only of the Recollects, but also of some

³²Martín LEGARRA, *Inauguración de Santo Tomás de Villanueva Institute, San Carlos, Neg. Occ. I.F.*, in BPSN 32 (1942) 12-17.

³³Regarding the early years of this school, cf. Martín LEGARRA, *El Colegio de San José-Recoletos. Cebú, Filipinas*, in BPSN 38 (1948) 206-210; 227-30; 276-279; 39 (1949) 14-15; 32-36.

³⁴Inocencio PEÑA, *La primera universidad de la Orden*, in BPSN 52 (1962) 446-451. Federico TERRADILLOS, *Universidad de Negros Occidental-Recoletos, Bacolod, Filipinas*, in BPSN 54 (1964) 67-72.

religious from other congregations. A number of Dominicans, Redemptorists, Franciscans and Benedictines were housed at San Sebastian convent in different periods. One part of the convent and the steel church also served as shelter for lay people. But, like in all wars, scarcity of food and drink and lack of security and order were the lot of religious and lay people alike.³⁵

In February 1945, the Japanese troops carried out a terrible massacre of religious and lay people in Intramuros.³⁶ Fr. Martín Legarra, one of the outstanding Recollects of the Philippines in the 20th century who later became Bishop of Bocas del Toro in Panamá, narrated that when the U.S. troops liberated the prisoners of the Japanese and began to recover the capital, the latter razed Intramuros and killed as many residents as they could find. On the night of 19 February, Japanese soldiers brought to bomb shelters twenty Spanish religious and eighty lay people whom they had earlier rounded up, on the pretext of protecting them from American bombs. Among the group were six Recollect priests—Mariano Alegría, Hernán Biurrún, Pedro Crespo, Ildefonso Vega—and the religious brothers, Ángel Peña and Juan Machicote. Once inside the shelters, the soldiers rained grenades and machine gun fire on the hapless group. Brother Machicote apparently died outside the shelter, death overtaking him as he attempted to escape. One who did survive the massacre was the Augustinian Belarmino de Celis whom Fr. Legarra interviewed while recovering in the hospital. It was also rumored that some 700 Filipinos arrested by the Japanese were also killed by bullets, bayonets or hunger.

Filipino vocations

It is not without irony that precisely when the beast of war was staging its last attack, a happy birth took place in the womb of the Philippine Recollection. In 1945, the first Filipino Recollect was ordained. The topic on Filipino vocations is complex and deserves

³⁵Manuel CARCELLER, *Notas para la historia. De Filipinas*, in BPSN 36 (1946) 33-42.

³⁶Martín LEGARRA, *Un superviviente de la catástrofe de Intramuros habla*, in BPSN 35 (1945) 114-115; Martín LEGARRA, *Los mártires de Intramuros*, in BPSN 39 (1949) 205-207; 228-230.

a separate study; it is not my intention to discuss it here. The lack of interest for native vocations, spreading until well into the 20th century, notes Angel Martínez Cuesta, was not uncommon among other religious congregations. Such attitude, while comprehensible centuries before, in part, as a carry-over of the failed Mexican experiment and in part due to the cultural backwardness of the Filipinos, had lost its historical basis with the passage of time, and if the Recollects continued to hold on to it, it was in no small measure motivated by racial prejudice.³⁷

The first official step indicating the change from an attitude of rejection of Filipino vocations to that of acceptance can be seen in the provincial chapter of 1934.³⁸ In Act 10, the chapter commands the provincial to see to the opening of formation houses as soon as possible in England, Venezuela and the Philippines. In 1942, the first Filipino candidate, Salvador Calsado, entered the novitiate and in January 1945 he was ordained as priest.³⁹ The next year we find him working with two other religious in their San Carlos school in Negros, which had reopened after the war. In this same house, the first seminary for Filipino candidates to the Augustinian Recollect religious life would be canonically erected in 1948.⁴⁰

In 1949, the novitiate was opened in Manila.⁴¹ Two years later, several Filipinos donned the Recollect habit, but ordinations would still take some time in coming; after Fr. Calsado, the next three Filipino religious would be ordained only in 1959. Thereafter, ordinations of Filipino Recollects would take place regularly.

In June 1965, the “Casiciaco” house in Baguio was converted into a philosophy seminary.⁴² Constructed in 1953, it

³⁷Cf. Unpublished article of Angel MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *Los Agustinos Recoletos en Filipinas*.

³⁸*Actas, determinaciones y nombramientos del capítulo provincial*, in BPSN 25 (1934) 162-169.

³⁹Angel MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *Los Agustinos Recoletos en Filipinas*.

⁴⁰Feliciano DE OCIO, *Erección de la casa de San Carlos*, in BPSN 38 (1948) 132-133.

⁴¹Feliciano DE OCIO, *Erección del noviciado de San Sebastián de Manila*, in BPSN 39 (1949) 145-146.

⁴²A rescript of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide of 4 June 1965 canonically erected it as a house of philosophical studies.

was originally designed as place for rest and spiritual retreat of the Philippine Recollects, although, according to the first annual report of the seminary “when it was built, it was also envisioned to serve one day as a house of studies for Filipino religious as well as non-Filipino ones who may come to the archipelago to finish their theological studies.”⁴³

Thirty-two aspirants started the first school year in 1965. Until then our philosophy seminarians studied in diocesan seminaries or in philosophates of other religious congregations. In 1970,⁴⁴ Casiciaco Recoletos also served as novitiate until 1985 when the novitiate was transferred to Quezon City. In recent years, the number of philosophy seminarians averaged from 70 to 80.

At present, the complete cycle of Recollect formation is being imparted in the Philippines in well-equipped seminaries, most of them new: the high school seminary in San Carlos (new building inaugurated in 1996), philosophy in Baguio (a new wing was built in 1990), novitiate in Antipolo (inaugurated in 1991), and theology in Mira-Nila (established in 1985).

The Philippine Vicariate on the Eve of Provincehood

We have presented some of the main aspects of the Recollect presence in the Philippines in the 20th century. Let us now consider the state of the Philippine Vicariate on the eve of its creation as the new Province of Saint Ezekiel Moreno.⁴⁵

⁴³Antonio MARTÍNEZ, *Seminario de Baguio*, in BPSN 56 (1966) 206-211; the quotation is on page 207.

⁴⁴Javier PIPAÓN, *Comunicación de la erección de noviciado en la casa de Baguio*, in BPSN 60 (1970) 312-313.

⁴⁵The new province was erected by the General Chapter on 28 November 1998 (Decree of Erection is Act 19 of the Chapter). The data that we present here are taken from Fr. Miguel MIRÓ, *Informe del prior provincial de San Nicolás sobre el proyecto de creación de la nueva provincia de la Orden de Agustinos Recoletos en Filipinas*, Madrid, July 1998.

Personnel data and salient developments⁴⁶

According to data of 1 March 1998, the Vicariate of the Philippines and China had one hundred forty religious, of whom one hundred twenty-two were Filipinos.⁴⁷ Among the most salient developments in the life of the Vicariate in the last fifteen years (1983-1998) are:

- The establishment of the complete cycle of seminary formation, taking place in recently-constructed seminary edifices and carried out by formation teams with a good level of preparation (15 had obtained licentiates in Roman pontifical universities). A good number of vocations undergo Recollect formation.
- A number of edifices have been constructed to improve the service in our schools: Bacolod library (1996) and oratory (inaugurated in September 1998), two new buildings in Cavite City (1995 and 1996), Law building in Manila (1998). The Talavera House of Prayer in Cebu was inaugurated in May 1998. As regards parishes, the Order acquired Our Lady of Consolation parish in Laray, Talisay City, Cebu, in 1989 and constructed there a new church and convent.
- The Augustinian Recollect family became complete with the foundation in 1992 of the first community of Augustinian Recollect contemplative nuns; the Congregation of Augustinian Recollect Sisters is flourishing (34 houses and some 300 religious),⁴⁸ and the Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity is present in all the thirteen Recollect communities (total number of professed lay members: 540; novices: 50).

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 11. The data in this section of the report were provided by then Vicar of the Philippines, Fr. Victor Lluch. His report, though, mentioned six religious brothers, including a Chinese; I have the names of five only.

⁴⁷Not included are the religious in irregular or special situation. Even so the Filipinos are the second largest national group in the Order.

⁴⁸Cf. Ángel MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *La Congregación de Hermanas Agustino-Recoletas de Filipinas*, in Tarsicius VAN BAVEL, *Agustín* (Turín 1997) VII.

- Special gatherings like Renewal Courses (1984, 1990, 1996), Month of Preparation for the Solemn Profession (yearly since 1988), and Vicariate Congresses with participation by superiors, parish priests, school administrators and chaplains, formators, missionaries, etc.

The task *ad intra*: Areas to strengthen and consolidate⁴⁹

The provincial Miguel Miró visited the houses of the Philippines in January and February 1998, the last provincial of Saint Nicholas to visit the Philippine Vicariate before it became a province. From the responses to the questionnaire he distributed, one could see the aspirations and insights of the religious of the Vicariate. Fomenting and improving community life was high on the list. Communitarian values which were desired most were understanding and concern for the brother, sensitivity to his needs, responsibility of each one for the other, mutual confidence and reciprocal acceptance. Among the activities and instruments that needed enhancing were fraternal correction, frequent dialogue, and avoidance of social commitments that draw the religious away from his community.

The respondents also expressed the aspiration for greater cultivation of the prayer life, both individual and communitarian. The religious sees the need for growth in one's own vocation and for greater interest in and availing of the means for ongoing formation. There is awareness on the part of the religious of the Vicariate that the practice of the vow of poverty has to be expressed more along the line of greater simplicity and austerity of life, and more effective solidarity with the millions of poor Filipino families. Earlier, in October 1995, a special gathering of superiors and delegates from the communities drew up a statement on poverty in Recollect communities. Even as it praises the positive expressions of poverty, the statement roundly denounces negative practices such as the attachment to positions and comfortable living, the easy use of money, etc. During his 1998 visit, Fr. Miró

⁴⁹Miguel MIRÓ, *Informe 1998*, 65-68.

likewise called for greater sensitivity and solidarity on the part of the religious with the plight of the many impoverished families in the Philippines.

The other aspects that were seen as needing improvement were: capacitating the religious for the apostolate and the mission, fomenting the missionary spirit, implementing a more dynamic and innovative program of ongoing formation, and seeing to a greater stability in the formation teams. The religious asked that the superiors function as real shepherds and that each community's *ordo domesticus* be a genuine expression of Augustinian Recollect lifestyle, charism and vision. Other respondents pointed to the need for greater attention to young religious, for deeper understanding and concern for religious in difficult situations as well as more efficacious solutions in their regard.

The Vicariate is thankful to God for the promising number of candidates in the seminaries; at the same time, there is consciousness that more effort should be expended so that a greater number of Recollect vocations will rise from our own ministries. Concern is aired over the departure of a number of young priests and religious; the factors are multiple, but a call is not lost for the formators to pay more attention to the personal accompaniment of the formand and for the superiors to show utmost care in the choice of the first assignment of the newly ordained.

The apostolate: realities and challenges *ad extra*⁵⁰

On the eve of becoming a province, the Philippine Vicariate had these ministries: seven institutes of learning, nine parishes in the Philippines and seven parishes in Taiwan.

Two of the seven educational center are universities, two others offer college courses, and the remaining three impart high school education. Total number of students of school year 1997-1998: 39, 393.

In a survey conducted in preparation for the First Vicariate Congress in 1994, the faculty, employees and students of our

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 30-43.

educational centers were asked to opine on how the Recollects exercise their roles as administrators, religious and educators.⁵¹ Without allowing statistics to tyrannize us, we can say that the respondents considered the religious assigned in our schools as good administrators who are good at defining the objectives and achieving them, at planning, making decisions and resolving conflicts, at bringing out the best in people and fomenting team spirit.

As to the living of the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and of the OAR spirituality and charism, the respondents considered our religious as “credible.”

As regard their role as educators, the religious were seen as academically prepared. Many respondents see them as catalysts and as keen promoters of the OAR identity. The presence of the religious in the classroom, though, has diminished over the years; in one school, student-respondents commented that the religious were seldom seen. A big part of the apostolate with the students is carried out by the campus ministry office. Among the programmed activities are retreats, recollections, prayer groups, Bible study, catechesis and outreach activities.⁵²

Modest financial resources are no hindrance for students to study in our educational centers. Many students from poor families work their way to college as student assistants, assistant secretaries, staff members, etc., in the different offices of the schools. The school in Valencia gets subsidy from the Vicariate; otherwise, there is no way that this lone Catholic school in the town could barely continue operating. The Catholic social doctrine, according to the recommendation of the Second Vicariate Congress (1997), has to be taught in our schools and universities and integrated in the campus ministry program.

As to the parishes, of the nine that the Vicariate administered in 1998, five are OAR property and two are given “*in perpetuum*” [forever, in perpetuity]. The ninth parish—that of Saint Vincent in Baguio—was temporarily given to our administration the previous year (and eventually reclaimed by the local ordinary at the end

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 39-40.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 36-37.

of the year 2000). Total number of parishioners (excluding those of Baguio): over 142,000. As in the Philippine parishes, there are such organizations as the Legion of Mary, *Adoración Nocturna*, Eucharistic ministers, Charismatic movement, Family Apostolate, Youth groups, Altar boys.⁵³ The distinctively Recollect mark is the presence of the Secular Fraternity which, as mentioned earlier, is established in practically all communities, parish, school or seminary.

The economic classification of the residents of our parishes is described thus: low-income group in four parishes, middle to lower middle class in two parishes, and higher middle class in one, but this last is not without a considerable squatter colony. In order to palliate the economic straits of many of their parishioners, Recollect pastors organize and implement self-employment or livelihood courses (sewing, cooking, practical electricity), education programs (scholarship for poor students), health programs (free medical-dental service every week), and give out emergency assistance (alms and support for the poor families, care for street children).

The local ordinaries of the dioceses where the Recollect parishes are located have a good opinion of our religious, the survey revealed. In Bacolod, the local bishop admitted that there was a negative attitude towards the Recollects in the past because of their meager social commitment; at present, though, he lauds the balance that the friars have achieved of their communitarian life and their social involvement. The *Handumanan* (Visayan Ilonggo word for “legacy”) project, wherein integral program of development is being implemented for and by erstwhile-marginalized persons, has been cited as a model project even on the national level.

For his part, an auxiliary bishop of Cebu sees it praiseworthy that it is the entire Recollect community that functions as parish pastor, each one showing concern for the parish. In the opinion of the former vicar for religious in the Archdiocese of Manila, Recollects showed greater availability in the administration of the sacraments, especially Penance and the Eucharist.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 30-32.

The Recollect parish apostolate, in the view of the participants of the Second Vicariate Congress (April 1997), should focus on fomenting the family. The need is seen for a religious to be specifically prepared for this fundamental apostolate, and for collaboration to be strengthened between our parishes and our educational centers.⁵⁴

Lay empowerment is among the most important tasks set by the Philippine Church for herself during the 1991 Second Plenary Council. Recollect religious consider that this too must be a priority concern among us. Another concern of our religious is that there be continuity of pastoral programs from one parish priest to another. To help achieve this end the secretariat of pastoral ministry and the parish pastors are exhorted to take into account, in preparing the parish pastoral programs, the two aspects of the Recollect identity and the pastoral guidelines of the local church.

The call of the mission

Our mission history in the Philippines ended with the turnover of Palawan to the diocesan clergy in 1987.⁵⁵ But the history of missionary expansion from the Philippines was just beginning. Let us remember that our predecessors went from the Philippines to Japan as missionaries in the 17th century, and there they wrote glorious pages of evangelization work. From the Philippines, too, Recollect missionaries went to Guam, Rota and Saipan at the close of the 18th century, to China in the 1920s and to Taiwan in the 1960s. All the members of the new Saint Ezekiel Province believe that the province must engage in missionary activity, and the majority point to a mission territory in Asia.⁵⁶ On the eve of becoming a

⁵⁴*Recommendations of the Second Vicariate Congress*, 10-13 April 1997, Baguio City: Recommendation nos. 18-21.

⁵⁵In the wake of a memorandum of agreement signed by Bishop Pedro Arigo and Prior Provincial Lauro V. Larlar, the Augustinian Recollects after a hiatus of eighteen years returned in 2005 to the future Parish of our Lady of Mount Carmel in Inagawan, Puerto Princesa City, of the Apostolic Vicariate of Puerto Princesa. They further accepted Saint Monica Parish in 2008 in Casian Island, under the jurisdiction of the Apostolic Vicariate of Taytay.

⁵⁶Cf. Miguel MIRÓ, *Informe 1998*, 68-69.

province, the Philippine Vicariate had ten Filipino missionaries abroad, six of them in neighboring Taiwan.

The Filipino Cardinal José Sánchez said during the 1998 Asian Synod: “After almost 2,000 years of evangelizing activity, Asia where our Divine Savior was born, suffered, died and rose from the dead, where the Blessed Virgin, the *Regina* [Queen] and *Apostola Apostolorum* [Apostle of the Apostles] guided and inspired the first Apostles who through their evangelization activities generated flourishing churches. In this part of the world that constitutes one-third of the world land area and two-thirds of the world population, only 2.9% of the people belong to the one fold which the Divine Savior had designed to be the one People of God united in faith and communion.”

We, Filipinos, are thankful to God for the Faith brought to us by the Spaniards. We are honored to be the only Christian country of Asia. But it is an honor that we ought not to keep forever, and not precisely by ceasing to be believers, but by continuing the evangelization work of our predecessors so that other Asian peoples, alongside with us, will also know the Good News of our Savior Jesus Christ.

A Short History of the Church in Caraga Antigua¹

Ángel Martínez Cuesta OAR

Proem

Through his papal bull *Quo plenius*, Pope Paul VI erected on 16 June 1978 the Diocese of Tandag, assigning to it the territory of Surigao del Sur province, which had belonged since 1939 to the Diocese of Surigao and, previously, to those of Cebu (1595-1910), Zamboanga (1910-1933) and Cagayan de Oro (1933-1939). The 25th anniversary of the diocese in 2003 was a good occasion to retrace a short synthesis of its history. Since Tandag was always closely related with the history of the dioceses of Butuan, Surigao and Mati, the origin and development of Christianity in that territory cannot be understood if such link is done away with. All that made me put the historical account within a framework that includes the whole region known until 1848 as Caraga, i.e., the land area occupied by the provinces of Davao Oriental, Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Agusan del Norte and Agusan del Sur.

The beginnings, 1622-1700

In 1622, eight Augustinian Recollect missionaries arrived at Tandag. A year before, on 1 March 1621, the bishop of Cebu had

¹Written for the 25th Anniversary of the Diocese of Tandag in 2003.

entrusted to the Recollects the evangelization of “the *encomiendas* and districts of Butuan, Sampongan and Caraga” with all the towns, rivers and mountains, “the small islands of Siargao up to Tandag, where a Spanish garrison was constructed, as well as the encomienda of Bislig and Cateel” (*Bullarium OAR* 1, 467-68). Two Recollects remained in Tandag where a military detachment was stationed. For a century and a half, Tandag would be the center of the mission and seat of its superior. The rest of the missionaries spread out and headed north. A small group, composed probably of three religious, went to Butuan and from there they proceeded towards Cagayan and Linao which was situated upstream of Agusan River. Another small group traveled to the northern shores of Surigao where they gave rise to the *doctrinas* of Gigaquit, Bacuag and Cantilan as well as to those of the adjoining island of Siargao. Still a much smaller group of missionaries later trekked to the southern region of Caraga Bay.

The work of the missionary was not easy then. The region was not yet pacified, and its inhabitants viewed all the Spaniards with suspicion. With the exception of the Butuan natives, with whom several Jesuits from Bohol and Cebu had worked sporadically from 1596 to 1614, it can be said that the natives knew no other Spaniards but the soldiers, who in 1609 had constructed an intimidating fort at Tandag, as well as the *encomenderos* and tribute-collectors. It was too hard for them to differentiate the Church and missionaries from the conquest and *encomenderos*. The ministers had to face the obstacles of the psychological and religious sphere: the polygamous practices of village chiefs, the ownership of slaves and inordinate attachment to religious rituals and traditions. The violent death of the first two missionaries tragically gives us an idea of the gravity of these obstacles. In 1623, Father Juan de la Madre de Dios ended his earthly life at the hands of Datu Suba, upstream in Tago River. The datu was irritated by the Recollect minister’s insistence on the deliverance of a woman from slavery. He pierced the missionary’s body with a lance. In the following year Brother Juan de San Nicolás perished in a sinking incident caused by the natives of Gigaquit.

Even so, evangelization rapidly progressed until July 1631 when it was brusquely disrupted by the widespread rebellion of the *Caragas*. In a few days' time the rebels sacked the pueblos, razed *kumbentos* to the ground, desecrated sacred vessels, slew four missionaries—Jacinto de Jesús María in Cateel, Juan de Santo Tomás and Alonso de San José in Tandag, and Pedro de San Antonio in Surigao—and captured two, namely, Lorenzo de San Facundo and Francisco de San Fulgencio. These missionaries saved their lives through the unexpected protection of Mangabo, one of the rebel leaders. Traditional historiography deemed the four religious as martyrs. But the motives that aroused the rebels' fury and forced them to take up arms were not perhaps totally religious in nature. Lying side by side with the corpses of the religious were several dead soldiers and encomenderos. During the exaction of the tribute, small boats owned by the Recollects and loaded with rice were found.

Their evangelization method was similar to what was adopted in other regions of the archipelago. At the outset, with the assistance of the Tandag fort, they worked as roving missionaries, traversing shores, rivers and estuaries, in search of natives scattered in the countryside and fields. They later established some *pueblos* where they erected in each a simple church made of bamboo, wood and nipa, and a parochial house or *kumbento*. They further encouraged a few more natives who had agreed to abandon their fields to build houses. Ordinarily, only from this moment did the minister administer the sacrament of baptism.

In the 17th century, the missionaries who worked diligently in the whole Caraga region were rarely more than ten. In 1655, the ten missionaries were distributed among five residences from where they exercised spiritual supervision over some 10,000 Christians, scattered in about thirty communities occupying several thousand square kilometers. The ministers of Tandag administered likewise the garrison or fort of the place and the towns of Marihatag, Lianga, Tago and Cantilan which was then created out of two villages named Calagdan and Bayoyo or Palasao. The Recollects of Butuan served the communities of Jabonga, Amongan, Arwayan, Linao, Hibong

and Odyongang. The missionaries of Cagayan reached as far as Iponan, Tagoloan, Compot and Camiguin Island. The ministers of Siargao attended to the needs of the villages in the islands of Dinagat and Siargao—Sapao [renamed Santa Monica], Cabuntog [present-day Luna] and Cacub or Caolo [Del Carmen today]—, Bacuag, Gigaquit, Bolor and Surigao, while those of Bislig administered Hinatuan, Cateel, Baganga and Caraga. All of them had under their jurisdiction groups—more or less numerous—of unbelievers and undocumented people. In 1671, a missionary fixed his residence in Cateel in order to support the evangelization of the Mandayas in the area in collaboration with the doctrineros of Bislig. Within a few days, they successfully reduced over a thousand. With the Christians of the coastal area, the Mandayas shared a common hatred towards the Moro who was starting to seriously vex their daily lives. However, the Moro systematic raids against Caraga did not begin until the 18th century.

A decade of terror

During the 18th century, Christian life of the region went on around four ministries carried over from the preceding century. But their geographic situation was not always the same and in some periods, more or less lengthy, it counted on other centers of evangelization. In 1753, the minister of Siargao moved his residence to Surigao which after years of hesitation was promoted as cabecera of the doctrina and administrative capital of the province. In 1755, Tubay, Jabonga and Mainit were separated from Butuan in order to form a new doctrina which survived only until 1767 or 1768. Still more ephemeral were those of Calagdan and Gigaquit, erected in 1746 and suppressed three years after. The doctrina of Siargao, re-established in 1748, was again closed in 1761. In 1768, five or six religious worked in the area. These missionaries attended to about 10,000 souls who lived in four traditional doctrinas.

The plight of these ministries was getting worse year after year. After the re-opening of the garrison of Zamboanga in 1719, the Moros renewed their raids against the Christian communities of the Visayas. Year after year, the natives of Jolo, the Maguindanaos, the

Maranaos, and the Tirones put out to sea and raided the unprotected Christian pueblos, sowing desolation and death. Nonetheless, except for a certain year (1722) when they laid siege against the fort of Cateel, at the outset the eastern coast of Mindanao was relatively free from raids. But in 1749 the missionaries already grieved over the destruction of a good number of *visitas* of Butuan and Siargao. The kumbentos, churches and houses of Tubay, Sapao and Cabuntog “were reduced to ashes, and the [Moros] captured more than 3,000 people from the entire province of Caraga.” The 1750s were even more tragic. In 1755, the Moros razed to the ground the pueblo of Caraga where they desecrated the Blessed Sacrament and torched the districts of Siargao and Butuan together with their ten *visitas*. Tandag and Bislig were kept incommunicado. The most difficult moment was the surrender of the Tandag garrison in October 1754, a victim more of famine and internal disputes than of a Moro raid. In the ensuing years, the fort was successfully rebuilt, but it never regained the strength it enjoyed in earlier decades. Tandag entered the phase of decadence that was hastened by the British Invasion of Manila in 1762 and by new Moro attacks against the fort in 1761 and 1767. In 1791, the Recollects opted to move the cabecera of the doctrina to Cantilan.

In 1768, Caraga region was on the verge of collapse. With impunity, the Moros traversed its shores and pillaged its pueblos, too small and defenseless to pose an effective resistance. The Manila government did not have the situation under control. The sole resistance stemmed from the missionaries. They erected bulwarks, organized volunteer groups and devoted a good part of their stipends to the acquisition of the most indispensable weapons. In 1790, for example, Prior Provincial Father Joaquín Encabo, future bishop of Cebu, distributed a number of cannons and falconets in the towns of the Siargao Island, Bislig and Gingoog. Their resistance, however, did not turn out to be effective.

These raids were fatal to several religious. Antonio del Santo Cristo de Burgos (Bislig, 1754), Antonio del Santo Cristo del Desamparo (Tandag, 1755), Esteban de San José (Bislig, 1766) and José de Santa Teresa (Surigao, 1770) lost their lives in the

Moro raids. José Andrés de la Santísima Trinidad (Gigaquit, 1753), Rodrigo de los Dolores (Surigao, 1755), José de San Joaquín in Butuan (1769) fell into the hands of the Moros. Occasioned by “a great number of fatigues, jolts and terror, many others became insane.” The fate of the Christian faithful was even more tragic. Many were able to flee to Leyte. Other sought refuge in the mountain fastness. However, almost all of them returned to find their harvests and houses gone. A good number of the natives lost their health, freedom and even their lives. It was the lot in life of a majority of the captives to toil in the ricefields of their masters. Others ended up in Borneo and Java where they were sold to the Dutch or exchanged for weapons and ammunitions. The women usually went to the seraglios in Jolo and Mindanao. The towns of Caraga and Baganga disappeared from the face of the earth and others were converted into wretched villages of thirty, forty or fifty families, without amenities of any kind. On 7 July 1793, the Recollect provincial bewailed in a letter to the Recollect superior general the fact “that the Moros had demolished all the houses of Iligan and Caraga provinces without any exception, and we were found living in the greatest need of protection.”

The dispersion of the population multiplied the tasks of the Recollect missionaries and decimated their fruits. On the one hand, the ministers were constrained to wander in endless movement, and on the other, it was the best stimulus for the natives to return to their ancient pagan way of life and for the growth of syncretism. Far from the minister and the strict socio-religious set-up of the community, and in constant contact with the unbelievers and at times with the Moros, the Christian believers’ religious life was exposed to serious snares of the *remontados*. They formed a hybrid mixture of Christian ideas and pagan practices. A number of them were born, lived and died without the aid of the religion. The missionaries exerted their best to stop these evils. Once in a while they went deeper into the fields and climbed mountains. Their visits, however, were too sporadic and they could not reach out to all the fugitives. The ministers administered baptism, solemnized marriages, and encouraged them to live Christian life. Moreover,

they had very little time for a more profound and systematic catechetical instruction. The Christian life of a group customarily remained at the mercy of the excellent preparation and zeal of a pious person who fortunately was not lacking.

Added to these hardships was the lack of ministers. In mid-1784 Caraga had solely two religious who were laden with maladies. “Valero de San Agustín, fifty-three years old and twenty-six in parochial administration, who was attacked with some sudden illness and had received the Extreme Unction,” who served Tandag with its four visitas, namely, Calagdan, Bayuyo, Cantulinan and Lianga. José de Santa Teresa, “forty-one years old and thirteen in parish administration, always attacked by sudden ailment and continuously vomiting blood,” administered Cateel and its visitas of Hinatuan and Baganga. Surigao and Butuan, with three and six visitas, respectively, had no priests. Between 1786 and 1797 the situation improved. And in subsequent years Father José de Santa Orosia (17?-1807), perhaps the greatest Recollect missionary of the 18th century, founded the mission territory of San Juan in Cape Bakulín and restored Caraga and Baganga (1802) with 2,000 Mandayas in adjoining areas.

Doctrinas and Population of Caraga, 1655-1776

Years	Doctrinas/Visitas		Population
	1655	1750	1776
Tandag	700	1,030	
Cantilan	700	2,200	
Tago	900	600	
Marihatag		140	
Lianga		350	
Total population	2,300	4,320	2,000
Siargao	2,000		
Sapao		635	
Cabuntog		850	
Cacub	600		
Bacuag			

Years	1655	1750	1776
Gigaquit	800	700	
Bolor			
Surigao		500	
Pahuntungan	800		
Dinagat	600		
Total population	2,800	4,685	3,495
Butuan	1,500	650	
Jabonga		600	
Amongan			
Arwayan			
Linao	1,600	280	
Hibong		240	
Odyongang			
Mainit		610	
Talacogon		250	
Total population	3,100	2,630	3, 285
Bislig		250	
Hinatuan		450	
Cateel		1,000	
Baganga		450	
Total population	2,150	1,900	2,100
Total	10,200	14,530	10,880

Recovery and progress

The 19th century was more complex and prosperous. Caraga overcame the most anxiety-filled period of its history. It came out of isolation and undertook a phase of a clear demographic, social and religious development. But the 19th century was not a homogeneous unity. Rather, three well-differentiated phases can be singled out in them. The first phase comprised the first thirty-three years of the century—from 1800 to 1833—and was characterized by the Recollects' gradual withdrawal which was completed in December 1815 when the last two Recollects of the period died in Cantilan

and Butuan. With their demise, the Recollects disappeared from the area and were replaced by the secular clergy from the Diocese of Cebu. The first was a Spanish mestizo named Agustín D. Then came Yamson (Surigao), Juan Ignacio Galán (Tandag), Santos de Santa Juliana (Bislig). Others retraced their footsteps.

The second phase lasted thirty years from 1833 to 1861, and it was more fruitful. It commenced in 1832 with the return of the Recollect missionaries, who urged by the bishop of Cebu and the colonial government, began to take charge of the administration of the parishes once more. In 1834, there were Recollects in Butuan, Surigao, Cantilan and Bislig, and in 1837 they returned to Tandag. For some years they counted on the cooperation of some diocesan priests. Among them were—we should remember—Juan Felipe, Mariano Nepomuceno and Gregorio Enríquez, assistant parish priests of Butuan, Surigao and Bislig, respectively, in 1840. In 1850, Father Nepomuceno was still working in Surigao.

During the first years the missionaries limited themselves to recovering what was lost. They strove to attract the remontados in the early years, repair the churches and kumbentos, replace the ornaments, and reorganize the lay associations and confraternities. Later they started to widen their field of activity. The arrival of new personnel reinforcements year after year allowed the Order to pay greater attention to the needs of the region. And if this attention was not great enough, it was due to the missionaries' obligations with the new parishes which stemmed from population growth and advancement and from the agricultural colonization in Zambales, Bohol, Mindoro and, since 1848, in Negros as well. The first fruit of this favorable climate was the creation of the parish of Davao (1848), followed by those of Cacub (Carmen) and Gigaquit in 1850, Mainit and Talacogon-Bunawan in 1851, Dinagat in 1855 and Cabuntog in 1861. The reduced population of the old region of Caraga from the territories which in 1849 were separated to form what is today the province of Davao Oriental, in the south, and the provinces of Agusan del Norte and Agusan del Sur, in the north and west, grew remarkably, swelling from 29,090 souls in 1838 to 37,611 in 1850 and to 53,767 in 1864.

Even so, such effort turned out to be inadequate to meet the growing needs of the region. The bishop of Cebu bemoaned the spiritual abandonment of the Manobos and the Mandayas in the interior of the island. The government became year after year more aware of the need to reinforce its presence in the island. In November 1857, Romualdo Jimeno, bishop of Cebu, wrote a letter to Madrid requesting that “naturally” the Jesuits take charge of the “spiritual direction, civilization and catechization of the part of the Island of Mindanao that comprised the districts of Bislig, Davao, Pollok, the province of Zamboanga, Basilan Island and others located east and south of that island.” Surigao and Misamis could continue in the hands of the Recollects. But in Madrid, because of still unearthed reasons, they completely left the Recollects out. A royal order of 30 July 1860 the government created the politico-military government of Mindanao and entrusted to the Jesuits “the spiritual part of island, replacing with individuals of [the Society] the existing curacies when personnel were available and in a manner deemed convenient.”

With such royal order the third phase of the century began. It was characterized by a gradual substitution of the Recollects by the Jesuits, by the establishment of new centers of evangelization and by the reduction of large groups of unbelievers in the interior regions and along the eastern shores of old Caraga.

The replacements commenced in 1868 with the cession of the parish of Davao to the Jesuits. In its wake followed the cession of Surigao (1871), Gigaquit (1873), Bislig (1873), Butuan (1875), Talacogon-Bunawan (1875), Mainit (1875), Dinagat (1877), Cantilan (1879), Cacub (1882), Cabuntog (1883), Tandag (1884) and Lianga (1884).

The Recollects and Jesuits had opposing views. The former felt unjustly dispossessed of some missions they loved as the “apple of their eyes,” while the latter came with new ideas, new methods and the unconditional government support reflected in the financial generosity never been witnessed in the archipelago. The Jesuits traversed the territory, resettling the inhabitants in numerous communities and giving life to new missions: Sigaboy

(1870), Placer-Taganaan (1873), Caraga (1876)—where for two years (1876-78) the historian Pablo Pastells worked—, Baganga, Jativa, Veruela (1893), Esperanza (1893), Prosperidad (1895), Mati (1897), Manay (1897).

At the onset of 1899, forty-nine Jesuits worked in the old territory of Caraga, divided into three provinces then. They were distributed among the residences of Mati (11), Surigao (13) and Butuan (15). The Mati residence kept eight religious working in Caraga, Baganga and Manay. The residence of Surigao likewise had Jesuits who served Tandag (3), Bislig (3) and Lianga (2), while that of Butuan had twelve working in Esperanza, Prosperidad, Talacogon, Veruela, Jativa and Mainit. In 1896, the Jesuits handed over to a group of Benedictines who had just arrived from Spain, the parishes of Taganaan-Placer, Gigaquit, Cabuntog and Numancia. In the following year Dinagat and Cantilan were ceded as well. Despite the adverse juridical circumstances which coerced the Recollects to withdraw when there were available Jesuits, the missionaries continued attending to their parishes and readily administered the parishes of Numancia and Cabuntog-Dapa, which had been erected years before but still had no priests, and even breathed life into the curacy of Lianga (1879).

The Revolution, 1898-1901

The Revolution reached the region of Caraga late and without the anticlerical burden that accompanied it in Luzon. Neither Rizal nor the Katipunan nor other advocates of independence found any echo in Caraga. Up to the beginning of January 1899 the progress of religious life continued with relative normalcy. In February 1897, the parish priest of Tandag was still talking of “Augustan peace” that reigned in the pueblo. Solely the escape of three hundred convicted criminals from the jail in Marawi seemed to disturb the tranquility of the towns. Even so, there were “revolutionaries” in their areas, and the religious—who were always in contact with their superiors in Manila—followed with apprehension the events that were changing the political map of the archipelago, even as they were aware that it would not take long for these events

to affect their lives. In October 1898, a group of religious met in Butuan to thresh out opportune measures to be taken. On 22 December, the Spanish commander of Butuan handed over the reins of government to the *gobernadorcillo* of the town, and the Spaniards two days after abandoned the provincial cabecera. But the missionaries continued to move around freely. The transfer of the reins of government was done in a peaceful atmosphere with nary a trace of anticlerical violence. In Butuan, the Spanish flag was lowered and the papal flag was raised.

The situation worsened with the arrival in Surigao of the brothers Simon and Wenceslao Gonzalez (12 January 1899) with orders from Aguinaldo to lead the revolution in the province and arrest the missionaries. As soon as they took possession of the government, the González brothers spread out to the other towns. At once they imposed their law, arrested the missionaries and seized church properties. Almost forty Recollect ministers were under house arrest at the kumbentos of Butuan (11) and Surigao (27) where, moreover, they continued to enjoy some kind of freedom. The missionaries in Tandag and those in the southern pueblos of the province under the control of Prudencio García remained scot-free in their curacies. In the wake of the rebellion of Prudencio García on 25 March 1899 and the subsequent killing of the González brothers at the beach of Cortes, all the ministers regained their freedom.

The leaders granted the religious missionaries full freedom of movement. But the political instability, unrelentingly threatened by Aguinaldo's followers, and the social upheaval forced the superiors to call them back to Manila. The missionaries in Surigao left on 18 April 1899 and a week after those in Butuan followed suit. Father Fernando Diego (Butuan) and Father Bernardino Llobera (Surigao) were the only ministers who stayed behind in their respective areas. With the help of some secular priests, the two Recollects continued attending to the parishioners amid countless limitations. In May 1900, Father Llobera took the place of Father Diego in Butuan, who traveled to Manila at once. By that time, the situation was getting crystal-clear. In March 1900,

the Americans had entered Surigao and the pueblos clamored for the missionaries' return. On 1 October 1899, the principales of Caraga signed one such petition; they were followed by those of Mati (1 November 1899), Baganga (20 November 1899), Surigao (28 March 1900), Butuan (28 March 1900) and Hinatuan (6 May 1900). The principales of Cortes, Tandag, Tago, Tigao and La Paz petitioned the ministers' return on 12 August 1900.

In January 1900, the first group of Augustinian Recollect priests returned to Mindanao to survey the situation of the land. Dapitan and Zamboanga (28 March 1900) were their first destination. In July, they arrived at Caraga and Cateel, and in October they reached Davao, from where they traveled to the whole province of Davao Oriental and the coastal areas of Surigao del Sur. They found everything in shambles: "Except for Sigaboy," wrote the Davao missionary on 1 January 1901, "in all other communities I found no churches nor houses [...] Everything had fallen. [...] Oh, Father! All that which was just starting then had to be abandoned." But the people welcomed them back with open arms and approached them en masse in order to have their marriages properly solemnized and their children baptized. On 1 August 1900, Father Raymundo Peruga in Santa Filomena (Cateel) wrote a letter to Manila requesting religious for Tandag, Lianga and Bislig. Two months after, Father Salvador Buguñá, Father Matías Roure and Brother Francisco Mompó were on their way to Caraga.

From a missionary church to a diocesan church

With those missionaries the reorganization of Christian life in the province began, but unfortunately the pace was sluggish. The hardships increased, and their strength was no longer the same as in the previous century. There was a dearth of priests and economic resources, and in many pueblos the intrigues and tricks posed by town authorities were more than enough. In 1902, a small group of Benedictines took charge of the present-day provinces of Surigao del Sur and Surigao del Norte. But they were not able to reach all the towns. Some parishes still had no ministers, and their absence was taken over by priests from the Visayas, who very often turned

out to be followers of Bishop Gregorio Aglipay. There were many court litigations on the ownership of cemeteries, churches and kumbentos. The education of the youth, albeit officially impartial, oftentimes fell into the hands of teachers who were hostile to the Catholic religion.

The dearth of priests, ignorance of Christian doctrine and disoriented nationalism opened the gates to Aglipayanism or *Iglesia Filipina Independiente*, most especially in the initial years when it could count on several prominent people in the towns and with the hands-off policy of the government in the Catholic-Aglipayan conflict over the ownership of church edifices. Until 1906 the right of the occupant was recognized without taking into account any other kind of title. Since that year when the Supreme Court recognized the right of the Roman Catholic Church, Aglipayanism lost its strength and entered a negative phase where it is still immersed. While 19% of the population of Surigao declared Protestantism as their religion, in 1948 it dipped to 13.1% and in 1960 it slid further down to 11.7%. The decrease was significant, but lower than the national average. In 1918, Surigao occupied the 19th place in the classification as to the percentage of Aglipayan adherents by province; it rose to 8th place in 1960. Occupying prominent places were Ilocos Norte, Zambales, Antique, Misamis Occidental, Romblon, Tarlac and Isabela.

In this recovery the determining factors, aside from internal ones within Aglipayanism, the Supreme Court verdict and Catholic immigration were the Sacred Heart Missionaries [MSC] who since their arrival in Surigao in 1908 gave a new impetus to education. In Surigao del Sur, they reorganized the catechesis, propagated the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and created new parishes: Hinatuan (1908), Tago (1913), Lanuza-Carmen (1913), Carrascal (1914), Marihatag (1914), Madrid (1915), San Agustin (1921), Lingig (1937), Tigao (1941), Manganoy (1952), Aras-Asan (1962). Their successors founded the parishes of Diatagon (1965), Barobo (1975), Tagbina (1976), San Miguel (1995) and Carmen (1997).

Initially, there were only eight religious distributed in four pairs, who fixed their residences in Surigao, Gigaquit, Cantilan and

Hinatuan. Surigao was responsible for Dinagat Island; Gigaquit, for Taganaan and Placer; Cantilan, for Siargao Island; and Hinatuan, for Lianga. A minister of Surigao was at once transferred to Tandag. But it did not take long for MSC missionaries to increase their number until they settled down with forty religious. In 1966, they were thirty-nine. The SVD missionaries arrived not long after to take charge of Dinagat Island. Finally, came the Maryknoll priests who still administer the parishes of Lanuza and Tigao-Burgos. Women religious likewise work hand-in-hand with them. Presently, the diocese is served by the Missionary Sisters of Mary, founded in 1958 by Msgr. Carlos van den Ouwelant; Saint Paul de Chartres Sisters and the Dominican Sisters of the Trinity manage schools in Diatagon, Cantilan and Aras-Asan.

For almost the entire century the region continued depending on foreign religious. In 1939, the whole region became part of the new Diocese of Surigao where in 1961 only Bacuag and Bayugan had each a diocesan parish priest. The thirty-three parishes were administered by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Majority of the officials of the curia and six of the eight existing parochial vicars belonged to this congregation as well. In 1966, the diocesan priests were six, and in 1976—on the eve of the creation of the Diocese of Tandag—they supervised fourteen parishes. With the creation of the new diocese, the participation of the diocesan clergy grew. In 1981, sixteen of the nineteen parishes were managed by them. In 2003, only two Columban priests remained in the diocese.

Augustinian Recollect Parishes in Cebu and Camotes Islands¹

Licinio Ruiz OAR

The beginnings of our missions in the Island of Cebu date back to 1744, as affirmed by our Prior Provincial Mamés de San Lamberto (1709-1796) in a letter to our vicar general² on 8 July 1755. It is said there that when Fr. José de la Concepción (1702-1757)³ was prior provincial for the second time, the Calced Augustinian fathers,⁴ our confreres, ceded to us the administration of the two towns of Cotcot and Naghalin in that island.

Enormous and generous was the effort of the prior provincial of our Observant Augustinian fathers, Fr. Pedro Espineyra

¹This chapter is culled from Licicio Ruiz de Santa Eulalia's *Sinopsis histórica de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino de las Islas Filipinas I* (Manila 1925) 628-648, translated and annotated by Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos.

²Isidoro de San Miguel was the vicar general in Madrid in 1754-1756. See FIDEL DE BLAS, *Labor evangélica de los padres agustinos Recoletos en la Islas Filipinas* (Zaragoza 1910) 5.

³José de la Concepción was prior provincial of the Province of Saint Nicholas for three terms: 1737-1740, 1743-1747, 1749-1752. Twice he was named provincial chronicler in 1740 and 1753, organized the provincial archives and wrote historical and biographical accounts as well various sermons. See Francisco SÁDABA, *Catálogo de los religiosos agustinos recoletos de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino de Filipinas desde el año 1606, en que llegó la primera misión a Manila, hasta nuestros días* (Madrid 1906) 200.

⁴The Augustinians, members of the Order of Saint Augustine (OSA), are traditionally termed as Calced Augustinians or Observants by Recollect

(†1763),⁵ in making such cession which having been proposed by the provincial to the intermediate chapter of their Province was approved, and it was afterward accepted by our superior. The exact year when we started serving those missions is not on record. In all our official books and even in the annual reports of Danao parish, Fr. Manuel de Santa Bárbara (1715-1772)⁶ appears as the first parish. This priest resided in Cebu City since 1753 as *prior presidente* of the Immaculate Conception Convent and in the provincial chapter that took place on 19 April 1755 where Fr. Mamés de San Lamberto was elected provincial (1755-1758). Fr. Manuel was the parish priest of Danao in the yearly statistics of the Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino. We presume that the administration of those curacies commenced in 1755 and that the parish was administered by the prior of the Immaculate Conception Convent⁷ of Cebu. But no date can be ascertained other than what has been already mentioned: 1755. To make the origin and development of the towns administered by our Order in this island understood by our readers, we are going to divide them into two groups, patterned after the plan of Fr. Francisco Bergasa (1855-1933) in his report on

chroniclers and historians to differentiate them from the Discalced Augustinians or Augustinian Recollects whose religious order (ORSA, OAR) traced their birth or foundation to the Provincial Chapter of the Augustinian Province of Castile on 5 December 1588.

⁵Fr. Pedro Sánchez Espineyra professed in Manila and was then sent to the Augustinian missions in the Visayas. He occupied various posts including that of prior of Santo Niño Convent, provincial secretary, provincial counselor, prior of Manila, and prior provincial in 1750, reelected in 1762. See Manuel MERINO, *Agustinos evangelizadores de Filipinas, 1565-1965* (Madrid 1965) 122-123.

⁶Manuel de Santa Bárbara was born to Manuel Ruiz Gálvez and Teresa de Horche in the Spanish town of Horche, Guadalajara. He arrived in Manila in 1750. He was elected *prior presidente* of the Immaculate Conception Convent in Cebu City from 1753 to 1755. He was at the helm of the mission of Danao in 1755-1760. Sádaba adds that Padre Manuel constructed the first church and convent of Danao. In order to protect the natives from Moro piratical raids, he also built a stone fort which he left in an advance stage when he was transferred to their convent in Bagumbayan, Manila as prior in 1760. See SÁDABA, 249-250.

⁷The colonial Recollect convent along Magallanes Street is now the site of University of San Jose-Recoletos and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish-Recoletos.

this district, which has provided us almost with all the data we are going to publish hereunder.

DANAO GROUP: Danao, Catmon and Carmen

When the Augustinian Recollects were put in charge of the administration of the territory between the Cotcot River and Naghalin River on the date we have indicated above, they found out that, according to the oldest annual reports of the Province, its population—including that of all the annex villages—hardly reached 1,500 souls who were scattered in an area of more than six leguas.⁸ Therefore, their first priority was to establish a town in a most convenient place and they chose the site which is occupied now by the town of Danao whose central and cleared location, fertility of its soils, facility of communication with the provincial capital and other conditions, guaranteed a rapid and prosperous development.

There were no small inconveniences stemming from the innate indolence of those residents who were not used to the advantages of social life. But Fr. Manuel de Santa Bárbara was a man of energetic character and at the same time an enthusiastic promoter of every undertaking that would redound to the benefit of the country. He was at the helm of this mission of Danao and he did not yield to the hardships he encountered. And supported by the authorities in Cebu and Manila, he did well in convincing the most reluctant ones and in setting up the town and residence of the parish priest on the site that had been recommended. Soon the outcome was palpable and at the close of the last century—the 18th—the population had grown to 5,000. The town continued its progress and development; the town of Catmon was founded in 1836, Carmen in 1851 and Compostela in 1862. In 1880, the total population of the four towns was over 30,000 souls, who on top of cultivating all the lands that could be tilled, helped bring about the great number of workers to the developing coal industry of Cebu and the grand exodus of migrants to the island of Leyte, the neighboring province, so sparsely-populated but teeming with wealth.

⁸Roughly 13.44 kilometers.

To describe now the works of each one of the parish priests who have distinguished themselves in those four parishes in the field purely religious as well as in the material progress of their towns would be excessively lengthy and copious, besides being tedious. Suffice would it be then to mention some indications which could come to the knowledge of how those people owed much to the enthusiasm and administration of those erstwhile Recollect ministers.

We have already mentioned the well-known Fr. Manuel de Santa Bárbara, the true founder of Danao which was one of the most beautiful and best planned towns in the entire Visayan Islands. The construction of the principal nave of the church and the old rectory (of which only some remnants can be seen now), so spacious and comfortable. Danao was for a long time the favorite place of Cebu bishops and provincial governors for their brief vacation during holiday seasons. Later Fr. Miguel Tabuenca (1773-1850)⁹ and Fr. Miguel de Jesús (1771-1844)¹⁰ brought to perfection the urban planning of Danao by providing much bigger space and width to its streets and by supervising the construction of some bridges and countless stone sewers which today enable the drainage of the town center. Fr. Miguel de Jesús deserved likewise a very special mention for having constructed the new convent whose sturdiness has resisted the destructive effects of the climate from 1840 up to the present year (1925) without any significant deterioration and without necessary repairs which were always costly. He supervised the construction of the old water channel which crossed the extensive mangrove marshes and put the town in communication with Carmen and Danao. Finally, he encouraged

⁹Miguel Martínez de San José, surnamed Tabuenca, a town in the Spanish region of Aragón, was parish priest of Danao from 1800 to 1811. He was elected prior provincial in 1834 and provincial chronicler in 1837. See SÁDABA, 372-373.

¹⁰Miguel Martínez y Lafuente de Jesús was parish priest of Danao in 1834-1843. He was prior provincial in 1828-1831. As military chaplain, he helped in the complete pacification of Bohol that had quelled the Dagohoy Revolt in southeastern portions in 1828 upon orders of Governor General Mariano Ricafort and in the resettlement of thousands of rebel returnees in newly-established towns. See SÁDABA, 369-370.

and brought to its happy conclusion the foundation of the town of Catmon by establishing it first in the old village of Catmon where we can still view the remains of the church he had constructed and afterward in the village of Manobo that apparently complied with the most suitable conditions.

Even now we can still hear from the old folks extol the enthusiasm and zeal of Fr. Miguel de Jesús on account of the development of their town and his munificence with which he compensated well and rewarded those who supported him in his very noble undertaking. [In 1844] he perished because he was drowned when the boat he took in Manila was devastated by huge waves on his way to his favorite town of Catmon. He had dubbed this town *Versailles* and pledged to devote himself to the betterment and advancement of Catmon. He had previously bequeathed to the people of Danao a long-lasting remembrance in the industry of very delicious cheeses, whose manufacturing process he had taught his parishioners thus providing them with a livelihood. Even to these days, Fr. Manuel Fernández (1807-1867),¹¹ the worthy successor and disciple of Fr. Miguel de Jesús, declared that the cheese industry still continues to give them not inconsiderable profits.

Fr. Fernández was responsible for the construction of the transept of the parochial church, the picturesque iron railing surrounding the temple, the stone schoolhouses for children of both sexes as well as the beautiful and sturdy *casa tribunal*. His enthusiasm was not limited only to the improvement of his town, but going beyond the jurisdiction of his parish, he founded the parishes of Carmen and Compostela, separating them from their matrix. He built the parochial buildings of Compostela which were unfortunately destroyed later during the horrifying typhoon of 1876.

Fr. Fernández was strongly backed by the governors of Cebu, Cerveró, Somoza and Quintana. Governor Quintana supervised the works of numerous stone bridges along the national highway

¹¹Manuel Fernández administered the parish of Danao 1841 until his death on 23 October 1867. He was concurrently vicar provincial of Cebu and Siquijor in 1846, reappointed in 1849 and prior of Cavite in 1849. See SÁDABA, 402.

between Compostela and Danao. In coordination with the parish priest of Carmen Fr. Antonio Fuertes, he almost brought to its happy conclusion the road that crossed the swampy areas that he constructed between those two towns and which is a continued embankment—more than three kilometers long—with stone bridges in the jurisdiction of Danao and a wooden bridge in the territory of Carmen. We are not trying to say that the glory of these public works exclusively belonged to Fr. Fernández.

Therefore, we acknowledge very willingly that the initiative and principal supervision were due to the learned and zealous Governor Cerveró who deserved a statue erected by Cebu for the many projects he accomplished to benefit the province. However, little would have been accomplished by the zeal of this illustrious governor, had he not possessed the great talent of putting himself in everything in agreement with the parish priests and entrusting them with the supervision of municipal funds and heaping accolades on them before the populace. That was how Governor Cerveró governed these natives and then he successfully made all the towns and very especially that of Danao that supported with promptness and diligence the projects he had undertaken. This enterprise was carried on by his successors in the provincial government—Somoza and Quintana—and implemented by the towns under the impartial and vigilant supervision of the parish priests.

To bring this topic on Fr. Manuel Fernández to a close, we shall put on record some fine points that confirmed the selflessness and love he had for his people. The residents of Cebu City were wont to ridicule the things of town residents. The compassionate Fr. Fernández had observed how they poked fun at his parishioners for their shabby clothes, so he took this behavior issue very seriously and did not stop until he succeeded in convincing them to refrain from going to Cebu if they did not wear some decent apparel. The parish priests worked so much and insisted convincingly in his effort which perhaps some would call a trivial matter. But eventually he impressed upon the people that hallmark of cleanliness and good taste so much that even today it attracted the attention of observant individuals and it went on as the object of grateful memories of the people of Danao.

Another characteristic that described the ingenuity of Fr. Fernández was his generosity with which he compensated the midwives when they had to assist women during difficult childbirth. He used to reward each midwife with a gift of four *duros*.¹² Difficult childbirths were very frequent occurrences which caused alarm, as it was only proper, on the generous pocket of the parish priest. On the other hand, he did not allow his parishioners to organize grandiose and lavish funerals because he said they needed money for other things. This was an exaggeration but definitely it was very impressive. After the death of Fr. Fernández in 1866, a new era began in the administration of the Philippines, especially in the area of public works. Gradually, the intervention of parish priests in public works diminished and was replaced by the official action of provincial governors and personnel under their jurisdiction. The regulations got more and more restrictive, frequent changes of systems and procedures in the implementation of projects, continuous decision of many provincial governors in converting the cost of personal services into cash, the demands of many subordinates in public works, the corruption of low-level personnel in the provincial administrative offices, the inactive opposition of the natives who tried hard to obtain the best possible benefits from so much confusion and other causes, then all factors began to cause frequent conflicts and chaotic quarrels now and then between the parish priests—who were the customary defenders of the people’s interests—and the bureaucratic officials and intrusive agents of government. Because of all that, if the parish priest’s intervention in projects of public utility did not completely disappear, it conspicuously diminished. The parish priest chose most of the time to gradually withdraw in order not to occasion more disputes with some government authorities. Notwithstanding all this, the parish priests still kept no small influence in many provinces and, therefore, they went on exercising such influence in a manner possible to them for the benefit of their towns. With respect to

¹²One *duro* was equivalent to five pesetas, a currency in circulation in Spain from 1868 to 2002. The gift per childbirth then was the equivalent of twenty pesetas.

Danao, the parish priests had to do much more for the preservation and improvement of what had been earlier accomplished and Fr. Ambrosio Iturriaga (1823-1898)¹³ dedicated himself specially to this. Furthermore, he exerted great effort to open a good local road to the important village of Santa Rosa adjacent to the renowned coal mines of Camansi. This road which occasioned great progress at that time and which afterward was partly abandoned and partly used for the small streetcar that led to the ruins of Camansi. The preservation and improvement of the road to Carmen which demanded constant work. Some important repairs in the church had kept Fr. Iturriaga occupied in his renowned enterprise.

Furthermore, Iturriaga had distinguished himself most prominently in census-taking and statistics. Such was his thoroughness and painstaking care in this matter that his work served as the pattern for numerous parish priests and even in the very offices of government. He was the first in the Province of Cebu and perhaps in all the islands in the Visayas to submit the famous *Statistics*, all-embracing, polished, and ordered for publication during the time of the unforgettable Don Domingo Moriones, governor general in 1877-1880. Iturriaga's successor, Fidel Moreno (1837-1891),¹⁴ constructed the present cemetery using church funds without any encumbrance on the people, placed a fine clock in the belfry of the parish church, put up several lightning rods in the church and rectory, adorned and improved

¹³Ambrosio Iturriaga administered the curacy of Poro in the Camotes Islands in 1854-1861. He was then elected prior of San Nicolás Convent in Intramuros, Manila but he resigned in 1862 and retraced his steps to Poro as parish priest, a post he held until 1868. In August 1868, he was named parish priest of Danao, concurrently vicar provincial of Cebu, until 1870. After a year as procurator general in Madrid, he resigned and travelled back to the Philippines to administer Danao again in 1871-1879. He was parish priest of Jagna, Bohol in 1882-1897. In 1883, he finished the construction of the spacious rectory which became half a century after Colegio de la Medalla Milagrosa of the Congregation of the Augustinian Recollect Sisters. He retired in the adjoining town of Garcia Hernandez where he died in 1898 at age 74. See SÁDABA, 446.

¹⁴Fidel Moreno was at the helm of Santo Tomas de Villanueva parish of Danao in 1880-1889. He sent to the Manila Exhibit in 1887 the *Descripción geográfica, histórica y estadística del pueblo de Danao de la provincia de Cebú (Filipinas)*, composed of eleven folios. See Sádaba, 505.

the interior of the temple, and lastly started the construction of the new sacristy which was brought to a happy conclusion by his successors who did not lack other projects to occupy themselves with as well as occasions where they rendered service of another kind to constituted authorities.

Following the pattern we started, let us now occupy ourselves briefly with the projects accomplished by the Recollect fathers in the town of Catmon. We have already taken into account the earliest achievements done by Fr. Miguel de Jesús, founder of Catmon. Nevertheless, we must add that the abject poverty and unevenness of the land under the jurisdiction of this town were the obstacles to its fast development in its initial years. That is why there was a need to transfer the town three times until the present site where it is finally located. This site is more extensive and encompasses lands of the best quality, although it is inconvenient because it is located in the farthest north of its jurisdiction. The name of Fr. Juan Juseu (1819-1868)¹⁵ who administered Catmon for fourteen years could not be easily forgotten in this town since the his memory was handed down from parents to children, like that of a very much-loved person. In truth, it was Fr. Juan who taught the people of Catmon the use of the plow, a farm tool unheard of until his time. It was Fr. Juan who—by appointing some people to assist him in his endeavor and by coaxing those concerned—was successful in his effort to make women put up their own modest looms and acquire a liking for chores and occupations appropriate to their sex. It was due to Fr. Juseu's strong determination that vagrancy and drunkenness vanished from the town, two vices that had plunged its impoverished residents to misery. And, as if these feats were not enough for his zeal, Fr. Juseu further undertook the construction of its very beautiful stone church, a source of pride of that penurious town and admiration of the engineers themselves for the remarkable job as symbolized by its belfry. He struggled

¹⁵Juan Juseu was assigned in 1845 to Cuyo, then to Agutaya in the Calamianes and subsequently to Himamaylan in Negros, Cagayan de Misamis in Mindanao and Isabela in Basilan. For fourteen years, he served the parish of Catmon from 1854 until his transfer in February 1868 to Zamboanguita in Negros where he died three months after on 17 May. See SÁDABA, 432.

with countless difficulties, with the scarcity of building materials which had to be transported from two *leguas* away, or almost five kilometers, for the dearth of resources due to the penury of the faithful, with the absolute lack of skilled workers, carpenters and masons who would help him in construction projects and at the outset with the very apathy of the whole populace who initially believed that the church project seemed impossible. But his ingenuity, perseverance and unselfishness surmounted everything. He selected those he seemed the most clear-headed ones, and in a short time he had four expert masons who in turn taught others the same skill. He further distributed compensation of four and eight pesos to those who practiced some useful little skill, for example, the finishing touches of window edges. And with such inhabitants motivated, the entire populace participated in their parish priest's enthusiasm. This exemplary priest was not able to finish the church construction, but he left it in a very advanced phase. Moreover, Fr. Juseu's successors in Catmon—supported always by the parishioners who were models of docility—continued and finished the projects. Fr. Manuel Jiménez (1835-1893)¹⁶ finished the walls of the church and laid the rafters of the roofing. He provisionally had the church roofed with nipa and cogon. Fr. Ramón Miramón (1842-1910)¹⁷ built the façade of the church and the dome of the belfry.

Finally, Fr. Francisco Bergasa (1855-1933)¹⁸ covered the church roof with tiles, built the altars, laid the wooden floor, and

¹⁶Manuel Jiménez de la Virgen del Rosario was a missionary in Mindanao before his assignment as companion in Liloan in 1863; parish priest of Talibon, Bohol in 1864-1867, Catmon in 1868-1872 and Liloan in 1876-1893. He died in their San Nicolás friary in Intramuros. See SÁDABA, 498.

¹⁷Ramón Miramón learned his Visayan Cebuano language in Loboc, Bohol; he was then assigned as parish priest of Catmon in 1873 and stayed there until 1879. After almost three triennia as master of novices in Monteagudo, Navarra, Spain, in 1886 he volunteered for Colombia with Fr. Ezekiel Moreno. See SÁDABA, 549-450; Miguel AVELLANEDA, *Continuación del Padre Sádaba* (Rome 1938) 362.

¹⁸Francisco Bergasa [*Vergasa* in FIDEL DE BLAS and AVELLANEDA) was assigned in the Immaculate Conception Convent of Cebu City in 1877 and moved to Catmon to study Visayan Cebuano. After his ordination to the priesthood, he

embellished the interior of the temple. He kept himself busy in church projects. The other priests enthusiastically took their turns in public works for the wellbeing of the people. Hence, we observe Fr. Jiménez who supervised the construction of the two stone bridges—one near the municipal hall and another at the exit of the town leading to Sogod. Fr. Miramon supervised the building of another bridge in Manobo in the vicinity of the barrio of Macaoes. Fr. Bergasa further constructed a schoolhouse made of masonry for children and the present *casa tribunal* since the previous one was gutted by fire.

How do we write about the activities of another kind accomplished by the parish priests for the spiritual and material welfare of the people of Catmon? This topic would be never-ending for us, but we must not conclude it without devoting time to the memory of the truly apostolic zeal of the indefatigable Fr. Ramón Miramón, an authentic model of parish priests of the natives, who by exerting his effort beyond his capability and by being unmindful of his health and his life at all times, dedicated himself thus to assisting the ill parishioners and spending the whole night at their bedside and even staying there without a meal if his servant or companion did not take care of sending him food when he was busy in so holy and charitable a ministry.

And let us say something about the benefits received by this people and especially by the village chief and community leaders: thanks to the influence and leadership of the parish priests even to the point of financial sacrifices. In just one occasion when more than twenty leaders of the town evaded incarceration only because their parish priest contributed more than twenty-five thousand pesetas, and there was a need to contrive ways and means by dint of sacrifices and anxieties. But let us not speak of these affairs because if we reveal the whole truth it would be necessary to put to public shame a lot of Spanish government officials.

administered Catmon in 1879-1888. He was parish priest of Danao (1891-1894), subsequently prior of their Cebu convent (1894-1896), vicar provincial of Cebu (1896-1897), provincial councilor (1897-1902), general councilor in Madrid (1914-1920) and various other posts. See SÁDABA, 602; AVELLANEDA, 468.

The town of Carmen was founded in 1851. Fr. Antonio Fuertes (1816-1892)¹⁹ was its first parish priest and administered the curacy until 1889. It can be very well said that the early period of existence of the town covered the entire life of the Recollect minister. His work included the parish edifices: church, rectory and cemetery of modest but solid construction. He loved decorum in the temple and during solemn celebration and worship, hence he invested considerable sums in decorating the church with several sacred images and other objects, especially in the construction of the small pipe organ that had the extraordinary distinction of having been built by Filipino artists under the parish priest's direction. A vigorous promoter of progress in his town, it was the foremost aspiration of Fr. Fuertes to provide his parishioners with all material benefits possible. We already mentioned his cooperation in the projects of the main highway that linked Danao with Carmen. Furthermore, we add that the road leading to the bridge of Luyang was continued under his supervision. This Luyang bridge project was so significant that the people owed much to his concerns. The town of Carmen suffered from the dearth of potable water. Its parish priest was so concerned because he wanted his dear parishioners of Carmen to avoid the inconveniences and troubles caused by this scarcity of water supply. After his strenuous effort, he succeeded in endowing the town with a magnificent water source located in the vicinity of the church.

But the great service that Fr. Antonio's charitable zeal did for the benefit of his parishioners was the sanitation and fertilization of the swampy and muddy land of Suyang which was previously an extensive marshy area. Thanks to his endeavor, it was converted into a very beautiful field planted with palay. In order to accomplish it, the good priest envisioned a dike to protect the whole length and width of the coast of Suyang with waterways and flood-gates for the purpose of providing exit to the water from the inland and depositing the flood-tides in some estuaries. By dint of patience and to put the finishing touch to his undertaking, he

¹⁹He was assistant priest in Danao in 1845-1846 and parish priest of Carmen in 1851-1888. He lived in Liloan from 1888 until his death in 1892. See SÁDABA, 436.

further built a dam in the upper part of Suyang River. Necessary waterways were opened. And the previously filthy and hazardous mangrove swamps were finally converted into a palay farm that was communally owned by the people of Carmen.

After this waterway project—so selflessly undertaken by the compassionate Fr. Antonio—was completed, the parish priest then had to focus his effort on another struggle in order to maintain the principal waterway for the welfare of everyone in town. This we discuss now somewhat lengthily because it included teachings that those vociferating against religious parish priests at present should very much bear in mind. A leading family in Carmen whose surname we omit here abused their controlling power in this town and tried to channel the main waterway of the palay plantation of Suyang to their own advantage and divert its course to their property for the exclusive use of their hydraulic machines, thus making the irrigation of communal lands impossible. The family could not claim any right to support their action and, taking advantage of their power and the natives' innate apathy, they were able to successfully accomplish what they had claimed at the start. Solely the parish priest, infuriated by such behavior, had the courage to go out in defense of justice violated in such a scandalous manner. And he went up to the highest authorities of the Islands with a prior opportune petition, and succeeded in obtaining a decree from the governor general himself to declare their dike and waterways as belonging to the people and for their benefit. It consequently rejected the right claimed by the family that was bereft of any title for it. For this reason, Fr. Antonio Fuertes had to undergo enormous displeasures and vexations, but in his last years he had the consolation of observing that his parishioners were thankful to him for their rights—as it was proper and just—and that the family we mentioned earlier would eventually reconcile with the parish priest. This reconciliation was one of the greatest benefits that their kindhearted parish priest had ever received.

To speak in a few words about the countless works of charity achieved by Fr. Antonio Fuertes would be completely impossible. Let it suffice to mention here that a great majority

of his parishioners approached him every year to ask for palay seeds which they would plant. Furthermore, in times of famine exceptionally frequent in Cebu Island, he customarily bought the corn and palay that arrived at the little port in Carmen for the purpose of distributing them among the impoverished and needy folks. All those who were extremely indigent went to his rectory every day to ask for medicines and alms. Lastly, especially in 1879 and 1889 when the people were so hard up because the town suffered from an almost absolute scarcity of corn and palay, the charity of the parish priest went even to the extreme of using up all his savings and part of the church funds in order to succor the destitute residents.

Even during his leisure time Fr. Antonio Fuertes was determined to help his parishioners, as shown by the result he had acquired by acclimatizing in his garden and growing the plant called *Tonquin Bean* or *Tonka Bean*,²⁰ whose excellent qualities he had made known among the people of Carmen by teaching them the way to use it against bites and stings of harmful animals and insects and even against bites by rabid dogs. Many persons were cured by it and the use of this medicinal plant, so incredibly beneficial, was spread extensively to other towns.

In addition, as pastime he made countless tests to obtain natural wine from grapes. This he did to be able to concoct his wine after several extraordinarily peculiar experiments. And he succeeded in fermenting his “wine and vinegar of Cebu” which received an award in the regional exposition in Manila in 1887 consisting of a silver medal and a diploma of first class. The wine was a superbly pleasant claret, similar—although somewhat thinner or weaker—to the claret from La Rioja, Spain. This amiable priest passed away laden with merits and virtues. His zeal, his apostolic charity and his exemplary poverty in which the unforgettable Fr. Antonio Fuertes lived and died constituted his greatest eulogy.

The parish of Compostela was established through the initiative and under the supervision of Fr. Manuel Fernández in

²⁰Its scientific name is *Dipteryx odorata*. The Spanish is *pepita del Tonquín*.

1862. It was known for its especially splendid beginnings because the construction of a beautiful church and a parochial house was carried in a short period of time, thanks to the services rendered by the people of Danao. However, these edifices were wrecked by the powerful typhoon of 1876. The succeeding parish priests encountered tremendous hardships in constructing new parish edifices. With enormous sacrifices, they successfully built a new rectory. They were likewise able to make adequate progress in the project of a new church made of masonry whose walls were completed some years back but the temple was not finished on account of the Revolution.

The penury of the curacy of Compostela, the nature of its inhabitants who were more accustomed to live in the mountains than in the lowland and lastly the exploitation of the coal mines which for a long time had been attracting a big number of lawless and immoral elements to the uplands of Compostela, have been the reasons why parish priests had not obtained all the fruits that their zeal had aspired for.

Moreover, let it be known here in order to cast away all kinds of suspicions when speaking of the coal mines that we do not aim to inflict harm in the slightest way on the management of the respectable owner of those mines, Don Ramón Montañez, who due to his diligence and upright conduct had merited the affection of Compostela priests and adjoining towns.

Despite the hardships, the Recollect parish priests of Compostela had exerted great effort as much as possible to provide the parish with excellent edifices, hence, the sacrifices made by Fr. Manuel Alonso (1831-1898)²¹ in constructing the

²¹The 24-year-old Manuel Alonso arrived in Manila in 1855 and was sent to Guindulman, Bohol to study Bisayan Cebuano. After his subsequent pastoral assignments in Maribojoc (Bohol), Guihulngan (Negros), Odiongan (Romblon), Banton and Basilan, he was sent to Cebu as companion of the parish priest of Mandaue (1864-1882), then to Compostela (1883-1884). In 1897, he resided at their Immaculate Conception Convent in Cebu City. Before the Revolution erupted on 3 April 1898, the Recollects had taken refuge in Fort San Pedro and then moved to the conciliar seminary where the gravely ill 67-year-old friar Fr. Alonso breathed his last on 12 April 1898. See SÁDABA, 476.

rectory and by Fr. Manuel Arellano (1843-1905)²² in building the church, should be put on record. Substantial expenditures for the church construction were defrayed by Fr. Arellano's own personal funds with due authorization from his superiors. Fr. Pedro Ibáñez (1868-1936),²³ the last parish priest, gathered all the lumber for the church roofing but when he was preparing to commence the project when the unfortunate Revolution erupted which inflicted so much damage to the Islands. For that reason, it was necessary to shelve the project for better times.

MANDAUE GROUP: Mandaue, Liloan and Consolacion

After the departure of the Jesuit fathers in 1768, the spiritual administration of Mandaue and its annex villages or visitas which at that time were Liloan and the Camotes Islands was adjudicated to the Recollect fathers. In fact, they took possession of the parish of Mandaue. However, for just reasons requiring the approval of higher authorities, the parish administration was abandoned in 1777 and handed over to the secular clergy who served it until 1846 when the possession of this town was handed back to the Recollect fathers by the governor general's official decree.

The parish of Mandaue during that period comprised its annex villages of Liloan and Camotes Islands, with a total population of 10,000 souls, as shown in the census statistics of 1846. Gradually, the population continued to increase unceasingly,

²²Manuel Arellano came to Manila in 1866 and was assigned as conventual at their Cebu convent. His subsequent assignments were Dumaguete, Tandag, Surigao and Cebu City. He was parish priest of Poro for twelve years (1872-1884) and then of Compostela for nine years (1885-1894). After his pastoral ministry in Dauin (Negros Oriental) and Sevilla (Bohol), he returned to Spain 1899 and from there to Brazil. For health reasons, he retraced his steps to his hometown in Corella, Navarra, Spain where he joined his Creator in 1905. See SÁDABA, 529-530.

²³After his arrival in Manila, Pedro Ibáñez was dispatched as companion in 1890 to Danao which he served as parish priest in 1894-1895. He served Compostela in March 1895-1898. In September 1898, he travelled to Spain and then to Brazil. After his return to Spain, he resided in various communities until his death at Marcilla, Navarra in 1936. See SÁDABA, 674-675; AVELLANEDA, 114-115.

so that it reached the satisfactory figure of 45,000 in 1897. From the town matrix of Mandaue were gradually separated the towns of Consolacion and Liloan along the coast of Cebu and those of Poro, Pilar and San Francisco in the Camotes Islands. All these towns were founded by the Recollect fathers in the short span of sixteen years since the establishment of the last town, San Francisco, that occurred in 1863. Such a significant outcome would never have become a reality without the perseverance and determination of the Recollect fathers whose most important achievements we shall specify below, albeit rather cursorily.

The first Recollect parish priest of Mandaue was Fr. Gregorio Sanz (1817-1859)²⁴ who administered this town with brief interruptions from 1847 to 1858. Although the parish could count on fine edifices, initially there was a need for Fr. Sanz to live outside the rectory because of its dilapidated condition which consequently required significant renovations. Hence, Fr. Sanz completed the repairs of the rectory with swiftness and big savings. However, it did not turn out to be sturdy as a whole. Hence, it was necessary to demolish it and construct a new one in 1890. Even so, the old parochial house lasted forty years, thanks to the repairs done by the commendable priest. Furthermore, he improved the church which was a fine structure made of strong materials and constructed in the form of the Greek cross with two octagonal chapels that gave the temple a really beautiful appearance.

Fr. Gregorio Sanz initiated and expedited the establishment of the new parish of Poro in the Camotes Islands. Thanks to his good relationship with the authorities, he successfully brought this

²⁴A man of science specialized in physiology and medicine and with other fine qualities that adorned “this illustrious son of the Augustinian Recollection,” Gregorio Sanz was born in Cubo de la Sierra in the Spanish province of Soria. He arrived in Manila in February 1842 and was sent to Cebu City, thereafter studied the Visayan Cebuano language in Loay, Bohol whose Holy Trinity Parish he administered in 1843-1845. He was given his canonical appointment as parish priest of Mandaue in 1846-1849 and in 1852-1858. He was recalled to occupy the post of vice prior of San Nicolás friary in Intramuros, Manila in 1849-1851 and then as prior in 1851-1852. In August 1858, he was elected prior presidente of San Sebastian Convent in Manila, concurrently provincial councilor, where he died on 30 July 1859. See SÁDABA, 424-425.

project to reality quickly. The creation of the new parish of Liloan was approved in 1845 and its own parish priest was installed. Both foundations, consequently, gave a significant impetus to the future development of the two towns.

A man of vast learning and most noble sentiments, Fr. Gregorio Sanz then focused his attention to one of the major catastrophes in the country. This went unnoticed by people less wont to thinking but it was a torture for the most educated parish priests. It was a never-ending cause of extensive misfortunes in the spiritual as well as in the temporal sphere. We refer to the great number of tragic abortions and childbirth deaths. Stemming from complete ignorance of hygienic prescriptions, from negligence and lack of health care by midwives and their clients, from the inhabitants' general misery, from absolute dearth of medical doctors even in town centers where natives resided, and from gross and superstitious practices of quacks or witch-doctors—a true plague of this country—were frequent occasions of the temporal and eternal death of countless infants and the probable cause of the increasing illnesses of mothers and infants.

In order to put an end to such a grave evil, according to his capabilities, the well-intentioned Fr. Sanz wrote in 1856 his important book *Embriología Sagrada* [Sacred Embryology]²⁵ for use by parish priests and parochial vicars who after having been instructed in the advancement of science would be able in turn to train midwives and provide valuable advice to pregnant women on everything that could be related to this delicate subject and especially on the way to assist in the salvation of newborn babies through the sacrament of baptism.

Still unsatisfied with having exhausted the subject matter in his *Embriología sagrada*, Fr. Sanz went on to write a simpler and

²⁵*Embriología sagrada en obsequio de los párrocos y coadjutores de estas Islas* has 258 pages, 22 cm. X 14 cm., and was printed by Establecimiento Tipográfico del Colegio de Santo Tomas in Manila in 1867. Cebu Bishop Romualdo Jimeno sent a circular thoroughly extolling the book and urging parish priests to acquire a copy of the book. Cf. SÁDABA, 427.

more basic work in Visayan Cebuano language entitled *Panabang*,²⁶ which was a compendium of precise and very practical rules. Everything found in the small edition pertinent to the subject [delivery, infant baptism, etc.] was within the reach of the meager income and scanty earnings of a great number of families. The first publication has been for a long period of time the manual and reference book of numerous parish priests on the subject and the second book was so disseminated among the people of the Visayas that there was hardly a family that did not own a copy. Both books were of immense value on account of the countless troubles that had been avoided by reading them. His cherished memory and his example of priestly virtues still recorded in the minds of the people of Mandaue were due to Fr. Sanz's affable nature, his concern and affection in his dealings with his parishioners.

After the death of Fr. Gregorio Sanz, Fr. Lorenzo Mayor (1828-1896)²⁷ administered the parish of Mandaue with some short intervals. He likewise deserved a special tribute for the exceptionally significant services he rendered to the Church in unfortunate circumstances. This priest commenced his spiritual

²⁶*Panabang* means midwifery, assistance given to women during childbirth. The book deals specifically with the training or assistance given by midwives during childbirth in Cebuano-speaking regions.

²⁷At age 16, Lorenzo Mayor pronounced the monastic vows in 1844 in Spain. He travelled to Manila in 1849 and was sent to Loon in Bohol to acquire proficiency in Bisaya Cebuano. He served the parish of Talibon in 1852-1861. He was named vice prior of the Immaculate Conception Convent in Cebu in 1861-1864. Then he was elected provincial counselor, concurrently appointed parish priest of Mandaue in 1864-1867 and vicar provincial of Cebu in 1865-1867. After his triennium in Madrid as commissary, vicar provincial and procurator general, he returned to Mandaue which he administered in 1871-1896. During his term, the near schism wrought by Alcalá Zamora took place. Fr. Mayor occupied the important post of ecclesiastical provisor and vicar general of the Diocese of Cebu in 1873, as mandated by Manila Archbishop Gregorio Melitón Martínez and diocesan administrator of Cebu *sede vacante*, and again reappointed in 1876 by the new bishop Benito Romero, a Discalced Franciscan friar. When Mayor died at the Cebu convent in 1896, the people of Mandaue sought the transfer of his remains to the parish he served for twenty-eight years, which gave him a multitudinous funeral. See SÁDABA, 450-451.

administration of the parish of Talibong²⁸ in Bohol where he designed the beautiful church of this town and had left his church project in a rather advanced state.

In 1863, Fr. Mayor was transferred to our Immaculate Conception Convent in Cebu as prior. Then he enlarged that small convent which had already become inadequate for the big increase of the religious personnel that the Province [of Saint Nicholas] had assigned in the Visayas. Towards the year 1864, he was appointed parish priest of Mandaue. In 1868, he was honored with the important post of commissary provincial and procurator general in Madrid, Spain. He accomplished this difficult assignment during the ill-fated period of the Revolution.²⁹ He repeatedly displayed the energy of character and calmness of spirit with which he confronted greater perils. In those times, our convent and church of Monteagudo were not completely abandoned when numerous friars and laypeople believed it should be, because great perils posed threats against the Recollect community of Monteagudo. Solely Fr. Lorenzo possessed the serenity of mind which was required by such circumstances. When the fears—not totally baseless—had been dispelled, but initially supported by other religious, the superiors were able to confront the situation and evade a measure which could perhaps produce grave consequences for the Province of Saint Nicholas.

After his term as commissary provincial in Spain, Fr. Lorenzo Mayor was pleased to trace his steps back to the Philippines and to his parish in Mandaue. Who could have informed him then that in peaceful Cebu the composed mettle of his noble character was destined to be more needed than ever? When that Cebu Diocese became *sede vacante* on account of the demise of the holy bishop Msgr. Romualdo Jimeno,³⁰ Fr. Lorenzo was caught by surprise

²⁸It is now known as Talibon, located in northern Bohol, present-day episcopal see in Bohol and the Recollect church now the Holy Trinity Cathedral.

²⁹The Revolution of 1868 was termed *La Gloriosa*, the Glorious Revolution, that led to the dethronement of Queen Isabel II, to the provisional government and inauguration of Amadeo I de Saboya as king of Spain in 1871.

³⁰Bishop Romualdo Jimeno of the Diocese of the Most Holy Name Jesus in Cebu was born on 7 February 1808 in Épila, Zaragoza, Spain. He was ordained

by his appointment as ecclesiastical provisor and vicar general of the vacant Diocese of Cebu. It was exactly during the time when the regrettably famous Luis Alcalá Zamora attempted to create a schism in this Archipelago by taking possession of that Diocese against all the statutes of Canon Law and against the express wishes of the Holy Father Pius IX.

Many religious were terrified in the face of an imminent schism that the civil authorities themselves seemed all set to support. However, Fr. Mayor stood firm in the tranquility of his conscience. And, well aware of the importance of his duties, he did not vacillate for a moment in upholding with staunch vim and vigor the rights of the Catholic religion and the Church. The numerous orders issued by the commanding general of the Visayas mandating Fr. Lorenzo to make preparations for the reception of the intruder bishop all ended up in vain. The threats of exile and other penalties were likewise in vain, as Fr. Lorenzo bravely responded to the commanding general: “Zamora shall be able to take possession of this cathedral church, but it shall be done only by tearing the cathedral doors down or by demolishing them, but never with my consent that your Excellency can never obtain by your threats.” Through such resoluteness, Fr. Lorenzo successfully convinced the commanding general that he had the backing of the entire clergy of the Diocese. Convinced that nothing could be obtained by sending Fr. Lorenzo to exile, the commanding general ceased from that extremely hare-brained objective and then gave an account to Manila about the exceptionally grievous scandals that Alcalá Zamora’s presence would create in Cebu and in the whole Visayan region.

Fr. Lorenzo Mayor’s unyielding response and stand might have perhaps influenced the change of attitude of the superior authority of the Archipelago. What is certain is that when the danger

as priest of the Order of Preachers in 1831 and raised to episcopacy in 1839. He was named coadjutor bishop of Manila in 1845. As successor of the Augustinian Santos Gómez, he was confirmed as bishop of Cebu in 1846. Bishop Jimeno died in Cebu on 17 March 1872. Cf. *Bishop Romualdo Jimeno OP*, in *catholic-hierarchy.org/ bishop/ bjimeno.html*. Retrieved 13 March 2020.

ceased to exist, the Archbishop of Manila³¹ in his congratulatory note to Fr. Lorenzo for his conduct, he expressed these significant words: “With men like you, Fr. Lorenzo, one can go anywhere.” When his term as ecclesiastical governor of the Diocese of Cebu ended in 1876, he continued to serve the parish of Mandaue on top of discharging simultaneously his duties as vicar provincial of the Recollects and vicar forane of that Cebu district as well as synodal examiner of the Diocese until his death towards the end of 1896.

In his last years and already sickly, Fr. Mayor had a lot more to do in making repairs in his parish church which he completely restored and in the construction of the new parish rectory whose walls he finished but left all the building materials ready for his successor Fr. Bernardino Ramírez to bring the project to conclusion. These works together with the little care he had for his body as well as the limited space and discomfort of a bad parochial residence where he lived during the construction of the new one created havoc on his health that shortly after ended his earthly life.

The people of Mandaue rendered a pompous funeral to Fr. Mayor’s mortal remains after they succeeded in requesting their transfer from the provincial capital where he passed away to the parish church that he had administered for so many years and where he was interred at the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament.

The town of Liloan originated from Mandaue, and its first parish priest was Fr. Francisco Gotor (1815-1888)³² who administered it from 1847 to 1866. He left behind a lasting legacy of zeal and activity in the very beautiful church which he commenced and brought to a conclusion at the cost of hardships and all kinds of sacrifices.

This church of Liloan, one of the best in the Diocese of Cebu is totally made of masonry, extremely strong and ventilated and

³¹The Archbishop of Manila in 1861–1875 during the period of controversy was Gregorio Melitón Martínez (1815-1885).

³²After his priestly ordination in December 1843 and passing his language proficiency thereafter, Francisco Gotor took the reins of the parish of Liloan in 1846 until 1867 [not 1847 as Licinio Ruiz claims]. Thereafter he was assigned to the Recollect seminaries in Spain. In February 1876, he resided at the convent in Cebu City until his death in 1888. See SÁDABA, 432-433.

elegant. It has the following dimensions: 73½ varas long, 14½ varas wide, 44 varas in the arms of the transept and 13½ high, with two bell-towers in the front, nine varas taller than the walls. With these data and bearing in mind that Liloan was a new town with 5,000 souls, we can only surmise the parish priest's effort that he exerted in order to carry out such a project which was disproportionate to the resources of the parish. But Fr. Gotor was a man of indomitable spirit and strong willpower needed for the job. Certainly, he was fit for the undertaking, since it was a well-known fact among the people of Liloan and likewise among the priests who were his contemporaries that Fr. Gotor was not only contented with supervising and making his work ready but also he gave example to his parishioners: he wielded the axe to cut wood or the crow-bar to extract rocks so that he reached the point of justly boasting that there was not a single hewn slab of stone in the construction project of the church that had not passed through his hands.

Fr. Gotor likewise built a spacious rectory, albeit with a bad taste and almost bereft of comforts since he never focused on what could personally affect him. He cooperated as well in whatever way he could to endow the town of Liloan with excellent roads through which communication with the adjoining towns of Danao and Mandaue was made possible since the roads of Consolacion and Compostela were still non-existent. And he was tireless in the exercise of his obligations appropriate to his pastoral ministry.

Fr. Gotor was succeeded by other parish priests who indefatigably worked in the administration the parish of Liloan and for its progress. Special mention must be made of Fr. Leandro Arrué (1837-1897)³³ who later became bishop of Jaro,

³³After his sacerdotal ordination, Leandro Arrué ministered to the parish of Cagayan de Misamis in 1861-1864 followed by four years as parish priest of Bacong in 1864 and sent thereafter to Sum-ag sometime in 1868, both in Negros Island. In September 1868, he was named parish priest of San Fernando Rey parish of Liloan and concurrently vicar provincial in 1871-1873. He was named prior of Cebu (1876) and elected prior provincial of Saint Nicholas Province (1879). In 1882, he returned to Bacong where he constructed the splendid parish church and rectory. In March 1885, he was preconized bishop of Jaro, consecrated in August

and Fr. Manuel Jiménez who replaced the roof of the church with galvanized iron and built the beautiful altars presently existent. He laid the wooden floor of the church. The last Recollect parish priest, Fr. Casto Sesma (1850-1899),³⁴ worked with good results in the repair and renovation of the parochial residence. He adorned the church with a dome of galvanized iron and embellished its whole interior in fine taste. The town of Liloan was always known for the huge number of children who attended school where its parish priest had incessantly worked. In the promptness and interest, the parishioners complied with government orders with respect to the payment of tributes and other services where the parish priests had direct involvement.

The last town founded by the Recollect fathers along the coast of Cebu was Consolacion which dated back to 1871. It could have been an error to establish the town on the site where it is now located, since the inhabitants are scattered in all directions, in the mountains and along the shores, and all the parish priests had struggled with this immense difficulty, and having only a very minimal success in the initial years and somewhat successfully in later years. Its convent, a modest edifice of a rather solid construction, was the project of Fr. Sebastián Leza (1834-1881)³⁵ who died as a result of a malignant fever perhaps having contracted it from sheer exhaustion in his work. His successor Fr. Adolfo

and installed in September. A zealous, generous, upright prelate, endowed with excellent skills of governance and prudence, he governed his diocese for twelve years until his demise on 24 October 1897. See SÁDABA, 506-508.

³⁴Casto Sesma was ordained as priest in the Philippines in 1873. In the wake of his sojourn at their Cebu convent, he was sent to study Visayan Cebuano in Loboc, Bohol he administered in 1876-1879. From 1879 to 1886, he was subsequently parish priest of Baclayon, Maribojoc, Antequera and Calape. After a year in San Sebastian Convent in Manila, he served Panglao in Bohol in 1887-1893. He was at the helm of San Fernando Rey Parish of Liloan from 1893 until 1898. In October of that year, he traveled to Spain and died at their convent in Monteagudo, Navarra on 10 April 1899. See SÁDABA, 570.

³⁵Sebastián Leza served the parishes of Negros Oriental such as Dumaguete, Tolong and Guijulngan. He was likewise the parish priest of Pilar in the Camotes Islands in 1864-1868 and from 10 September 1880 the Parish of San Narciso of Consolacion where he died on 27 May 1881. See SÁDABA, 486.

Muro (1836-1898)³⁶ finished the construction of the rectory. The parish church, a very modest structure, was very well built and it could last many years. The church was the project of Fr. Timoteo Miramón (1864-1941)³⁷ who likewise erected the school houses and the *casa tribunal* [municipal building] of the town.

It was Fr. Francisco Gómez (1843-1913)³⁸ who was most successful in his effort to gather the parishioners and make them live near the town and it was mostly due to him that that majority of the houses were located in its environs. It was the lot of this priest to experience a most unfortunate period since the cholera of 1881 cut down the lives of the people of Consolacion in a devastating manner. The faithful had observed the remarkable interest of their parish priest in assisting them spiritually and materially, and the excellent results he had obtained from his medicines. They got

³⁶Adolfo Muro ministered to the parishioners of Cacub in the Island of Siargao for twenty years and in 1880 he was transferred to Consolacion. Towards the end of December 1881, he was assigned to their formation houses in Spain: Marcilla (1885) and Monteagudo (1888). After his assignments in Spain he was sent to Cebu in October 1892 and to Danao in December. He was parish priest of Catmon from March 1895 to August 1897 when he was assigned as resident in their Cebu convent where he returned to his Creator in January 1898 at age 61. See SÁDABA, 488.

³⁷Timoteo Miramón was assigned as companion of the parish priest of Liloan in January 1887 until his sacerdotal ordination in March in Manila. In April he was sent to Catmon to become proficient in Visayan Cebuano. He was named parish priest of Consolacion in June 1888-January 1896. He translated and published the *Novena can Señor San Narciso* Patron sa lungsod sa Consolacion with twenty-four pages, printed in Cebu City. He was the Recollect parish priest of Carmen from February 1896 until the Revolution in April 1898. He left for Spain in June 1900. After his missionary endeavors in Brazil, he travelled back to Spain 1922 and resided in various convents until his death in Granada in 1941. See SÁDABA, 467; AVELLANEDA, 265-266.

³⁸Francisco Gómez arrived in Manila in June 1868 and was ordained as priest in July. His pastoral ministry was subsequently carried out in the following territories: Cuyo and Taytay in the Calamianes; Himamaylan and Valladolid in Negros; Puerto Princesa in Palawan and Agutaya in the Calamianes. In 1882-1884, he was appointed parish priest of Consolacion. Thereafter, he was assigned to Talibon in Bohol, Cajidiocan in Romblon, Sibulan in Negros and finally in Siquijor. He travelled to Manila and then to Spain in 1899. He was assigned to Venezuela and after five years he returned to Spain and lived in Motril, Granada where he passed away in 1913. SÁDABA, 536-537; AVELLANEDA, 377-378.

encouraged little by little and gradually set up some houses which had been on the rise since then. The *tabò*, that is, the market day which the natives held every Monday in this town, had been the source of frequent displeasures for the parish priests. The Recollect curates had to pose objections to the demands of some exploiters who attempted many times to appropriate for themselves the products—as agreed in the town’s arbitrary judgment—thus with prejudice to the rights of the people. Thanks to the objection posed by the parish priests it has been maintained for the good of all up to these days. It thus avoided further the payment of exorbitant fees by countless impoverished natives when others tried to intrude in order to live at the expense of another’s labor. Fr. Francisco Gómez, Fr. Blas Adán (1846-1893)³⁹ and Fr. Timoteo Miramón similarly worked for the preservation and improvement of the roads in Consolacion, rendering their services to the officials of the government.

CAMOTES GROUP: Poro, San Francisco and Pilar

These three small islands are located between those of Cebu and Leyte that were administered in ancient times by the Society of Jesus. It is evident in the old records that the three islands were the focus of the missionary sallies by the Jesuits and they depended upon the parish of Mandaue which toward 1734 had Poro as annex, the center of the three islands of Sulanga, and Poson forming the small group of Camotes Islands. They remained under the spiritual administration of the parish priest of Mandaue until the Recollects were put in charge of the parish in 1846.

Upon the petition of the parish priest of Mandaue and through the episcopal decree dated 14 December 1847, Poro was erected as a parish. Its territory comprised the three islands of Sulanga, Poro

³⁹Blas Adán arrived in Manila on board the frigate *Concepción* on 10 February 1870 with the 60th Recollect missionary expedition that included the future Saint Ezekiel Moreno. After his priestly ordination in March 1870, he was assigned in Jagna and then in Sierra Bullones in 1872 and in Ubay in 1877, all in Bohol. He was parish priest of Consolacion in 1884-1888 and Corella in 1888 until shortly before his death in April 1893 which happened in Manila. See SÁDABA, 547.

and Poson. At that time, the parish of Poro had 4,000 souls based on the parochial census of that year. Furthermore, the increase of population and the constant vigilance of the parish priest Fr. Ambrosio Iturriaga soon produced as a result the creation of two new parishes: one parish in the island of Poson, the town of Pilar, created by the diocesan decree dated 9 November 1859, and another in the island of Sulanga, the town of San Francisco on 23 June 1863. During this year, the population census recorded in the three islands had gone up to the respectable figure of 10,000 souls. Despite the poverty of these islands and the difficulty of communications, the population constantly increased, and in the latest censuses the total was 20,000 souls.

Due to the pastoral activity of Nicolás González (1824-1892)⁴⁰ and Ambrosio Iturriaga, Poro could boast of a nice stone church with tiled roof and a fine rectory—restored in these last years by Ramón Alegría (1854-?)⁴¹—a good cemetery and public school houses for children of both sexes. The civil town of Taganito, whose creation was officially petitioned by Fr. Alegría, still belonged under the spiritual jurisdiction to the parish of Poro. That priest constructed a decent church with posts and *tabique pampango* and with roof of galvanized iron. He further improved the other public buildings and supervised the public works connecting Poro with its adjoining Taganito through a suitable road that he had finished when he left that parish.

⁴⁰Nicolás González was parish priest of Poro in 1850-1854. He served the curacies in Mindanao, Bohol and Cavite Puerto. He resided in Intramuros, Manila for two years and in the Immaculate Conception Convent for nine years in 1881-1885, then in 1888 till his death in 1893. He wrote catechism books, novenas, grammar books in Visayan Cebuano and Spanish poems. See SÁDABA, 444.

⁴¹Ramón Alegría was assigned as companion of the parish priest of Poro in early 1879 but was soon transferred to Dimiao, Bohol and to Cagayan de Misamis to study Visayan Cebuano. His subsequent assignments: Iligan, Cagayan in Mindanao, Himamaylan, Bago and San Sebastian in Negros Island. In 1887, he worked as companion in Danao until his appointment as parish priest of Poro from 22 July 1889 until 24 April 1894 when administered the parish of Maria in Siquijor where he built the magnificent church and convent. He returned to Spain in 1898 and from there to the missions in Brazil. There is no published information at hand on his possible exlaustration. See SÁDABA, 603.

Pilar had a church made of masonry with strong walls that was erected by Fr. Manuel Arellano, with a parochial house restored in these last years by Fr. Emeterio Martínez (1869-?),⁴² a cemetery and public school buildings. In its three barrios or visitas of Dapdap, Lanao and Cautit, it has also three provisional chapels, owing to the zeal and supervision of the parish priests. In the town of San Francisco, because the old church was in a dilapidated state, Fr. Nemesio Llorente (1852-1931)⁴³ constructed a new one in these last years. The church edifice was made of wooden posts and interpolated pillars of stones, socle of masonry, *tabique pampango* and roof made of galvanized iron. The best woods were utilized in the church construction. The rectory was the work of Fr. Lope Martínez (1833-1889)⁴⁴ and it was a fine edifice with tiled roof. The cemetery walls and gate were likewise made of wood and built by Fr. Martínez who lived in that isolated town for more than twenty years.

⁴²After his sacerdotal ordination in 1892, Emeterio Martínez subsequently served the curacies of Garcia Hernandez, Tagbilaran and Jagna in Bohol. He was put in charge of Pilar from 17 November 1895 to 28 November 1897 and Poro from 29 November 1897 to 28 September 1898. He travelled to Macao and then to Spain where he was assigned to their convent in Monteagudo, Navarra in 1899. There is no published information on his possible exclaustation. See SÁDABA, 685-686.

⁴³In 1877, Nemesio Llorente was sent to Loay, Bohol after his ordination in Manila to study Bisaya Cebuano. He took over Loay after its parish priest died in 1878. He headed the parish of Cagayan de Misamis in 1879-1882. His subsequent assignments: Bacong, Tolong, Cortes, Corella, Jasaan, Cagayan de Misamis, Talibon. He was parish priest of San Francisco in the Camotes Islands in 1888-1892 and Talibon in 1892-1897. After the Revolution, he returned as parish priest of Sibulan in Negros Oriental in 1904-1914 and 1920-1924 where he repaired its convent, built the cemetery and assigned people to guard the church edifices from anti-Church elements which had set on fire ecclesiastical edifices in Negros Oriental. He died in Manila in 1931. See SÁDABA, 594-595; AVELLANEDA, 458-459.

⁴⁴Lope Martínez received his sacerdotal ordination in Cebu City in 1856. After his first pastoral assignment in Panglao, Bohol (1858-1859), he was named parish priest of Pilar in 1860-1863 and of San Francisco in 1864-1880. He was sent to Compostela as parish priest in 1883-1884. He resided in 1881-1882 and 1885-1889 as confessor at the Immaculate Conception Convent in Cebu City where he rejoined his Creator on 11 November 1889. See SÁDABA, 479.

In brief, it would be extremely tedious to review one by one the projects carried out by the Recollect fathers in San Francisco and in other towns of Camotes. We shall just end this chapter by declaring that all the school buildings, *casas tribunales*, churches, chapels in the towns and barrios of the three little islands, as well as the rest of the projects for public use were exclusively due to the relentless zeal and intelligent supervision of the Recollect parish priests. Let us have as example the magnificent seawall that stretched across the swampy area of more than a kilometer long that connected the towns of Poro and San Francisco. The determination and strength of character of Fr. Ramón Alegría and Fr. Nemesio Llorente were indispensable so that the natives might not be dismayed in that project which had brought thereafter so numerous benefits to both towns by providing them with easy and short communication. That project further attracted to those towns countless bancas from Bohol and Cebu which in their frequent trips between Cebu and Leyte found there not only a haven of refuge and provisions but also a safer and shorter route, thanks to the drawbridge which was constructed in middle section of the marshy area in order to give passage to sea craft. The roads going to Banhig and Pagambacan should be for all time a tribute to the memory of Fr. Ramón Alegría and Fr. Nemesio Llorente, to whom these towns owed enormous and myriad benefits.

We shall not wind up this section on Camotes without adding that these islands separated from Cebu Island, to which province they have always belonged, had practically no Spanish administration at all, nor a single Spanish government official in those towns, and not even a single provincial governor who ever showed up there in order to conduct an inspection tour—we exclude those trips on board comfortable steamships lasting but a few hours—and that Recollect fathers supervised all the services—even the postal service was organized and maintained by them—as well as the collection of tributes because without the assistance of the parish priest it was impossible to compel the natives to comply with their obligations to the State.

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The Augustinian Recollects' Role in Quelling the Dagohoy Revolt (1827-1829)¹

Manuel Carceller OAR

Great were the hardships faced by the Augustinian Recollects in Bohol Island in their evangelization work and effort for the welfare of its people, primarily because of the rebellious unbelievers in the mountains and forests. They annoyed the missionaries no end and inflicted destruction and injury upon the Christian people who lived peacefully in their towns. As they searched for solutions to such situation, our missionaries sometimes climbed those mountains to deal with them through persuasion and at other times through information dispatched to civil authorities in order to take appropriate measures to completely subjugate the island.

The subjugation [of the Dagohoy Revolt] was almost completed during the three-year term (1791-1794) of the Prior Provincial José Pardo de Santa Orosia due to the decisions made by the Philippine authorities as a result of the information and warnings issued by the abovementioned religious prelate. This was following his provincial visit to the ministries of Bohol. However, despite the goodwill

¹This chapter *Pacificación de Bohol en la que intervienen los recoletos* is culled from *Historia de la Orden de Recoletos de San Agustín X: 1808-1836* (Madrid 1962) 526-538. Translated, edited and annotated by Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos.

and effort exerted by the missionary priests, for some reasons² the difficult situation was never put to an end. On the contrary, during the years we are dealing with, the conditions just turned for the worse. For the peace-loving inhabitants of Bohol, the vexations wrought by the upland rebels who perpetrated them grew more and more excruciating. The rebels destroyed their harvests, robbed their livestock and razed their houses to the ground. In one word, they had inflicted massive damage on the townspeople and their properties³.

The new Prior Provincial Pedro de Santa Rita was informed about all these events during his provincial visit to the island. Upon his return to Manila, the prior provincial made Captain General Mariano Ricafort aware of it and urged him to remedy that rueful situation. Thus the captain general exerted pertinent measures and ordered the alcalde mayor of Cebu to organize an



Francisco Dagohoy's revolt started in 1744 owing to a Jesuit priest's refusal to inter his brother **Sagarino** and lasted almost five decades after the chief's demise in early 1780s.

Source: Bohol Museum.

expedition. Consequently, the provincial governor did as he was told and took as chaplains Calced Augustinian Julián Bermejo, parish priest of Boljoon, Cebu, and the two Augustinian Recollects: Miguel de Jesús, parish priest of Danao also in Cebu, and Narciso de Jesús María,⁴ parish priest of Guindulman in Bohol. The three priests voluntarily offered their services.

²Some causes are mentioned in detail in Gregorio OCHOA, *Historia general de la Orden de Agustinos Recoletos VIII: 1755-1796* (Zaragoza 1928) 600.

³The full account is found in AHPM, Oficios, ff. 122ss.

⁴Narciso Hernández was born in Pandacan, Manila, on 5 August 1789. His parents were José Apolonio and Paulina Bini, according to Francisco Sádaba. He professed the vows in 1813 in Manila. Manuel Carceller writes in *Historia general* XI, 44, that Narciso was surnamed *Hernández* in the folio page 140 of

The operations commenced in the first half of May 1827. They were carried out under strict orders from the captain general himself to handle it with greatest prudence possible in order to shun too much bloodshed despite the resistance posed by the upland rebels. After twenty-nine days, over twenty-two thousand rebels surrendered. A great number voluntarily presented themselves on account of the valuable services of the three chaplains who had given evident proofs of their enthusiasm for religion and country. For this reason, they—together with others who distinguished themselves in that undertaking—were recommended to the Spanish ruler for him to acknowledge and thank them as the monarch might be pleased to do.

However, the desired and expected outcome was not acquired and, furthermore, there lay a danger of wasting what had been gained because the *alcalde mayor* Cairo was in a real hurry to withdraw to Cebu with his troops that were then sent back home. A small group of soldiers stayed behind and was put under the command of a captain without giving him any instruction at all to preserve the gains or improve on them.

The two Recollect chaplains reported the matter to the prior provincial in Manila. Father Provincial in turn informed the captain general about what had been reported by the two Recollects for the purpose of compelling the *alcalde mayor* of Cebu to stay in Bohol until everything was put in order, as Father Narciso had requested his religious prelate. At the same time, he pointed out to the prior provincial the need to make Bohol independent from the provincial government of Cebu, by creating for that island a *corregimiento*⁵ or *comandancia* or *alcaldía militar*, as the Province of Saint Nicholas had petitioned so many years ago, even as it the *Book of Necrologies* of Manila, now kept in Marcilla, Navarra. He served the parish of Paminguitan [actual Cortes] in 1815. On 4 January 1819, he received the canonical collation as parish priest of Guindulman. He was its curate for 45 years. He remained in this parish a little before his demise in Pandacan, Manila on 21 May 1865.

⁵A special territory of a *corregidor* who was an official appointed the Spanish monarch to hear and render verdict on litigations and then impose punishments for crimes committed.

had been always requesting the conquest of that island, but had always encountered—on account of this or that thing—a thousand obstacles and excuses. And, if the powers of the captain general did not authorize him to proceed with the creation of the office of *corregidor* or *alcalde militar*, the prior provincial promised him that the Recollect procurator general [in Madrid] would have recourse to the Spanish monarch to obtain the confirmation of that office.

On the 4th of December of 1827, the prior provincial again wrote to the captain general several letters. In one letter, after congratulating him for so many measures he had taken to finish the total subjugation of Bohol, the Recollect prelate informed him that the provincial governor, the vicar provincial of Bohol and the governor general told him that they had pulled out Father Miguel de Jesus and Father Narciso de Jesús María from their parishes [of Danao in Cebu and Guindulman in Bohol, respectively], and had put them in charge of the administration of Mandao and Canaugay, new towns created from more than eight hundred tributes and families, whose appointments were willingly accepted by the two religious for the sake of the two Monarchs.⁶

Then the prior provincial informed him that—with the priority need of choosing the locations where the new towns would be created from the settlements which had been overcome but were scattered in the mountains—he had wanted Father Miguel de Jesús, endowed with hands-on knowledge, prudent decision and dealings with the natives to be authorized, coupled with the assistance of the commander of the troops to be deployed in the island in order to select the site of the new towns. He would suppress those settlements considered prejudicial to the new town, thus avoiding that the towns might be unhealthful and sparsely populated, since their contentment and wellbeing consisted in their being resettled or grouped together in a suitable territory with abundant arable lands. All this should be taken into account according to the aforementioned religious.

⁶The Lord God, the King of Heaven, and the Spanish monarch.

In another letter, the provincial again went on to cite the two parish priests' insistence on the need of permanent troop deployment in the center of the island so that the conquest of the uplands would lead to its total completion. In a third letter, he requested the governor general—in accordance to the recommendation of Father Miguel de Jesús—to order that the new *reducciones* of recent rebel returnees established from the town of Jagna up to the town of Loon be regrouped in small resettlements or in one sole town where they could be supervised. Otherwise there would be a sure danger that the malcontents would seduce them and that the armed conflict would be protracted. The war tolled heavily on the people of Bohol who had been constrained to wage it for their own survival even without the necessary provisions.

Another letter referred to the fact that Father Narciso de Jesús Maria had established the town of Batuanan where many returnees presented themselves for the census. Batuanan was a *visita* or annex village of the new town of Canaugay⁷ that Father Narciso continued to administer. And finally, in a fifth letter, the provincial made it clear that the parochial ministry of Inabanga, also in Bohol, consisted of ten *visitas* with very few houses located very far from the town center of Inabanga. It was for this reason that the parishioners could not be administered in spiritual matters by their minister and in civil affairs by the civil authorities. Numerous upland residents presented themselves in these *visitas* for the census-taking in order to take advantage of the privileges given to the newly resettled people. However, later on they did not reappear in the *visitas* anymore, even though they had to be sought after. That is why it was of utmost importance that not only those rebel returnees who voluntarily descended in the last conquest but also all those who lived in the old settlements should be compelled to be resettled in one, two or three towns, by selecting the sites

⁷Historian Jes B. Tirol informed this writer in a text message that Canuagay could be the present-day Camangay, a barangay of Dagohoy municipality. This is a more feasible statement since the proximity of Canaugay to the town of Guindulman where Father Narciso was the parish priest. However, if Canaugay is the actual barangay of Kanoan, Engr. Tirol went on [but this is a far-fetched conjecture], it is now part of the far-flung town of San Miguel.

most healthful and very highly advantageous to them. There they might be grouped together for the general instruction by the parish priests and it might be possible to defend them from the Moros since up to the present time there have been unabated kidnapping cases in that part of Inabanga.

In a decree dated 5 February 1828, the governor general informed the prior provincial that the conquest of Bohol would proceed with the greatest efficacy until the subjugation of the last person who remained in rebellion in the mountains. The Spanish viceroy further ordered that, as they would be subjected to reduction, new population centers would be established in best-suited places complete with water supply, land for cultivation, mountain and pasture for livestock. When the site had been designated for the town, a *gobernadorcillo* and a church minister would be appointed, and both officials—by common agreement and in conformity with the duties of each one—would take the census of the town and instruct people in the obedience to authority and in the mysteries of our religion. Furthermore, lands would be distributed to the resettled people who ought to be treated with all compassion and consideration.

On the 14th of the same month of February, the prior provincial informed the archbishop of Manila who was the administrator of the Diocese of Cebu *sede vacante* that the alcalde mayor had written the vicar provincial of Bohol Father Blas del Carmen and the vicar general of the diocese of Cebu so that the two would agree to designate ministers in those towns with the greatest number of resettled people—Mandao and Canaugay—convinced that these ministers were to be practical and virtuous, experienced and tested in the work with the unbelievers and they had offered the two said ministries to Father Miguel de Jesús and Father Narciso de Jesús María, who having left behind the conveniences of their curacies in Danao, Cebu and in Guindulman, Bohol, respectively, “exchanging what is sweet with what is bitter,” willingly accepted and in the month of December had moved to their new residences. Once the decree had officially come to their attention—in the final words of the prior provincial—not only did he approve what was decided

by the vicar provincial but also did he write the royal vice patron and governor general, Don Mariano Ricafort, proposing to him the need to give the immediate approval upon what was provided for by the alcalde mayor and the two vicars s[vicar provincial and vicar forane] already mentioned and that these new resettlements be declared as missions, and ordering that he assisted the two missionaries with compensation to which they were entitled and they might be exempted from what the law had provided for with respect to sacred ornaments, etc.

In March, the prior provincial communicated to the royal vice patron and governor general about the separation of the respective towns of Father Miguel de Jesús and Father Narciso de Jesús María for their transfer to the new resettlements. He received in reply the vice patron's approval of the recommendation of the general assessor of the government, who declared the following:

With the abolition of the Law of Concordance by the royal decree of 1 August 1795 and the re-establishment of the common right, no canonically appointed and installed parish priest can be removed without a lawsuit, without hearing his defense or without his resignation from the position definitely, nor any curacy be declared vacant by any government ruling without exposing itself to terrible consequences. And, as from the letters issued by the metropolitan archbishop of Manila and by the prior provincial of the Recollects, it appears that this legal provision was not taken into account, and your Excellency deigned to reply to them by reminding them about its prompt compliance.

The prior provincial gave the following reply on the 19th of April:

Your Excellency:

Having received the superior decree of Your Excellency on the 12th of the current month [April], wherein it is ordained that the curacies of Danao and Guindulman cannot be declared vacant; in order to comply with this superior decree, I have ordered that these two religious who had left those parishes in December to fulfill the mandates of the superior government in the new town centers in the Island of Bohol to return to their former curacies because their separation and voluntary departure from their towns had not been granted by Your Excellency's approval, by abandoning the comforts

offered by the towns—old, established and very regular for their subsistence—but moving to the center of the forests of Bohol in order to set up new towns consisting of coerced people and enemy of God and State, without any support and comforts except the hardships posed by the mountains, lack of food provisions, without a roof on their heads, without a church and in continuous jolts whether from the newly resettled or by those who rejected resettlement and who ambushed, cajoled and induced the resettled folks to abandon their new lands or lifestyles and to return to the ancient customs. All this was their recompense, Your Excellency, that the religious Father Miguel de Jesús and Father Narciso de Jesús María, who even as they believed they were doing a new sacrifice for Religion and a new service to the State, have sought and have made themselves available for this new conquest, for that motive and not that of the royal *cédula* of the Concordance, from which our minds have been very far from taking advantage of it, the vicar general of Cebu invited by our *alcalde mayor*, and my vicar provincial in that island, granted the permission to the two priests so that they would move to the *reducciones* to take charge of them. It was furthermore evident to the prelates that there were no other ministers more suitable for that situation [than the two] since they have been familiar for many years with the Visayan character [*visayismo*] whether for the exemplary conduct or, above all, for their prudence they were endowed with, so necessary when dealing with some uncivilized people who were rational only because they had rational souls but were bereft of culture. If it had been believed that it was me who had presented him to the diocesan prelate so that he as the administrator of that bishopric would approve what would be within his jurisdiction to establish new missions and to remove those curacies and that through the conduct of his Excellency it would be raised to the royal vice-patron who was to approve or disapprove what had been done, if this deed, in my opinion, would please his Excellency, it would seemingly need the approval of wanting to make use of the royal *cedula* of the Concordance, I must likewise say that my mind has been very remote from this deed, if I had acted the way I had just said, it was because your Excellency in your superior decree of 5 February, by which you declare and order the continuance of the conquest of Bohol until not a single person would remain in the mountains. Similarly, you ordered me to petition this and everything deemed to lead to the good success of the conquest and its preservation, and as I had already made your Excellency aware—through a separate communication—of the need for the creation of

these missions with many other things pertinent to that conquest. And the communications had been accommodated solely to the principal cause, without having taken the channels separately from that, and so it was that—believing that other matters would be activated because they had already been issued by your Excellency, to which office they had to be forwarded for your approval, I took the opportunity of this channel with no other objective than what had been said.

Lately I had to be specific, although with much sentiment and pain, to have to inform your Excellency that it was necessary that the illustrious archbishop, the administrator of that see, must of course provide those missions or new settlements with ministers since my Province at present does not have anyone to substitute those two religious in the missions in Bohol. The old religious who would assist them were well-placed and would suffer the same hardships as the incumbent [parish priests], when perhaps there would be no one who might want to emulate the oft-cited two priests.

The young religious have only a year of pastoral work here, newly ordained, without having mastered the language yet; and so for now it would please your Excellency that they are able to replace the ministers either in an acting capacity or with canonical collation that the illustrious Lordship might want to order whether they be clerics or anyone from the religious corporation that might accept it, while let it be made clear that it is not my intention to reserve for me any right to these foundations or resettlements.

Although this topic does not correspond to the history of the present triennium [1825-1828], we can affirm here that until 1829 the total subjugation of the island of Bohol did not materialize. With a great number of towns of *reducidos* established, our religious were put in charge of their administration. The enormous task that weighed upon the shoulders of these religious can be culled from *Sinopsis histórica de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino*.⁸

We mention Padre Manuel Plaza de San Benito, the first minister of one of those towns called Balilihan. This new town was erected as a parish in May 1829 and it consisted of three hundred and twelve tributes and two hundred unbelievers. This young religious belonged to the second missionary expedition that headed out of

⁸Licinio RUIZ, *Sinopsis histórica de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino de las Islas Filipinas* I (Manila 1925) 709.

Alfaro⁹ and was assigned to that parish in September of that same year 1829. "At the arrival of this priest, the natives of Balilihan lacked everything and lived the uncivilized lifestyle. They had no farms or bananas. The priest had to start by simultaneously imparting spiritual instruction to them and teaching them how to till the land, how to cultivate plantations, how to plough. He did it all by himself in order to give example because they abhorred manual work and considered it as superstition on account of the many illnesses they had been victims of. This minister brought to Balilihan the first bananas from Baclayon, planted coconuts and raised cacao. It was something new for his parishioners. Furthermore, he opened roads to adjoining towns."

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⁹Alfaro in La Rioja, Spain, was the first convent of the Province of Saint Nicholas that trained future missionaries. Before its canonical establishment in 1824, the vicar provincial went to various Recollect convents in Spain and recruited volunteers to Philippine missions. The Alfaro convent was short-lived because in 1829 the monastery of Monteagudo in Navarra was canonically erected where young formands had their novitiate, philosophy and initial theological formation.

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The Cession of the Recollect Curacies in Mindanao to the Jesuits (1859-1863)

Manuel Carceller OAR

The 30 July 1859 royal decree¹

The polemical royal decree was published on 30 July 1859.² In the words of Fray Toribio Minguella, future bishop of Sigüenza, Spain, that decree issued by the Queen of Spain eventually filled “the hearts of the Augustinian Recollects with bitterness.”³ The provincial chronicler Licinio Ruiz further observes in the first volume of his *Sinopsis histórica*, published in 1925:

When everything was going splendidly, when the hardships blocking the progress of our Province had found their solutions and we were already counting on a group of missionaries, capable and sufficient in filling up and maintaining the whole vast administration we have in the Archipelago, and when it was least expected our superiors encountered a royal decree ordering them to abandon the spiritual administration of Mindanao forever and surrender it to the priests of the Society of Jesus.

¹The article is culled from Chapter 17 of Manuel CARCELLER, *Historia general de la Orden de Agustinos Recoletos* xi: 1837-1866 (Madrid 1967) 438-447, translated and annotated by Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos.

²This royal decree was issued on the eve of the feast of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus.

³Toribio MINGUELLA, *Conquista espiritual de Mindanao por los Agustinos Recoletos* (Valladolid 1885), 10.

That royal decree in its Article 13 ordered the mission of the Society of Jesus, dispatched to Mindanao, to take charge of the spiritual care of the island, replacing the existent curacies with its individuals as the necessary personnel may become available and in a manner deemed convenient.

The chief cause that gave rise to such order was the long letter which the bishop of Cebu sent to her Majesty on 26 November 1857, asking her Majesty—once the Society of Jesus was re-established in her dominions by the law of 19 October 1852 and the Island of Mindanao being so vast that it had a million and a half population of Christians, unbelievers and Muslims, and attending to those peoples and to the new missions being so difficult to the Recollect priests due to the extent of their administration—to deign authorize the priests of the Society to take charge of the spiritual administration of Mindanao in the areas comprising the districts of Bislig, Davao, Polloc, Zamboanga Province, Basilan Island and others located east and south of it. We cannot second-guess the motives which the most illustrious Bishop Fray Romualdo Jimeno, the author of such account, could have had for a measure like that. If he had lavished encomiums on the Society of Jesus in his letter—certainly well-deserved—in like manner he paid tribute to our Congregation which he said had bequeathed heroic and valorous deeds to history, etc. We believe, however, that there was no other cause but our dearth of personnel he had alleged and because of which we could not attend to all the needs of the island.

‘Poor, very poor, deceitful,’ motives in his reply dated 8 July 1860 to the Cebu bishop’s letter, our commissary provincial Fr. Guillermo Agudo in Madrid termed the alleged reasons of the prelate and fiercely rebutted by the commissary.

Vigorous and simultaneously convincing would be the challenge that the Recollect fathers could do in the form, spirit and way of the bishop’s petition. It must highly call the attention of his Excellency—who cannot ignore the highest respect that the monarch has granted to the possession of *doctrinas* and curacies including instances when some exchange [of parishes] was established, it was done in accordance with the requisites provided for by law with respect to proprietorship that the bishop of Cebu, without even bringing out the idea of exchange or indemnification, likewise proposes as he does has deprived and dispossessed the Recollects even without making such a severe measure pleasant in one way or another.

Disregarding not just the lack of courtesy or attention by not sharing his intentions with our fathers but also the lack of equity as well as the infringement against the Laws of the Indies,⁴ because without saying a single word about it nor contacting them at all, he took away from them—merely because, yes, he wanted to do it—the towns which the Recollects had in legitimate possession. Neither was he truthful when he stated that we did not have enough personnel to attend to all the towns and parishes, precisely because at that time—thanks to the establishment of the new college seminary of Monteagudo—our Province had over forty religious in excess and sixteen more in Spain who have just finished their formation.

That way Fr. Agudo was countering all the arguments given by the most illustrious bishop by reasoning out brilliantly the right we Recollects had for our side to be heard at the very least—as we are the interested party in the controversy— and by making him realize that the bases upon which the most illustrious bishop supported his petition had no weight whatsoever, if it was not perhaps the certain good will he had for the Society but which constitute reasons of another nature.⁵

Agudo's letter to the Queen; the Provincial Council decision

Another letter was written by the commissary provincial Guillermo Agudo in the wake of that 8 July 1860 reply to the bishop of Cebu alluded to earlier by Licinio Ruiz in his *Sinopsis histórica*. This time it was addressed to her Majesty the Queen of Spain⁶ on 5 November 1860. We reprint it here because we believe that the minimal details of this controversy of enormous significance to the Recollects must be brought out.⁷

Thus writes the commissary provincial:

Madame: Fr. Guillermo Agudo, commissary and procurator of the Augustinian Recollects of the Missions in Asia, respectfully informs your Majesty:

⁴The Laws of the Indies mandated that, in matters like this, information or comment must be sought from the parties involved in the litigation.

⁵Licinio RUIZ, *Sinopsis histórica de la Provincia de San Nicolás* I, 254-256.

⁶Isabel II (1833-1868).

⁷AHPM, Folder 4 bis, 105.

That as soon as his Province was informed about your Majesty's royal decree dated 30 July of last year [1859], by means of which in its Article 13 the Recollects are totally deprived of the spiritual administration of the Island of Mindanao, a great part of which with so many sacrifices of every nature they had overcome for the Church and State, they could not but provoke strongly the undersigned, with due compliance, to inform your Majesty—as I am doing—that the sacrifices of those religious, their selflessness and abnegation in preserving and increasing the five towns received from the former administration of the fathers of the Society of Jesus, and even increased its number to twenty-seven towns that constitute their present administration, not only have they not been taken into consideration but judging from the terms used in the decree it seems it was more than anything else but a disapproval of their services. I shall say further and it is one of the things that greatly called the attention in that decree where even the provisions of Canon Law were bypassed, without respecting [canonical] collations, since in the decree it is said with finality that incumbent parish priests shall be replaced with individuals of that [Society]—the Jesuits—when necessary personnel becomes available. This has no room for whatever interpretation: for example, when available, ten Jesuits fathers shall at once take over ten curacies whether they have received the canonical collation or not, getting rid of ten Recollect fathers.

Madame: The Recollect fathers accept and always comply even with benevolence with your Majesty's orders. Neither do they put in doubt, on the contrary, they defend and shall always defend the ecclesiastical patronage of your Majesty in all its extent, however, they cannot but call the attention of your Majesty with respect to the absence of consideration given an Order that has been rendering untold services to the Church and State in the scattered administration, the most grueling and poorest in the entire islands. When your Majesty's service demanded some changes in the spiritual administration, always—there has been no precedent to the contrary—certain considerations for the Orders have always been taken into account—whether swapping with mutual acquiescence or indemnifying the Order with other *pueblos* or *doctrinas*. In the case at hand, however, it has done away with everything, and in the decree in question the [the Recollects] and their Institute were not even given the consolation of being named.

Endless would it be to try to convey to your Majesty all the reflections that the cited decree suggests to me. Your Majesty, in your

profound insight, shall understand that no favor whatsoever has been done to the Recollect fathers when they are removed from the spiritual administration of the whole island of Mindanao, that this act alone is enough by itself to dampen the spirit of these fathers in their apostolic endeavors; moreover, this precedent shall similarly be acrimonious to the other Orders.

In the name of my Corporation, in submission and deference I beg your Majesty to deign take into consideration the services of these religious, assuaging their departure from Mindanao, by entrusting them with other administrations in compensation for those they have established and shall now abandon and by providing employment for twenty-seven missionaries who shall be bereft of assignments as soon as the decree is implemented. Furthermore, the decree thus nullifies their sacrifices exerted in order to promote their college seminary by order of the government of your Majesty, which is now the cause of the superabundant personnel of the Province.

As regards the provincial council, we have to warn that in the meeting held on 24 July 1859—a few days before the decree we referred to was signed in Madrid—, when the prior provincial notified him about the petition made by the bishop of Cebu, and that this petition had the support of the Superior Government of the Philippines, all the provincial councilors “had agreed on the voluntary cession for its being an unburdening, so exceptionally enormous and hard to carry out.” Although a week later, we should, as justice demands, for our part, place two missions in the territory of Bislig, in this manner we could re-establish the old missions of San Juan and San Salvador, or wherever it was more convenient, assigning to the two missions those stipends stemming from the income of the *obra pía*⁸ named Taboada. But we believe that the council had firmed up this decision because, as the founder of this *obra pía* destined its income to the missionary of Bislig or whatever mission in Mindanao, when they are now forced to abandon that pueblo, in case the petition of the bishop of Cebu is granted, they would be able to apply the abovementioned stipends to new Recollect missions in the same island.⁹

⁸Literally, *pious work*.

⁹AHPM, 35, *Definitorios*, ff. 48, 49. Cfr. pág. 820, no. 17.

Prior provincial's letter to the captain general

However, despite all these measures taken, and upon being persuaded that what was dealt with in the petition of the bishop of Cebu was already a reality when the very decree of 30 July 1859 had come to the attention of the provincial Antonio Úbeda, the [Recollect] wrote a letter to the father commissary, telling him to strive to achieve successfully the conservation of our ministries in Mindanao, or at least to exert every effort to obtain anything from the government so that the Recollects may leave that island with honor.¹⁰

Hence, Agudo did what he was told to do in Madrid, as we have already seen, that is, to address a petition to her transcribed above. At the same time Prior Provincial Antonio Úbeda himself wrote a letter to the captain general of the Philippines, who held the position of vice royal patron, requesting that the implementation of the decree be suspended until such time that the [Madrid] central government would resolve the recourse presented by the provincial commissary.

Still the prior provincial did not content himself with this measure; he wanted to deal personally with this matter with the captain general himself. Fr. Úbeda therefore wrote him a letter dated 4 March 1861 bringing all his observations out.

This document is penned by Fr. Antonio Úbeda. Albeit lengthy, “we are going to reprint it in its entirety.” We shall declare together with the author of the *Sinopsis histórica*—besides highlighting our fathers’ sentiments—that it is “the best synthesis and the most beautiful compendium of our glories and triumphs in that island from which they now try to dispossess us.”¹¹

Here it is:

Most excellent sir: Your Excellency sent me an official letter dated 23 February 1861, in short, relaying to me that on the same date you informed the superior of the Jesuit priests, declaring that, having adjudicated the spiritual administration of Mindanao in the 30 July 1859 decree to them, they dispatch the available religious in

¹⁰AHPM, folder 80, leg. 2, of the 20 January 1861 Letter.

¹¹AHPM, 49, *Oficios*, 193v.; L. RUIZ, *Sinopsis histórica* II, 256.

the steamship *Malespina* which was about to lift anchor on the first of March.

I acknowledged receipt of the abovementioned official letter on the 25th day of the same month [February]. However, mention was made of a long letter that I addressed to the vice patron. I exerted effort to get an audience with your Excellency in order to narrate to you, with due respect, the observations I believe are helpful. This audience could not take place because your Excellency was somewhat ill, and you were indisposed to receive anyone. That is why on 28 February when I was slightly indisposed though, my [provincial] secretary went to see your Excellency in my name, and on that day you deigned to receive him with kindness, to attentively listen to the observations that he narrated to you with respect to the spiritual administration of Mindanao, and to deem them level-headed and appropriate, to give him the assurance that, with respect to your part, your Excellency would extend support to the Province of the Recollects and would not do anything that would prejudice it. You concluded by entrusting him to inform me that these same observations, conveniently expanded, to be drafted for your Excellency in an official letter to Madrid—channeled through your Excellency—in the next mail in order to back up the negotiations being done in the office of the Director General in the Overseas Ministry by Fr. Guillermo Agudo, commissary and procurator of my Province in the royal court. So then, I am doing what your Excellency has bidden my [provincial] secretary in the letter I have the honor of addressing your Excellency today.

Your most excellent sir: The 30 July 1859 decree hurts my Province so much that it may not be strange to it, although we profoundly comply with it, that we exert our effort, even as we always obey all the orders of his Majesty (May he rest in peace) with all the respect they deserve, to bring to an end or to lessen the pain it is causing us. In November [1860], I already dispatched a statement to the most excellent vice patron, wherein, by showing what the Recollects have done in Mindanao and how much they have cooperated with those in government, and requesting the suspension of ‘let it be complied with’ of the decree only in what concerns the spiritual aspect, until—not more than that—the [Madrid] central government to which he had recourse to, resolve what it might deem fair and convenient. My province, sure enough, went to the office of the Director of the Overseas and Fr. Agudo, procurator of the Recollects in Madrid, carried out this negotiation. And today I am going to bring to your Excellency’s knowledge the evangelization efforts of the Recollects in Mindanao

for a span of two and a half centuries, the zeal they have shown, the barriers they have hurdled, the unending risks they have been exposed to, the adversities and sacrifices they have undergone, the triumphs they have achieved, the damages that are going to be inflicted against the Recollects who would be replaced in their existent curacies in Mindanao, all those [faithful] are entrusted to their care, and how ready are they to assist the government in its projects and are in fact implementing them. Without a trace of a doubt, to fully accomplish this objective, what is needed is rather an extensive narrative; but do not fear your Excellency that I will abuse your goodwill, since I will try to not go beyond what is right but within proper bounds.

In 1622, the Augustinian Recollects commenced their evangelization work in Mindanao. From 1597 to that year, several attempts had been undertaken but they came up against the fierce nature and barbaric customs of the natives of the island. That is why they [the Recollects] thought of altering the line of conduct and it was believed that the surest way was to employ the gentle means of Christian preaching. When a considerable number of Gospel workers of the Order of the Discalced of Saint Augustine arrived in these islands, Bishop [Pedro de] Arce, the most worthy prelate of Cebu, thought he could assign this enterprise to those religious. Eight were the Recollects, most excellent sir, to whom he could entrust the task. They were bereft of human assistance and with no resources from this world, and they dared penetrate the territory; rather than imposing upon any man of greatest generosity of spirit, on account of the ferocity of its inhabitants, the island presented itself entirely unproductive due to the superstitions and idolatries of its residents and that posed a great obstacle to the Word of God. Nevertheless, greater was the enthusiasm and zeal of the Recollects than the multitude and magnitude of the risks they were encountering. Unnumbered were the difficulties and privations they were undergoing. But God protected them through some manifestations; the power from on High was shown in a conspicuous manner and the Lord gave strength and efficacy to the missionaries' preaching.

This made those eight apostles harvest abundant fruits from their evangelization work, and that, in so brief a time, against all the appearances and odds here below, they established the towns of Cagayan¹², Catarman,¹³ Butuan, Surigao, Cantilan, Tandag, Linao

¹²Present-day Cagayan de Oro.

¹³A town in Camiguin Island.

and Bislig where a considerable number of new Christians were converted.

Do not think, nevertheless, that those spiritual conquests were accomplished in a peaceful manner and that the Recollects could just submit themselves with calmness to the duties of the pulpit and confessional and to the pleasant increase of imperturbable, calm and collective prayer. It was indispensable for the new Christian community to be watered by the blood of martyrs in order for them to acquire steadfastness and stability and to traverse majestically the long course of more than two centuries in the midst of the countless setbacks and mishaps. Thus it happened, most excellent sir: the year 1631 was horrible for that new Christian community and devastating for the Recollects, although the storm ceased and it provided them with triumphs that would never fade away.

The Caraga inhabitants, encouraged by the uprising of the Jolo natives against the Spaniards, [and] instigated by heathen priests to rise up in arms, incited and reinforced by the Muslim king Cachil Corralat [Sultan Kudarat], all the towns of the province, with the exception of Butuan, rose up in arms against the Spanish missionaries, vandalized the churches, desecrated the sacred vessels, committed sacrilege against the religious icons. And in that rebellion the zealous Recollect missionaries—Juan de la Madre de Dios, Pedro de San Antonio, Jacinto de Jesús María and Juan de Santo Tomás—perished by spear thrusts. Father Alonso de San José was beheaded. Those were not the sole victims of my Recollect province at that time, because in 1624 some rebellious natives who took so badly Father Juan de San Nicolás' zeal for promoting Christianity cast him to the sea and he died from drowning. I cannot pass in silence the great service rendered by the very reverend Father Jacinto de San Fulgencio, prior of Butuan, in the 1631 revolt because he travelled to Cebu, braving the maximum risks, to seek assistance. And with the troops who arrived, he was able to defend the fort of Tandag which was about to fall into the hands of the rebels. It seemed that such a very extensive devastation, such an extremely horrifying storm would scare the Recollects living in those islands and would necessarily make them resolve never to set foot on Mindanao again, scene of untold misfortunes. Far from happening that way, the apostolic fervor of the Recollects experienced the greatest flames, everybody debated with holy emulation as to who were to take the place of those who preceded them in the glorious call to martyrdom. Hence, the first martyrs were at once replaced, and the ardor of zeal of the new ones paved the way in such a short

period of time to the reconstruction of churches and *kumbentos*, to the restoration of peace and tranquility, and the renewed Church showed life and vigor once more.

Despite everything, the apostolic workers of Caraga were not free from dread and anxieties; they were never spared from setbacks. Besides the Moros of Jolo and Mindanao, they had as adversaries the idolatrous unbelievers who from time to time caused terrible persecutions, as made evident in the uprising of Lanao Lake in 1651 instigated by an idolatrous chief, rose up in arms with a considerable number of natives whose rebellion resulted in several fatalities and misfortunes, especially the loss of Fr. Agustín de Santa María who was stabbed to death. But the scourge of those regions, the Almanzor¹⁴ of Mindanao, was the Muslim Cachil Corralat who would have put all the Christians to death and would have completely destroyed the evangelization work of my Province, if God had not stirred up a hero in Fray Agustín de San Pedro, known as *Padre Capitán*. This Recollect priest wielded together the meekness of a religious and valor of a soldier, the expertise of a military leader and ecclesiastical science, the apostolic zeal likened to Saint Paul, the holy enthusiasm in his breast as in Simon Maccabee. If God, I repeat, had not stirred up that hero to crush the pride of Corralat and weaken his formidable strength, if there had been no objections on the part of the government against Padre Capitán who would have finished off Corralat's power and would have made great conquests in the Lake of Malanao wherein, despite those objections, Padre Capitán still reaped significant laurels and won great trophies. The biography of Padre Capitán and that of Father Pascual Ibáñez who gained fame in the attack against Jolo in 1851 are most noteworthy and they constitute amazing pages in the history of the Recollects in Mindanao.

We have many other glories I must omit in order not to prolong this, as well as the names of the other noteworthy men and how much did our missionaries suffer in the first and second quarters of the 18th century. Without any trace of a doubt, due to the history of countless apostolic endeavors and innumerable hardships and sacrifices, his Majesty Carlos III was moved to entrust to them the towns of

¹⁴Abu Aamir Muhammad Ibn Abdullah Ibn Abi Aamir, Al-Hajib Al-Mansur (c. 938 - August 8, 1002), better known as Almanzor, was the *de facto* ruler of Muslim Al-Andalus [now Andalusia] from the late 10th to early 11th centuries. His rule marked the peak of power for Moorish Iberia. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Mansur_Ibn_Abi_Aamir.

Zamboanga, Lubungan, Dapitan and Misamis¹⁵ served by the Jesuit fathers until they were expelled from his realm. The results of the evangelization efforts of the Recollects of Mindanao are of significant consideration; since on top of the adequate increase of their first towns, they have subsequently created the towns of Jasaan, Iligan, Davao, Balingasag, Gigaquit, Cacub,¹⁶ Iponan, Mambajao, Jimenez, Sagay, Mainit, Dinagat, Talacogon, Linao, Polloc and Isabela. Therefore, the Recollects actually have twenty-seven towns, and we must note that in all of them, according to the annual census, the number of souls is in ascending progression. Such were the accomplished results, results that cost untold sacrifices, unnumbered privations and difficulties, numerous lives and captivities; results for my Recollect province that employed in Mindanao two hundred and fifty religious, as proven by existing documents, and many of them had achieved fame through their zeal and other prominent qualities.

Let us now deal with the damages that the 1859 decree inflicts on my province by ordering in its Article 13 the Society of Jesus to replace the incumbent parish priests in Mindanao, all Recollects—as it has been said—numbering twenty-seven at present. Dismissing at once the Recollects from those twenty-seven curacies they presently administer, and that—as it has been seen—had cost them so much, for now, I repeat, it will happen that the thread of their glorious traditions and the most beautiful flower, so to say, shall be detached from its stem. I mean, therefore, that the said decree shall inflict great moral damages on the Recollects and it wounds them in what hurts them most; since in the mid-17th century there was an attempt to take the Christian community away from them that was drenched by the blood and sweat of their confreres and that they defended as bravely as they could, and the Supreme Council preserved it in their possession having considered the reason that was brought out. Besides these moral injuries, other real and positive damages are inflicted upon us. In 1847, when his Majesty (may he rest in peace) deemed our services as useful and pleasing to him, his government encouraged us to give more extension to our college seminary in Monteagudo (Navarra), which is a house of religious formation and studies, so that a bigger number of religious destined for the Philippines might come out of it. So it was done to implement the wishes of the government; and therefore since 1848 from that college seminary one hundred thirty

¹⁵Present-day Ozamiz City.

¹⁶Cacub, now a village of Koronadal. Ruiz writes *Carbub*, cf. *Sinopsis*,

religious have come to these Islands. This makes it so that my Province never lacked any personnel in spite of the increase of ministries¹⁷ in all the provinces of these Islands administered by the Recollects.

And that is why when we will be eventually dispossessed of the twenty-seven parishes we now administer in Mindanao, we would not know what to do with the twenty-seven priests who are serving them. Undoubtedly, they would have to come to our convent in Manila. But, in that case, how do we sustain them? The properties owned by that convent can hardly defray a fourth part of the provisions of ten to twelve religious, who are customarily there to maintain the divine worship and take charge of church duties in the convent. Therefore, it is necessary to charge the balance against the funds of the Province.

But nothing more of these expenses can be taken than what is already allotted to defray the expenses for the funds for the students of Monteagudo and to defray the fares of the missions¹⁸ which we now entirely shoulder and which will increase to a considerable cost. If we deviate from its purpose, it would be necessary to close the college seminary in Spain and stop sending missionaries to these islands. Therefore, it is evident that our services in Mindanao are not to be taken for granted. And the great moral damages that the 30 July 1859 decree can cause us are significant. Nevertheless, it seems likewise that our remarkable services which we can offer to the faith and to the native land could be used. Thus it is: with our sufficient personnel, with appropriate and competent personnel, whether because they are cognizant of the practices and customs of the land where the Recollects have lived for such a long time, or because they are familiar with the nature of the inhabitants of Mindanao, or because they understand their language, an indispensable requirement in order to fulfill the ministry of a missionary; we—I repeat—with such personnel can greatly assist the government.

And not only we can but also we have the greatest wishes to gain subjects for his Majesty (May he rest in peace), children for God and souls for Heaven; and from here, we have assigned—even

¹⁷The word is *ministros* in Father Carceller's original text. But the context of Fr. Úbeda's letter posits *ministerios*, ministries.

¹⁸*Misiones* in Recollect parlance refers to protracted transoceanic voyages of Recollect priests, brothers and professed religious gathered by the provincial commissary from convents in Spain until the foundation of Alfaro. They usually embarked at Cádiz or Sevilla to the Philippines, with the galleons making stopovers in Mexico until the journeys were "shortened" on steamships passing through the Suez Canal in the 19th century.

with no prior invitation from anybody—to regions where there were unbelievers who because of their nature accepted resettlement, four religious who are young and proficient in the language of Mindanao and contribute to such crucial enterprise. Upon informing your Excellency about the appointment of the four abovementioned missionaries, I hope you shall provide for their sustenance and shall assist them with their corresponding stipend.

What has been narrated, most excellent sir, is not even a summary yet; it is nothing but an index of how much could be said in support of my Province with reference to Mindanao; it is my belief, however, that what has been exposed is satisfactory and I must not distract the attention of your Excellency needed by so many other very vital matters. I promise, then, in view of what was narrated, and encouraged by the benevolence that your Excellency has singled out that the Recollects shall strive—so that in the implementation of that decree shall not turn out to be detrimental to them, and you shall also make the government aware of all this or shall forward this official letter so that the negotiations that Father Agudo, our procurator, is transacting in the office of the Director General in the Overseas Ministry may bring forth a favorable outcome.¹⁹

With the preceding transcription of the significant document written by Prior Provincial Antonio Úbeda, we momentarily leave this pending affair and continue its history in the subsequent 1861-1864 period since this present triennium is about to end.

Once more the cession of the Mindanao curacies to the Jesuits²⁰

When it was decreed on 30 July 1859 that the religious of the Society of Jesus were to take charge of the ministries of the Recollect fathers in Mindanao, their commissary and procurator in Madrid. Guillermo Agudo and their prior provincial in the Philippines Antonio Úbeda had recourse—as we have earlier indicated—first to the Queen, and then to the captain general and royal vice patron of the churches in the Islands. Simultaneously, they expressed as usual their good disposition to receive and always obey the orders of the monarch, and manifested, among

¹⁹AHPM, ff. 121-133; L. RUIZ, *Sinopsis histórica* I, 257-264.

²⁰This part hereinafter is the continuation of the controversial expulsion of the Recollects from Mindanao in *Historia general de la Orden de Agustinos Recoletos* XI: 1837-1866 (Madrid 1967) 567-582.

other things, the deep sentiment caused by the non-mention in the decree of any indemnification for those who presently serve those ministries—the Recollects—with the offer of other curacies; an anguish that was extraordinarily aggravated when they noticed that they were not even mentioned by name in the text of the royal decree.

Fr. Licinio Ruiz—after inserting the document addressed by the prior provincial Fr. Antonio Úbeda to the captain general whose copy in its entirety was also given when we referred to this matter in the 1858-1861 triennium—states that “it did not have the effect which was expected from such an exposition as heartfelt as reasoned out.”²¹

Surely, the revocation of the royal order of the cession of the ministries served by the Recollects to the Jesuit fathers was not obtained; but likewise it was true that the indemnification which our religious had requested was achieved. So it was done through a royal order dated 10 September 1861, whose text is as follows:

For the purpose of removing whatever doubt that could take place with respect to the compliance of Article 13 of the royal decree of 30 July 1859, pertaining to the administration of the island of Mindanao and wherein it was ordered that the actual parish priests be replaced by the missionaries of the Society of Jesus, the Queen has deigned to declare that these missionaries had exclusively created and subsequently developed the active missions in said Island and they must also take charge of the administration of the curacies and *doctrinas* already established by Augustinian Recollect religious, as these curacies are vacated on account of the death or transfer of those who then administer with canonical collation bearing the title of proprietary curate. And being her Majesty’s wish to grant an indemnification and to give a proof her appreciation with which she recognizes the value of the distinguished services rendered by the Augustinian Recollect religious, has been so kind as to authorize the Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino to administer the curacies of the Province of Cavite or others there might be, which are served by the indigenous clergy, as they are vacated, in the manner indicated, with respect to those in Mindanao which are administered by the abovementioned Recollect missionaries.²²

²¹*Sinopsis histórica* I, 264.

²²AHPM, 49, *Oficios*, f. 251v.; L. RUIZ, *Sinopsis histórica*, 264-265. .

The captain general and vice patron José Lémery did not officially relay this royal decree to the prior provincial of the Recollects until 6 February 1862. However, it was on 23 November of the previous year [1861] when he had already affixed “let it be complied with” on the same royal decree.²³ Likewise he had insinuated his opinion on the matter in the month of February.

In the provincial council meeting held on 22 January of that same year, the prior provincial on his own had relayed to the councilors certain suggestive remarks by the captain general on the subject. And he told them at the same time that he thought of answering him, manifesting his way of thinking in these or similar terms: that, although the sovereign order was rather sensitive to them, because by that virtue the Corporation was forced to relinquish a productive land with fruits of blessings from Heaven and religion, fertilized by the blood of our confreres who were the first to conquer for the Lord those natives of the wild and impenetrable forests, nevertheless, this Province was making the sacrifice of submitting itself to the will of its beloved Queen in courteous obeisance and adherence. The provincial council gave its assent to the loyal line of thought of the prior provincial.²⁴

On the 6th day of the following month [February] the captain general ordered that the transcribed royal order be transmitted to the prelates of the Society of Jesus and the Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino for its strict compliance as soon as the case of a vacancy existed in the ministries administered by the latter [Recollects] in the Island of Mindanao, further ordering that the vicar capitular of the Archdiocese of Manila *sede vacante* and the bishop of Cebu be informed about this resolution as well.²⁵

Prior Provincial Juan Félix gave his response on 10 February with an official letter wherein he expressed himself with these words:

I comply with, respect and willingly accept, in the name of all my subordinates, the will of our beloved Queen, as it certainly is just

²³*Importantísima cuestión*, no. 8.

²⁴AHPM, 35, *Definitorios*, f. 76v.

²⁵*Importantísima cuestión*, nos. 21, 22.

and I must accept. And in order that the royal order that concerns me, may begin to have effect, of course, I have the privileged satisfaction to make the initiative part in its compliance, placing in the best knowledge of your Excellency that the parish of Mainit, the jurisdiction of the third district—named southern—of the Island of Mindanao, is vacant because of the death of the parish priest serving it, which I want nothing of since that date, as it is commanded of me, so that the superior of the abovementioned fathers of the Society of Jesus may avail himself of his right to it.²⁶

On 16 February, the prior provincial convoked the venerable council and “informed the fathers that—despite his being able to certainly avail himself of his full right as representative of the religious Order of Augustinian Recollect missionaries in these Islands, as granted by the royal decree of 10 September of last year [1861] and despite the fact there were some parishes in several provinces, served by the secular clergy really vacant, he thought it was convenient and prudent not to precipitate the events and skip whatever action of acquiring new administrations, although it is certain that it could not conceptualized as out of the sphere of what is just and equitable, every time the religious order had nothing to do anymore with its parish and shall have nothing to do with as many as may become vacant in the jurisdiction of the Island of Mindanao, by giving to the first vacancy the example of submission and obedience to the sovereign will until the arrival of the archbishop elect of this metropolis, avoiding with this conduct even the suspicions of a twisted intelligence and likewise the appearances of discord that might result in the minds of the clergy, secular and regular, dealing with the bishop on this truly delicate matter and seeing the gentlest and exact way and means to carry out the decree of the Throne.”²⁷

These calculated and prudent words of the prior provincial of the Recollects evidently showed the worthy and noble attitude that he knew how to adopt in that critical period, despite profound bitterness that his heart would feel, like all the other sons of the Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino, they had to abandon

²⁶AHPM, 49, *Oficios*, f. 252.

²⁷AHPM, 35, *Definitorios*, f. 78; *Importantísima cuestión*, no. 23.

almost by force those ministries of the famous Island of Mindanao, replete with an intense and glorious history for the Recollection. However, the reaction of other people who could be affected by what was ordered in the royal decree was not of the same nature.

Fr. Juan Félix, writing again on 19 February 1862 to the commissary of his Province in Spain, Fr. Guillermo Agudo, unburdened himself in the following manner:

The royal order of 10 September 1861 has begun to produce results. His Excellency the superior governor and royal vice-patron communicated in an official letter to concerned parties on the 6th day of the present month, the cathedral chapter—according to the information relayed by a good friend—raised the cry to the heavens by not pulling its punches and repudiation, and saw to it that their outpourings of resentment could reach us. The outcome: appointment of a commission of canons to redact a long letter to the Throne, by making her Majesty aware of the harm that the cited royal order was going to cause them, the very sacred rights it would trample upon, and how contrary it was to Church laws and even to the Laws of the Indies, as well as the privileges of the archbishop, much more in the vacancy of this church—the archdiocese of Manila is *sede vacante*; designating a representative in the Court who would take the cudgels for this [cathedral] chapter; remitting money in order to arrange and petition at all cost the secularization of communities, or at least the parishes, because it seems they had said that the friars were going to create a river with a current so sudden that it would spill over and go out of its course, and there would be no dike that could block it and that, when this case will be reached, which in the opinion of other people would be already near at hand, the secular clergy would be carried away by its waves with no remedy all.

Afterwards the prior provincial notified him that he has already begun to give example of submissive obedience, by not doing anything with the vacant parish of Mainit in Mindanao so that the Jesuit religious could avail themselves of their right and privilege; and he goes on further in his letter thus:

There are many vacant *doctrinas* in all the dioceses and in the archdiocese, but I have not made any arrangement even up to this day, and I do not wish to do anything so soon. The case, truly, is very awkward and it could be an endless wellspring and fatal source of dissent, discord, quarrels, grudges, ill feelings, and perhaps events of

irreparable and ugly consequences. The indemnification that the royal order has granted us covers all the parishes presently served by the secular clergy in the entire Philippine archipelago, since her Majesty indemnifies us for the curacies that we are to abandon in Mindanao, with the curacies of the archdiocese, as they become vacant, in the Province of Cavite and others. This clause has alarmed the bishops and the vicars apostolic of the diocese, and they do not lack reasons for that because there are twenty-seven parishes that we are to lose in Mindanao, through whatever diocese we may manage, we are leaving in the course of time the diocese bereft of clergymen, or not, bereft of assignments to reward the deserving in them. This is very harsh and it causes a lot of bitterness. I believe that the affair would be remedied or, if not, the diocesan bishops and the clergy would not be left so prejudiced and it would show us a road free from annoyances to embark on our journey with security, if they would indemnify us with, let's see for example, seven curacies, the first to be vacant and according to the order with which they might become vacant in each diocese. This insinuation—if it might be implemented—would encounter as such a setback and it would not be pleasant for all, the diocesan bishops would feel sorry for it, nevertheless, time would erase the pain which that measure would cause in the meantime. There would be no rancor of spirits and we would be satisfied.

And the provincial concludes by telling him to proceed in Madrid “with the appropriate measures that would lead to the most peaceful result so that, after we are compensated, the bishops would not be inconvenienced or anguished.”²⁸

After knowing Prior Provincial Juan Félix's opinion on the conflict, we also consider it very timely to publish here what the vicar capitular of Manila, Fr. Pedro Peláez who was elected to the position after the death of the Archbishop of Manila, Most Reverend José Aranguren, had written him on the subject. He told Fray Juan Félix among other things:

The report you sent me makes me see that the government is determined to go on with its idea, although it does not have the means for it, and you inform me of the just representation that you have made on the services of the Order and loss of employment of twenty-seven religious that caused in the [secular] clergy this new deprivation of curacies without you losing it. I did not believe it; because I had no

²⁸*Importantísima cuestión*, no. 24.

proof to give as I have now. That the [secular] clergy would feel sorry for it, and very sorry, I think you will agree that it is a natural thing. I also feel sorry because, bereft of assignments, it [the secular clergy] will not have incentives nor rewards, and consequently, it would be better to ban ordinations here... With respect to what depended on me, I have exerted every effort to placate everybody, by assuring that the new archbishop would not be uninformed and unrepresented that he was not lacking of clergy and that, consequently, they would wait for his arrival and everything would be arranged. At any rate, I can assure you that, if before I did not permit, much less shall I permit from now onwards that they murmur against you. If upon answering the latest letter of the government, I say something in favor of the clergy, it shall be without being disrespectful to you nor to any Order at the very least. I would like to request you, in return, not to avail yourself of the royal order during the vacant see nor to proceed with any transfer in order to allow time for tempers to settle down. I was confident that your line of thinking is that way, that's why and only for that motive why I write you this: I am asking that favor from you. Furthermore, I request you that, if some other measure or decision may occur to you, please indicate it to me frankly, and for that purpose, I shall have the pleasure of dropping there by your place on one of these afternoons.²⁹

We can clearly see that Fr. Peláez requested Prior Provincial Juan Félix not to make any move anent the thorny question during the *sede vacante* of the metropolitan see. Nevertheless, he and the Manila cathedral chapter did not wait for the new archbishop and for his decision in order to intervene.

The previous letter was dated 2 March and we know that on the 27th of the same month, the assessor of the captain general, Mr. Pareja y Alba, gave his report on the observations made by the vicar capitular in a lengthy official letter together with the complaint that he and the chapter elevated to the queen on the 10 September 1861 royal order. The assessor likewise in a long written reply showed his disagreement with many of the ideas expressed by the vicar capitular and the cathedral chapter, contributing the reasons that support him in that, as he himself declares, he refrains from rebutting in detail other assertions out of prudence, and affirms that the dearth of religious and consequent evil they have indicated,

²⁹*Ibid.*, no. 25.

“can be and must remedied by opening new college-seminaries of religious in Spain, which educate young men and bring them to the islands at no cost to the Treasury, except for the Franciscans; that the religious handle very many, very difficult missions under their care, and that—if they champion very much on their behalf—the native clergy has many fields to do in their new settlements and establish population centers.” He winds up his opinion saying that the captain general can make the necessary procedures for the official letters of the vicar capitular and metropolitan cathedral chapter, attaching furthermore his own opinion and the reflections that his familiarity with the country might suggest to him. And it was on 21 May when finally those letters and other documents were dispatched to the Queen of Spain.³⁰

In turn, Fr. Juan Félix once more wrote a letter on 17 June to the captain general, consulting him on the appeal he made in such a punctilious case, and if—in virtue of what was ordained in the oft-repeated 10 September 1861 decree—he could proceed with the presentation of the *ternas* for the first vacant parishes in the archdiocese of Manila.

General Rafael Echagüe, who had succeeded General Lémery in the office of the captain general of the Philippines, replied to the prior provincial on 21 of the succeeding month [July], by showing that what was mandated in the royal order was “definitive and clear” and there should no doubt in understanding the same, and, for his part, he provided the solution to it by being in agreement with the judgment of the assessor, that “he is authorized and has all the right to present the *ternas* of religious of his province for the first vacant parishes in the archdiocese, in accordance with the spirit and text of the aforesaid royal order.”³¹

Certainly, the prior provincial has firmed up his decision to take this measure, in view of the fact that, on the one hand, the documents together with the official letters and the representation of the vicar capitular and the chapter, have been dispatched to Madrid and, on the other hand, the presence of the new archbishop

³⁰*Ibid.*, nos. 5, 8, 33.

³¹*Ibid.*, nos. 26, 27

Gregorio Melitón Martínez y Santa Cruz was already a reality in Manila, complying that way with his promise not to make any move in this regard until his arrival in the Philippines.

When the parish of Antipolo in the archdiocese became vacant, although the vicar capitular had appointed Fr. Francisco Campmas as interim parish priest, and it was a long time that the prior provincial had announced the cession, given the circumstances, for his own part, of the parish of Mainit in Mindanao, and counting furthermore on the affirmative reply of the captain general, he made on 22 July the provision for a *terna* for the Antipolo parish, which was approved by the latter. With the acceptance of Fr. Francisco Villas of San Lorenzo, who was the first in the *terna*, the presentation of this priest was done on the 24th [July] as parish priest and the corresponding title was issued.

But, lo and behold, on the 9th of the following month [August], the same captain general signed a new order, by which he declared that “what was processed and resolved by his authority was without value and bereft of effects,” because, having examined with all care the general dossier of the case by himself, it came to his knowledge that his predecessor had written to her Majesty on the 5th of February, requesting him a clarification in order to do away with the impediment that might come its way in the practical area when dealing with the compliance of the royal order of 10 September 1861, and likewise he became aware that in the month of May the same consultation had been repeated because the vicar capitular had petitioned it, and on account of it all the dossier should have been suspended and archived “until the time that her Majesty, whose decision and awareness he has petitioned and who might dictate the determination which she in highest justice might deemed convenient.”

Likewise it was ordered in the decree which was to be dispatched in full to the archbishop and to the prior provincial of the Recollects, by remitting to her Majesty the whole dossier, including this same decree, and notice should be sent to the archbishop for him to deign designate a cleric to administer on an interim basis the Antipolo parish until such time that her Majesty’s

resolution would fall into its general dossier.³² The archbishop's response to this last point was the interim administration of the curacy of Antipolo by the diocesan priest Francisco Campmas who would continue in his service until the definitive resolution which he was ready to comply with.³³

Fr. Juan Félix, in turn, sent a reply on 14 August to the captain general and vice patron saying that certainly his superior decree was based on strong reasons which, just by being aware of them or by having merely suspected of them, would have prevented him from taking any measure officially, and keeping himself in abeyance until the resolution of the dossier in the same way that he had carried out until the decision to send him the *terna*. And, after showing him that the decree has explained the loyalty, righteousness, equity and justice of the captain general himself, the provincial went on this way:

In short, it is a document that—more than informed about the incidents that I have no knowledge of as well as they have been hidden from your Excellency yourself—makes clear the conduct that I have observed in the matter that elucidates so explicitly and in detail, it ended in all the bad understanding that they had emanated from my acts, the antecedents upon which I based myself that guided me gently and as if by hand to them. I therefore express as many thanks to your Excellency that I can and I must for that communication, and, although my congregation is going to lose territory by divesting itself of the curacies in Mindanao with which it renders itself submissive and obedient in implementing the will of her beloved Majesty, without seeing practically any favorable outcome consequent to the indemnification which with so much generosity she has granted, that the person who sent it is endowed with sufficient resignation to accept willingly what your Excellency has ordered, since you await with fullest confidence that your Excellency, as the representative of her Majesty in the Philippine archipelago, shall deign take the providences that her superior perspective and wisdom may judge more opportune so that once and for the doubts shall disappear which until today have presented obstacles for the compliance of the sovereign concession in the [10 September 1861] royal order.³⁴

³²*Ibid*, nos. 8, 28.

³³*Ibid.*, no. 8

³⁴*Ibid.*, no. 29.

In another official letter of the same date 14 August, the prior provincial placed at the disposal of the vice patron the curacies of Lubungan and Bislig and the missions of Davao, Pollok and Isabela, “divesting himself—he said—of the aforementioned administrations in the same way that I have divested myself of the curacy of Mainit.”³⁵

However, by this time the indemnification for the parishes that needed to be abandoned had already been granted to the Recollects, the manner and circumstances in which it would be carried out having been determined as well. So on 16 August of the current year, the prior provincial received the royal order of previous 16 June [1862] wherein it was declared that the vacant curacies in Mindanao might continue to be provided with Recollect religious while the Society of Jesus did not have enough number of individuals to replace them, but they should enter in possession of the curacies in Cavite or in the [arch]diocese of Manila, as the cession of the ministries that might become vacant in Mindanao is adjudicated to the Jesuits.

In the face of the present clarificatory royal order, the reply of the vice patron given on 30 September to the prior provincial’s letter wherein he placed at his disposal various ministries in Mindanao, the abandonment of the same was declared valid, but that—in view of the circumstance that the Society of Jesus did not have at present available personnel to serve those ministries, with the exception of the curacy of Isabela,³⁶ they would go on providing the rest with Recollect religious, in accordance with what was provided for in the 20 June 1862 royal order.

After receiving such communication, Father Juan Felix replied with another official letter on 6 October to acknowledge receipt thereof.³⁷ Only two days passed since that last date when the captain general dispatched to the Recollect prior provincial for his information and other consequential effects a royal order published on 31 July of this year [1862], whose text is as follows:

³⁵*Ibid.*, no. 30.

³⁶A parish and town in Basilan Island.

³⁷*Ibid.*, nos. 8, 29, 31, 32.

The Queen, informed through a confidential communication from your Excellency's predecessor dated 21 May with which the representation of the metropolitan chapter of that church had forwarded, through the vicar capitular *sede vacante* who has requested the revocation or modification of the royal order of 10 September 1861, that, when the administration of the curacies of the Island of Mindanao was ceded to the missionaries of the Society of Jesus, as they became vacant, he ordained that the religious of the Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino, took charge of the parish of Cavite and others in the same manner as they became vacant, her Majesty taking into account the considerations exposed thus in the aforementioned communication, like the faculties that corresponded to her as her universal patronage in the churches and ecclesiastical affairs in the Indies, has deigned to resolve that it might be to what was determined in the royal order of 10 September 1861, and her clarificatory decree of 20 June 1862 without any excuse or hesitation.³⁸

Once this royal order was communicated to all interested parties, the captain general and vice patron attempted to render compliance to it, however, "as a preliminary step and desirous of certainty of all his acts, in the session of 22 December, he issued a communication wherein—after what would be the interesting outcomes and considerations, the true summary of all what had happened has been made—he ended by saying:

Let it be said to the governor general and president [of the Royal Audiencia] that based on royal arrangement, complying with the 10 September [1861] royal decree and its clarificatory 20 June [1862] order as it corresponds, the most reverend prior provincial of the Order of Recollects be informed for him to make the presentation of the *terna*, containing the religious who can be assigned to the town of Antipolo in this diocese, in order that the vice patron may elect among them the one he deems most suitable for the good accomplishment of the office, informing the archbishop of this diocese about this resolution for the consequent effects.³⁹

The vice patron agreed in all aspects with the previous consultative vote and told the prior provincial to present the *terna* for the curacy of Antipolo. Hence, Juan Félix, repeating the

³⁸*Ibid.*, no. 33.

³⁹*Ibid.*, no. 8.

previous *terna*, did it. Again Francisco Villas was elected, in whose favor he signed the papers on 26 January 1863 and forwarded it to the captain general Rafael Echagüe as royal vice patron of the Philippine churches. On 30 January 1863, Archbishop Gregorio Melitón Martínez of Manila agreed to the presentation of Father Villas for the curacy. But the archbishop himself wrote in his official appointment paper, “*under protest until her Majesty may resolve the consultation we shall elevate to her superior wisdom channeled through his Excellency the vice patron*, in the best way and form we are able, we confer upon him the canonical collation and installation in order that he may enjoy the ecclesiastical benefice as mandated by law.” On 2 February [1863], Francisco Villas appeared before the archbishop and received from his own hands the canonical collation and installation, although again “under protest attached to the title given him.”⁴⁰

Prior Provincial Juan Félix wrote Guillermo Agudo in Madrid on this strange way of granting possession of parish by the archbishop, and termed it “spontaneous, ill-timed and worthless because the protest stamped on the titles I think affects not the canonical collation or institution but in fact on the person who received with all the legal terms, arranged according to the practice and strict formality, but the vice patron’s conduct in the confirmed presentation.”⁴¹

Fr. Guillermo Agudo made a personal comment on this matter thus:

We are not very formidable in canons but of course we understand that this move taken by the archbishop does not have any precedent or justification: the canonical collation and institution which is absolute, perpetual and for life, recently conferred, suspends it and wants no canonical effects to stem from it; we have consulted persons in the

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, no. 37.

⁴¹In *Nuestra Señora de Antipolo y los Agustinos Recoletos*, BPSN (1956), Rafael García writes on page 89: “Finally, we affirm we did not receive the parish of Antipolo in 1866, as written by Licinio Ruiz in his *Sinopsis* I 280, but in February 1863, as it is evident in the letter of Prior Provincial Juan Félix de la Encarnación to Guillermo Agudo on 16 February: ‘Today, four days ago, the 12th February, the new parish priest Father Villas took possession of Antipolo’.”

know and they unanimously opined that they did not comprehend what was done and they described him not with very kind terms.

We, yes, and very well understand that if the archbishop interprets the royal orders in a different manner than that of the captain general and vice patron and the legal representatives of the Royal Audiencia, (who by habit and custom have to explain the decrees of her Majesty, and consequently are more suited for that effect than his illustrious Excellency), he might suspend the canonical collation and institution of the parish priest of Antipolo until the resolution by her Majesty in what he might have deemed as convenient to present; but, we repeat, instituting the parish priest and giving him the canonical collation, but leaving the canonical effects in suspension and hanging in the air, we do not comprehend it.⁴²

The affair remained punctilious and unpleasant. It paved the way for the abandonment of the Recollect ministries in Mindanao. We now end with these statistics: In 1838, there were 71,589 souls under the care of our religious in various towns and annex villages in Mindanao, Camiguin, Dinagat and Siargao. In 1851, the censuses recorded a total of 91,992. In 1861, at the start of these events, there were already 125,861.⁴³ This substantial increase was due to the apostolic efforts of the Augustinian Recollects.

Another serious matter

Hardly as the conflict we narrated had come to a close, another one arose, perhaps, partially as a natural consequence of the former and with similar characteristics, but this one was thorny and annoying to all the religious orders in the Philippines. On 25 February 1863, a lengthy exposition addressed to the Queen by Archbishop Gregorio Melitón Martínez of Manila and Cebu Bishop Romualdo Jimeno and Nueva Cáceres Bishop Francisco Gainza.⁴⁴

In a similar manifestation, after declaring that “there was no need to renew the memory of the past and to end disputes between

⁴²*Importantísima cuestión*, 9-10.

⁴³Toribio MINGUELLA, *Conquista espiritual de Mindanao*, 8, 9. This includes the small islands of Camiguin, Dinagat and Siargao near Mindanao.

⁴⁴*Importantísima cuestión*, no. 11.

the bishops and religious prelates of the Indies in general and, especially in these islands, about the exemption and submission to the diocesan authority and visit,”⁴⁵ the letter-writers affirm that the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XIV, upon the petition of the King of Spain Fernando VI, granted a papal brief *Cum nuper* on 8 November 1751, issuing another brief *Firmandis* on 6 November 1744 covering the whole Philippines, by virtue of which “it subjected the regular clergy to episcopal visitation and jurisdiction not only pertinent to the functions as such or *in officio officiando*,⁴⁶ but also to their lives and customs, and ordered that the bishops and the religious prelates could remove that regular parish priest from his parish independently from each other, and without the need of showing themselves, and much less, mutually probing into the motives; nevertheless, they give such preference to the bishop’s order which must always be favored in the case there is disagreement with the religious prelate.”

Immediately they copied the paragraph of the short papal brief that ordered what we have just recorded in order to emphasize afterward “the ample freedom, the total independence in his line from both diocesan and religious superiors and the respectful deference to the judgment of the diocesan prelate in order to watch over the conduct and to correct in his case the abuses of the religious parish priest: however, unfortunately, the exaggerated arrangements of the bishops of that time broke that line so prudent, and not only the canonical institution with a title of perpetual irremovability in some dioceses was granted to religious parish priests, but that some worrisome parish priests even obtained the royal cedula of 1 August 1795, which mandated in general terms “that thereafter parish priests and *doctrineros* cannot be removed... without a formal charge filed against them and without hearing their side in accordance with law.”

⁴⁵Cfr. CR, 8, 83, 350, 430.

⁴⁶*In officio officiando*, literally “in fulfilling the functions of his office,” meaning, the curate is subject to the diocesan prelate only in the exercise of his office as parish priest.

Such an order, according to what the letter-writers say afterward, opened a wide breach in religious discipline and observance so that the four provincials in the Philippines were forced to have recourse to the king in 1805 petitioning him to make the regular parish priests understand that—upon their appointment to any post in their province—they should accept it without any excuse and their parishes handed over to other religious. This petition was resolved in the 29 September 1807 royal cedula.

The evil was somewhat remedied—they later confessed—but it survived with the bonds that linked the friar parish priest with his own superior growing weaker and weaker every day. The religious superior did the customary visits, but it was so difficult to prove certain matters, so effortless for headstrong religious to elude justice, and so sensational in the Philippines to file charges against them that, even though the religious prelate might prevail, the remedy was worse than the illness. The very vow of obedience was nothing but only in name, with the fear of removal being non-existent, and, on the contrary, keeping their impunity almost guaranteed, they hid behind the shield of their canonical collation before their superiors who—in order not to appear defeated or to make any public scandal—were constrained to keep in the ministries those religious who were not equal to such a difficult responsibility. This caused the weakening of religious discipline and observance.

Because of all that, the exponents [bishops], who far from fearing the religious prelates' meddling, want them to have a very broad and legitimate intervention over their parish priest subjects. They are convinced that one of the best means of solving these miseries was to strengthen the bonds of regular obedience and that they have felt the inconveniences of irremovability of the religious parish priests and do not doubt in petitioning the revocation of the royal cedula of 1 August 1795, by restoring the affairs in accord with the papal briefs of Benedict XIV.

This exposition was presented by the signatories—diocesan prelates—to the prior provincials for them to subscribe to it, since

it had been written in the name of all, but the latter refused to sign it⁴⁷ and the Recollect prior provincial Fr. Juan Félix wrote a lengthy and detailed response “in order to elucidate the points raised in their writing and all the extreme cases.”⁴⁸

The prior provincial explained that the papal brief *Cum nuper* was issued by Benedict XIV “appropriately, exclusively and precisely for the regular parish priests of the Antilles, also called West Indies, as the Holy Father took good care in expressing.”

What his Holiness established in the papal brief and wanted that it be extended to the East Indies, he explained it clearly and distinctively that, since two paragraphs after that one which was referred to by the bishops, when discussing the point declaring that nowhere could any regular clergy—to whatever institute he belonged—take charge of the care of souls without prior examination and approval by the bishop, his Holiness then declares: “*Earumdem praesentium serie statuimus, prout alias statutum decretumque per Nos fuit*, in our aforementioned decrees—*Firmandis*—as as well those published in others on 5 May 1745 from the Incarnation of our Lord... whose beginning is *Quamvis ad confirmandum*, all others of the sacred canons and of the Council of Trent, and all provincial and synodal councils, in the regions themselves of the West Indies, they were customarily supported by the sanctions, *and they should be extended to the West and East Indies*, and in both places they must obtain the force of law perpetually.”

Furthermore, the papal brief *Cum nuper* belonged to the type which for it to be mandatory it was necessary to be published in places for which they were issued in some way, and signed by public secretary and sealed by someone with ecclesiastical dignity, and all of this was missing in that one pertinent to the East Indies. Nevertheless, even supposing that the papal brief in question was given to these territories as well, by making the other one applicable to these places—as the bishops made sure—there would reasons why it should not be implemented not even once. In spite

⁴⁷*Importantísima cuestión*, p. 11.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, no. 12.

of all this, they seek the restoration of affairs in accordance with the briefs of Benedict XIV, “and I—observed Father Juan Félix—do not imagine how something that was not implemented needs to be restored nor can it again produce an effect that had never been applied.”

So then, what is the true cause—asks the same Father Félix—for claiming back a measure that—as it can be deduced from their language—was indispensable *necessitate medii ad salutem parochorum regularium*, out of necessity for means for the salvation of regular parish priests? And after annotating those indicated by the bishops in the exposition we have previously excerpted—the prior provincial goes on saying—, certainly, they have the ways and means for the reform of the customs in their respective dioceses without the need for Benedict XIV’s briefs. But is such reform needed only in the ministries of regular parish priests? Apparently, it is only against them that their most illustrious Excellencies have agreed to adopt some rulings.

And after stating—according to the diocesan prelates—“the corruption of customs in towns administered by the religious parish priests it has been a century and a half or more, the same thing as *the slackening and enervation in the discipline and regular observance*,” filled with zeal to put in a high place the honor of the religious and their very parishioners, exclaims the Recollect provincial: “It has been a century already when they began to denigrate, ridicule, reproach, censure, slander and place the religious parish priests in most wretched places; and nevertheless, the natives—their parishioners—are Christians, observe all the religious practices, comply with the divine and church precepts, obey blindly the duly constituted authorities, they keep themselves in neat and good order and in the strictest submission to the Spanish rule, without any effort, without any violence, with pleasure, with willingness and with no need to advise them to acquiescence, they love, serve, respect and give the fitting place to any European who passes by in their places of residence and if he needs something from them they provide him with all kinds of assistance. They advise neatness, cleanliness and tidiness in their towns, beauty in

their temples and amazing magnificence in the suitable rites to give due worship to the true God. Streets diligently maintained can be viewed and everything that is characteristic of a society, that if it had not reached or will it reach after a long time to be equal to the advancements of the world, it strives in small and reduced proportions to be impressive, using the meager resources available to it. And, is it possible—it is believed and it shall be certain—that in towns whose customs need reforms because they are guided by immoral, troublesome, lax and headstrong administrators—have they done or can do great things? Aptly a Gospel passage comes to mind: *Ex fructibus eorum cognoscetis eos, quia non potest arbor mala bonos fructus facere*, By their fruits you shall know them, for a bad tree cannot bear good fruits.”

Since the exposition of the bishops makes allusions, although it does not cite names, “in the unanimous opinion of national and foreign writers” and “in the judgment of thinkers,” Fr. Juan Félix then brings forward a series of documents favorable to the religious orders in the Philippines, by providing dates and names. Then the prior provincial meditated very lengthily in order to try to prove that the means proposed by the bishops in order to avoid the evils they themselves pointed out was necessarily counterproductive since it was then when there would precisely be the relaxation of the religious obedience and discipline. He then proceeds to the royal decree 1 August 1795, which not a few troublesome parish priests were—as they said—able to obtain. “Let it be read—he adds—so that there would be no doubt about my assertion. That was why the Catholic monarch decreed it; and if there were troubles, they did not originate from some regular parish priests but from one sole clergyman named Fr. Juan José del Royo stripped of his curacy in the diocese of Lima through an agreement between the viceroy and the most reverend archbishop.” The prior provincial continues:

With respect to the royal order of 1807, cited by the bishops there is little to forewarn. It was a favor granted to the religious corporations; an exception of the general rule established in the royal cedula of 1795 which his Majesty was able and wanted to grant, which did not affect or distort it all. Solely, yes, I will say that objection or opposition posed by the regular parish priests to move to Manila in

order to exercise the offices with which the provincial chapters had honored them, very rarely did he get out of them. Customarily, it consisted in the displeasure which the chief executives of the province of the townspeople were seeing the departure from them their zealous and charitable *doctrineros*, with their tear-laden handkerchiefs, their spiritual directors and fathers, their teachers and directors; and from this were born the petitions, presentations and undertakings, in order to obtain the permanence among them who were the old recourse in their miseries and misfortunes, though how much they thought of in order to deny it. Let this be clear for the satisfaction of their most illustrious Excellencies, who obtained a document with collation that rather humiliating exalts them.

Finally, Fr. Juan Félix makes a short summary of all his extensive reply and winds up stating that from it all there was “no evident cause” to be presented to petition the revocation of the royal decree of 1 August 1795. It was written in consideration of the verdict by the counsels of the monarch and the judgment of the Supreme Council of the Indies on 20 December 1794 and issued in conformity with the spirit and existing legislation of the Church.

The exposition of the bishops was taken to the Council of Administration for its information. From the Council, Mr. Pardo de Tavera issued a favorable verdict to the exposition, but two other council members Messrs. Alix and Triviño presented each a personal vote against the same. The vote of Mr. Triviño, very curious, ends by “advising the Section which, in the case of full consultation, has deigned inform the governor general as royal vice patron in the sense that no amendment in the existent legislation must be made on the expressed bases, informing thus his Majesty and simultaneously elevating the exposition made by the most excellent and illustrious archbishop of Manila and the bishops of Cebu and Nueva Cáceres.”

When the time came to deal with the issue in full council with the attendance of its fourteen members, twelve gave their opinion and vote against that commented exposition, which two were in favor, with one of the two, Mr. Padilla asking that the dossier remained on the table for further study.⁴⁹

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p. 14, nos. 13, 14, 15.

With respect to that thorny question, we read in the *Book of Noteworthy Events* of Monteagudo which dealt with the letter written by Fr. Juan Félix that he obtained from her Majesty the non-implementation of what was petitioned by the bishops.

Publication of *Importantísima cuestión*

Perhaps it was towards the month of October 1863 when a thick pamphlet printed in Madrid which dealt with the provision of curacies in the Philippines began to circulate in Manila. A series of documents was inserted to it for the purpose of attacking the religious corporations of those islands, especially our Recollection, without consideration of any kind, with scorn against charity, with an unambiguous resentment against those corporations and everything, for the purpose of rallying the opinion of the peaceful inhabitants in the Philippines against them.

On 24 October 1863, the provincial Juan Félix wrote the commissary in Spain Guillermo Agudo. He informed him on the circulation of said pamphlet in Manila and later entrusted him to print another with different documents that he would enumerate for him. Fr. Félix advised him that he was authorized to do so by Captain General Echagüe who had already given opportune orders to gather all the copies of that repulsive libel that were arriving in Manila. He counselled him not to be afraid of printing three or four hundred copies. “Let us show the world—he added—that our conduct in the matter of the indemnification of curacies may be known, that we did not ask for anything and that justice and cleverness may stand out in favor of whoever has it, by comparing a pamphlet with another.”⁵⁰

And, effectively, likewise in Madrid and in that same year 1863, there appeared another pamphlet with big letters titled *Importantísima cuestión que puede afectar gravemente a la existencia de las Islas Filipinas*,⁵¹ which contained fifteen

⁵⁰APHM, 67, *Cartas*, f. 156. The author of the pamphlet against the religious orders was a certain Mr. Lecároz.

⁵¹*Very important question that can gravely affect the existence of the Philippine Islands* which comprises the first part with 66 pages.

documents preceded by a long introduction whose first paragraphs are as follows:

Under the title of *Important documents for the pending question on the provision of curacies in the Philippines*, a voluminous pamphlet has been published in this court that we keep with sorrow not because it may negatively affect the religious corporations directly with well-intentioned shots directed by the digger of the old documents (which in their time produced the effects proposed by their authors), but because there is a need to refute him since it harms the memory of a prelate of the Church, who does not live anymore, of a chapter in the same case, and non-impartiality of the person who unearthed such documents.

Changing the order, we shall say four words to this gentleman who undoubtedly with great satisfaction but with very little glory and success has arranged to publish the documents in the pamphlet we are dealing with. I have always believed and i still believe that when dealing in good faith with pointing up to the people and not to prejudice deceitfully the judgment of persons, particularly of those called to intervene in the resolution of questions, must be impartial, presenting side by side the documents, reasons and arguments of one and the other side. Has the digger of such documents done this? In truth, no.

In 1864, as the provincial had dispatched to Guillermo Agudo another series of documents on the aforementioned affair, a *Complemento* put the same publication year as 1863, the year when the first part saw print.⁵²

⁵²It is titled: *Complemento de los documentos del folleto de 14 de noviembre de este año de 1863 sobre cuestiones de curatos* [Complement of the documents of the pamphlet dated 14 NOVember 1863 on the issues of curacies] with 52 pages.

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Augustinian Recollect History of Siquijor (1794-1898)¹

Ángel Martínez Cuesta OAR

ABSTRACT

During the Spanish rule Siquijor Island was under the *alcalde mayor* of Bohol in 1864, after being part of Cebu for decades. The lone town of Siquijor was separated from Dumaguete and created into a parish in 1781. It was handed over to the Recollects in 1794 and in 1800 it had 5,000 inhabitants. The growth of Christianity finds its roots in the intense systematic missionary activity by Augustinian Recollects who established four more parishes. They constructed stone churches, belfries, kumbentos, roads, municipal edifices and even water depositories. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the towns underwent cholera and smallpox outbreaks, typhoons, Moro piratical raids, locust plagues and earthquakes (1886, 1897). During famine the Recollects distributed corn among parishioners. Juan Félix de la Encarnación, author of the *Diccionario español-bisaya, bisaya-español*, served Siquijor for thirty years. The huge kumbento of Lazi was completed by Toribio Sánchez in 1891.

¹This chapter is translated from *Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos II: El Siglo XIX* (Madrid 2015) 718-726, by Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos. Reprinted from Ángel MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *Augustinian Recollect History of Siquijor*, in *Philippine Social Science Journal*, II 2 (July-December 2019) 173-178.

Siquijor is an island of about 340 square kilometers in extension. It is situated between Negros, Bohol and Cebu. It belonged to the civil province of Cebu until 1864 when it became part of the province of Bohol. In 1892, on account of the petitions filed by the *gobernadorcillos* and the parish priests of the five towns and parishes of Siquijor, it was annexed to the province of Negros Oriental despite the objections posed by the Spanish colony of Bohol. In the ecclesiastical sphere, Siquijor was the sole parish in the town of the same name. It was created as an independent parish, separated from that of Dumaguete in 1781. In 1794, Siquijor was handed over to the Augustinian Recollects.

In 1800, the five thousand inhabitants of Siquijor were attended to by Father Alonso de los Dolores. His parish administration lasted until 1831 when he was promoted to the post of prior provincial in Manila. His successor Juan Félix de la Encarnación was parish priest in 1832-1849 and 1852-1861. During the terms of Alonso de los Dolores and Juan Félix, Siquijor suffered from endless Moro invasions. In 1818, twenty natives were hauled off as captives. But the population of Siquijor tripled in spite of the Moro raids and eventually went out of isolation wherein the island was wallowing for years. For the first time, the people received continuous catechetical instruction and acquired the stable civil structures for the first time.

Alonso de los Dolores finished the church edifices that were started decades before by José Fernández de Septién who was parish priest of Dumaguete from 1764 to 1776. Both the church edifice and the *kumbento* constituted the defense bulwark. Juan Félix provided stability in the parish, which fact attracted the attention of the government and the Recollect community on Siquijor. That stability further encouraged the creation of the parishes of Canoan [present-day Larena] in 1836 and Lazi in 1957, which substantially improved their religious situation, covering both north and south of the island. Apart from attending to a very forsaken area, the parish of Lazi included the pastoral care of a region where the fugitives from justice thrived and the use of arms was frequently made.

During his almost thirty years of stay in Siquijor, Juan Félix traversed the coastal areas and valleys, spreading the seeds of the Gospel, exploring their geography and studying their language, their plants and their customs. All that was reflected in his splendid *Diccionario español-bisaya, bisaya-español*, which for so many years became the inseparable companion of missionaries. It had three editions (1851-1852, 1866 and 1885). Later on, the parish of San Juan was created in 1863 southwest of the island and that of Maria in 1880 in the east.

Parishes of Siquijor

Parish	Old Name	Year founded	Parish Matrix	Patron Saint
Siquijor	Siquijor	1781	Dumaguete	San Francisco de Asís
Larena	Canoan	1836	Siquijor	San Vicente Ferrer
Lazi	Tigbauan	1857	Siquijor	San Isidro Labrador
San Juan	Macapilay	1863	Siquijor	San Agustín
Maria	Camiña	1880	Canoan ²	Ntra Sra. de la Providencia

The geographical nearness among the curacies, their isolation and small number as well as the apostolic zeal and affection for their own parish of so many ministers facilitated the communication with each other. This in turn favorably resounded in quality of their religious life and their apostolic service. They frequently visited each other; they helped one another in their necessities, at least in the last lustrums of the nineteenth century. They confessed to another confrere every fifteen days, a luxury that was not possible in other areas of the Recollect apostolate. A great number of the ministers stayed for many years in the island. They had felt great affection for the island and they exerted effort for the spiritual and material wellbeing of the natives. They constructed churches and convents in every town and in the most important villages. Timoteo Gonzalo, parish priest of Canoan, inaugurated in Maria a chapel dedicated to Saint Rita, on 13 November 1861, eleven years

²*Expediente de creación de la parroquia de María en Siquijor, independiente de Canoan*: Archivo Histórico Nacional Madrid, Spain, Legajo 2232, expediente 28.

before it was decreed as a town (7 February 1872) and twenty years before it was created into a parish (6 August 1880). The same thing was done by Eustaquio Ruiz in the village of San Antonio. Some parish priests invested in these edifices part of their personal savings and everyone cooperated with material improvement and even for the economic welfare of the faithful. In 1895 and 1896, the people of Lazi pitched in ₱2,780 for the purchase of 780 *quintales*³ of galvanized sheets for the roofing of the convent.

The churches were more or less well-endowed with images, ornaments, and sacred vessels. Víctor García and Balbino Díaz were extra cautious. The former acquired an image of our Lady of Consolation for the church of San Juan. The parish of Siquijor had an organ since time immemorial. It was restored by Francisco Gómez towards the end of the 19th century. Almost all the churches had sets of bells, which were blest in solemn rites with the multitudinous attendance of the faithful. Siquijor had its six bells blest in July 1882. The bells of Canoan and San Juan had been blest the year before.

At the close of the 19th century, the churches of Siquijor, Lazi and Maria were first-class, all of them were made of stones. The other two were third-class churches. Of the convents, only that of Lazi can be classified as first-class. Even up to these days, the convent attracts a lot of attention on account of its dimension or size, the quality of its wood, the arches of its entrance and the expanse of its gallery. The convent of Lazi was the work of Toribio Sánchez in 1882-1893. Without a doubt, it is the most representative edifice of the Order in the whole island. The convents of Canoan and Siquijor are second-class, meaning to say, they were made of *mampostería* [rubblework] and *tabique pampango* in the upper floor. The convents of Maria and San Juan are third-class. During the earthquake of 1897, the economic crisis of the years 1894-1896 and political circumstances in the last years of the century prohibited their replacements with other more solid materials. Manuel Guillorme had gathered all the materials to start the construction of the new church of Canoan.

³One *quintal* is equal to 100 lbs.

Like his other Recollect confreres, Toribio Sánchez was the least worried about making their work known or publicized. Nevertheless, through sheer luck, he had a successor who took the trouble of doing justice to his work:

On account of his activity Lazi has the best edifices—church, casa tribunal [municipal hall] and kumbento—in the island. As soon as he took charge of the administration of this parish, he worked on the church project. In four years (1882-1886) the whole church nave and part of the transept on the epistle side are made of rubblework. The belfry, which is solid until the second tier, is likewise made of rubblework. In due time the lateral altars were done. Once the church was finished, he started the great work of the new kumbento. And he had the satisfaction of seeing it finished in December 1891. However, he could enjoy it for two and a half years only because his illness constrained him to relinquish [the post] and leave for Manila. As soon as he finished the kumbento, he enlarged the *casa tribunal* and erected a *cota* made of *tablilla* which exists till now. He carried out all these works with a lot of his personal savings and very insignificant were sums of money invested in them because the whole town, including the young boys and girls, volunteered to render manual work and lent their carabaos and carts for the transport of construction materials. The same population continued doing so since the undersigned was placed in charge of the parish, because they worked on a voluntary basis and contributed cash in order to put the convent into perfection in whatever way possible and [they have] painted it. This work was finished towards the end of 1895.⁴

At the arrival of the Recollect missionaries, the island was backward with a population scattered and left to fend for themselves, with no schools nor roads to speak of and with a very primitive agriculture. Little by little the most visible deficiencies were remedied. One of the most noticeable was the dearth of roads. Between 1872 and 1874, Estaquio Ruiz constructed roads, eleven meters wide, from Siquijor to Canoan and to San Juan. During those time periods, Ramón Eraso opened the road from San Juan to Lazi, and at the end of this period (19th century) he replaced the age-old road that connected Canoan to Talingting (actual Enrique Villanueva town) with another road much wider but a third

⁴*Cosas notables de la parroquia de Lazi*, Archivo Histórico Provincial de Marcilla, Navarra, Spain [AHPM], Legajo 56, folder 2.

shorter. The construction of these roads turned out laborious as they traversed almost always rocky terrain and crossed rivers and rivulets. On the first occasion they were forced to use gunpowder a lot to open roads. Then there was a vital need to construct bridges. Manuel Guillorme built thirteen bridges in 1897 between Canoan and Enrique Villanueva. The road that went almost around the island served as the basis for the first modern road of the province constructed by the Americans at the outset of the 20th century.

Another urgent need was the supply of potable water. Except for San Juan, the towns had deep wells whose water was often healthful. For a long time the inhabitants of the capital drank turbid water which was fetched from a deep well in an adjoining barangay. Only towards the end of 1894 were they able to avail themselves of abundant and crystal-clear water, thanks to the determination of their parish priest. In spite of the apathy of the civil authorities and without having recourse to the services of the *polistas* [workers in communal projects], Francisco Gómez channeled the water of the “large spring named Songculan,” and conducted it by means of tubes made of bamboo canes six kilometers long up to the church plaza, where he constructed a depository made of rubblework equipped with eight spouts. Gervasio Margallón did the same thing in Canoan (1891-1893) and Manuel Guillorme in Lazi (1894).

Another sector that benefitted most from the busy activity of the Recollect parish priests was education. The parish priests of the capital town of Siquijor started it. Víctor García followed suit in Lazi in 1857-1868. Ramón Eraso in 1863-1864 and 1865-1881 and Albino Díaz in 1887-1897 in San Juan. Father Víctor exerted special effort in trying to convince the parents on the importance of education. Every day he imparted catechism classes to his Mass servers and sacristans. The construction of *casas tribunales* was likewise the object of their attention.

In the pastoral sphere it is worth highlighting the zeal of Víctor García in Lazi, a new town with quarrelsome people coming from other places. His successor recalls the diligence and time he devoted to catechesis, preaching and the confessional. Similarly, Father García was vigorous in correcting abuses and

confronting the town braggarts' brazenness. The people welcomed his corrections because he knew how apply them with tenderness and supported them with the solicitude with which he helped them in their material needs. "Every year," goes on writing Patricio Adell, "during harvest time he purchased abundant corn and, as it was already known, in May and June all the residents went to the priest and, as much as possible he gave them advice, even as he fed them. He also bought rice as much as his money could afford, since this rice distribution served as his gift for the ill people."⁵ Years later, Gaudencio Marqués imitated his example in Canoan in 1885-1890.⁶ Other Recollects fomented agriculture with the introduction of crops and new methods. They acclimatized the coconuts, which strange as it seems, were unheard of in Siquijor. They earnestly promoted the production of abaca fibers in 1864 and plantation of coffee in 1880.⁷ Patricio Adell constructed a channel for the irrigation of fields. When he left his parish in 1874, this same priest could boast of the fact that not one couple was left canonically unmarried.

Generally, the religious ministers enjoyed peace and could do their work with great independence. The civil authorities were far-off and rarely showed themselves in Siquijor. Although they were of rustic customs and strong bad habits of old, the inhabitants were docile. Even Mother Nature was propitious to them. The typhoons were seldom present. Historical sources only recall two important storms. The typhoon of 25 December 1874 destroyed the corn plantations of Lazi and devastated ninety-seven houses. Two years later, another one wrecked one hundred and four houses in San Juan and wrought havoc on its public buildings.⁸ Famine became more frequent. The island was self-sufficient. It produced corn, rice and edible root crops needed by the inhabitants. They earned profits from the sale of cloth and carabaos in Cebu and Bohol. But the practice of exporting corn to Bohol during harvest time had

⁵Patricio ADELL, *Adiciones a la necrología del. Padre Víctor García*, Archivo General de la Orden de Agustinos Recoletos, Rome, Caja A80, Legajo 0.

⁶AHPM, Legajo 56 no. 5.

⁷*Cosas notables de la parroquia de Siquijor*, AHPM, Legajo 56, No. 2.

⁸*Cosas notables de la parroquia de San Juan*, AHPM, Legajo 56, No. 2.

some negative repercussion among the residents. In 1880, hunger was felt in a special manner in Maria. In 1886, locusts devastated the fields of Canoan. In 1894-1896, the plague affected the whole island constraining the natives to emigrate [or] subsist by eating fruits and wild root crops, with which they could barely survive.”⁹

Cholera and smallpox were, as in other islands, almost customary visitors. “At the outset of November 1872, smallpox commenced in this island and ceased in June 1873,” according to reports by the parish priest of Siquijor. The victims went up to 1,208: 326 in Siquijor; 275 in San Juan; 276 in Lazi; 150 in Maria and 181 in Canoan.¹⁰ The cholera outbreak of 1883 was apparently more benign. In Canoan, it lasted two months and a half, from 18 July to 14 September, cutting down the lives of thirty adults and six young children. On 30 September 1883, the *Te Deum* was sung in the whole island as thanksgiving for the end of the epidemic. Between November 1889 and February 1890, similar outbreaks of cholera and smallpox brought about countless deaths in the whole island. In San Juan, the number of cholera victims rose up to twenty while smallpox fatalities numbered 478, a great number of whom were children.¹¹

The local chroniclers recorded only two earthquakes. The first tremor took place in July 1886. Apparently, it caused great destruction. The earthquake of 21 September 1897 was more violent; it affected the entire island and its aftershocks continued until 9 November. In San Juan, it destroyed the newly-constructed church completely. In Maria, “the bells tolled by themselves and it caused cracks in the cota of the new church in its four corners: a vertical line two varas [roughly 15 meters] long and one centimeter wide.” The bells in the capital tolled and cracks were observed “in two arches of the kumbento.”¹²

⁹*Cosas notables de la parroquia de San Juan*, AHPM, Legajo 56, No. 2.

¹⁰*Cosas notables de Siquijor*, AHPM Legajo 56, No. 2.

¹¹*Cosas notables de la parroquia de San Juan*, AHPM, Legajo 56, No. 2.

¹²*Cosas notables de María, Siquijor y San Juan*. AHPM.

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The Augustinian Recollects and the Philippine Revolution in Cavite¹

Ángel Martínez Cuesta, OAR

When the Revolution broke out in 1896, the Order of Augustinian Recollects was greatly involved in the Philippines. It can be said that the Order was identified with its lot. More than 80% of the active members of the Order worked in the Islands. Even those who were in the stages of formation had their eyes set on the Philippine missions. In August and September 1896, when seventeen friars had already lost their lives, the Order still dispatched twenty-four more religious to the Philippines, nineteen of whom were new missionaries. The biographer Fr. Francisco Sádaba saw in this latest Recollect expedition the spirit of self-denial and sacrifice of the Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino. A century thereafter things are viewed in a different way. In early 1898 there were in the Philippines about 330 Recollects who attended to approximately a million and a half souls, who lived in four convents (Intramuros and San Sebastian in Manila, Cebu and Cavite), a secondary school in Bacolod (Colegio de San José), and 235 parishes in Luzon, Mindanao, Negros, Palawan, Bohol, and other small islands.²

¹This chapter is culled from *Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos II: El Siglo XIX* (Madrid 2015) 960-970, and translated by Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos.

²Ángel MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *La Iglesia y la Revolución Filipina*, in *Recollectio* 21-22 (1998-1999) 19-82.

This revolutionary situation announced harsh days for the Province and for the entire Order. When the Recollects were constrained to abandon the Philippines, they lacked points of support or convents in other countries. Several religious had given early notice about the gravity of the perils and favored the opening of centers in Spain, America or even in China and Japan. But the routine, unjustified fear of possible reprisals of the Spanish government and a perilous ecclesial and cultural isolation had set aside the warnings of Fr. Fernando Mayandía, Saint Ezekiel Moreno, Fr. Patricio Adell and others.

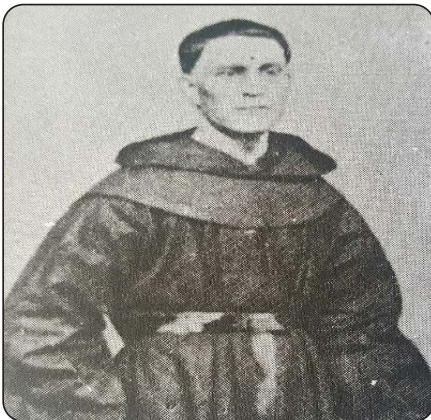
The Tagalog Revolt (September 1896-December 1897)

Towards the end of 1896 and during the first eight months of 1897, the parish priests of Cavite and Zambales and, to a lesser degree, those of Batangas wrote in their letters about bands of revolutionaries who roamed in the vicinity of the parishes. They lamented the apathy of the government, even as they urged the officials to take urgent measures. Perhaps the government people did not even give them due weight and consideration. They claimed that most of the revolutionaries were maladjusted people, simple malefactors inclined to robbery and pillage. Majority of the people remained loyal to Spain. There was no need, therefore, for extreme measures. On 27 August, the prior of Cavite talked about “complete tranquility.” Two days later, the administrator of Imus Hacienda, who, despite persistent rumors about Andres Bonifacio’s uprising, reported to the provincial that there was nothing new in his area. It was merely two days before the uprising of Emilio Aguinaldo in Kawit, not very far from his own residence. The comments made by the parish priests of Caloocan and San Mateo were more alarming. Nonetheless, these parish priests trusted their parishioners and did not see the need to abandon them and seek refuge in Manila. Such relative calm did not make the work of the superiors easier. Even as they trusted those reports, they simply followed with increasing preoccupation the events but without taking extraordinary measures. It was enough for the friars to take some precautions and gather themselves in those zones considered safe.

The disenchantment was going to be atrocious. On the night of 31 August, a rebel group headed by Emilio Aguinaldo, laid siege to the estate-house of Imus where the administrator of the Hacienda (Fr. Juan Herrero), the town's parish priest (Fr. José María Learte) and five religious brothers were joined by six troops of the Guardia Civil, two local policemen and the domestic personnel.



The Recollect Casa-Hacienda (Estate House) of Imus, Cavite



Fr. José María Learte, parish priest of Our Lady of the Pillar parish.

During the whole night they resisted the assault of the attackers but the next day (1 September), after viewing the futility of their efforts, they abandoned the estate-house in search of a safer shelter.³ Nevertheless, Brother Román Caballero, an aged man of 70, opted to await the revolutionaries at the residence. When they set foot there, the old

³Aguinaldo placed the date of the attack against the estate-house on 2 September.

friar approached them. He had hoped that with his twenty-four years of service to the Hacienda and its sharecroppers, he would get some special consideration. But those were not the times for considerations. Initially, the revolutionaries did not pay attention to him. But later when they became aware there were no other people in the house, they shot him dead. The same fate happened to Brother Dámaso Goñi who had ensconced himself in the drainage.

The five religious [Fr. José María Learte, Fr. Juan Herrero, Br. Bernardo Angós, Br. Jorge Zueco, Br. Victoriano López] who escaped the siege of the estate-house took unknown routes and reached the boundary of Imus and Bacoar. When they felt they were almost safe, they were discovered by a band of revolutionaries who, with bolos in their hands, struck them down and slew them straightaway. Aguinaldo claimed all were given Christian burial. Brother Angel Morrás, who closely followed this tragic event, and Fr. Víctor Oscoz, who visited Imus some months after, wrote that the corpses of some friars were dumped in the river. It was only later and at the persistent requests by Baltasara Lacson and other influential women that the cadavers were given burial on holy ground.

Two days later,⁴ the parish priests of Silang [Fr. Toribio Moreno], Dasmariñas [Fr. Toribio Mateo], Bailen [Fr. Faustino Lizasoain] and Maragondon [Fr Simeón Marín], and two religious brothers [Brother Luis Garbayo del Carmen, Brother Julián Umbón] who were in charge of the estate-house in Salitran, not far from Dasmariñas town proper, were executed. The parish priest of Dasmariñas and the two brothers were slain in the barrio of Sampaloc as they attempted to cross over to Silang. No other details on the slaughter of the other three parish priests exist. The two religious brothers in Hacienda de San Nicolás were able to flee to safety in Manila. One of them was Brother Angel Morrás and it is to him that we owe the most reliable details of this Cavite tragedy.

⁴ 3 September 1896.

AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECT PRIESTS/BROTHERS SLAIN IN THE REVOLUTION

NAME	RESIDENCE	PLACE	DATE OF- DEATH
Fr. José Maria Learte, OAR	Imus	Imus	1 Sept. 1986
Fr. Juan Herrero, OAR	Imus Hacienda	Imus	1 Sept. 1986
Br. Román Cabalero, OAR	Imus Hacienda	Imus	1 Sept. 1896
Br. Jorge Zueco, OAR	Imus Hacienda	Imus	1 Sept. 1896
Br. Bernardo Angos, OAR	Imus Hacienda	Imus	1 Sept. 1896
Br. Victoriano López, OAR	Imus Hacienda	Imus	1 Sept. 1896
Br. Damaso Goñi, OAR	Imus, Hacienda	Imus	1 Sept. 1896
Br. Luis Garbayo, OAR	Salitran Hacienda	Silang	3 Sept. 1896
Br. Julián Umbón, OAR	Salitran Hacienda	Silang	3 Sept. 1895
Fr. Toribio Mateo, OAR	Dasmarinas	Silang	3 Sept. 1896
Fr. Simeón Marín, OAR	Maragondon	Silang	3 Sept. 1896
Fr. Faustino Lizasoain, OAR	Bailen	Silang	3 Sept. 1896
Fr. Toribio Moreno, OAR	Silang	Silang	3 Sept. 1896

These religious were the first thirteen Recollect victims of the Revolution. Although they had links with the Imus Hacienda, more or less close, and hence the target of the revolutionaries, their death was especially on account on the insecurity of the first outburst, when there was no law and what mattered most was merely to overwhelm the enemy.

Fr. Agapito Echegoyen, parish priest of Amadeo, likewise fell captive to the revolutionaries, and after three months of deprivations and vexations, he was killed in Maragondon on 28 February 1897 together with three Calced Augustinians.⁵

The rest of the parish priests of the province of Cavite were able to save themselves. The parish of Bacoar counted on the help of the revolutionaries of the town. Others were alerted on time about the events and fled to Manila or Cavite. Those of Las Piñas, Caloocan, Montalban, Taytay, San Mateo and Antipolo, lived

⁵José Manuel BENGOA, *Fecha del asesinato del P. Agapito Echegoyen*, in BPSN 89 (1999) 25-33.

months of anxiety, caused by searches, threats, robberies and tax levies.

By mid-September, the provincial felt he was on top of a “volcano about to erupt.” By the end of the month, the whereabouts of fourteen religious was still unknown. The parishioners seemed loyal but the information that came from adjoining towns and the freedom that the groups of revolutionaries moved about put him on guard. Although some Recollects were absent from their towns for some days, others returned soon. But at the start of November they still remained at the convent of Cavite [Puerto]. Aside from the prior of the house, the parish priest of Kawit,⁶ all the parish priests of Batangas, some from Mindoro and those of San Mateo and Montalban stayed there.

The behavior of the parish priest of Taytay reflected an ambience of great insecurity. On 5 September, at the insistent request of his superiors, he took refuge in Morong, Rizal, and on the 19th of the same month, parishioners encouraged him to return to Taytay where he was welcomed by thirty town leaders on horseback. On the 28th “after having received several warnings by loyal parishioners,” he transferred to Manila. On 10 October, he was back again in Taytay where he continued without any sudden scare until the end of the hostilities. The parish priest of Calauan, however, remained all the time in his post, without experiencing the least setback.

Second Phase of the Revolution

Tranquility would take months to arrive. In February 1897, when Fr. Agustín Garrido⁷ was assigned to the parish of Caloocan, he came upon eleven barrios and the peripheries of the same town that were completely destroyed. From mid-November until the end of April 1897, the province of Cavite was the scene of bloody encounters between the revolutionaries and government troops, which left thousands dead over the land and reduced several towns into ashes. During these months, the military operations were

⁶Fidel DE BLAS (1845-1920).

⁷Agustín GARRIDO (1861-1916).

concentrated almost exclusively in Kawit and Noveleta. But in mid-February of 1897, taking advantage of the arrival of thousands of Spanish soldiers, General Polavieja⁸ undertook a systematic campaign which in two months' time led him to the reconquest of the whole province.

Behind the Spanish army followed the parish priests who found their parishes in total disarray. On 27 March, Fr. Mariano Asensio came upon Bacoor without residents, the church and convent in ruins, and the sacramental books dispersed. The church and convent of Silang were turned into warehouses of sacred objects. Still there were enough books and documents left, some very valuable ornaments, about a hundred ivory images, three wall clocks, a piano, etc. Fr. Manuel Jiménez, the military chaplain at that time, took care of all of them with General Lachambre's consent. Months later, the new parish priest found the church converted into a factory and military hospital. Of the sacred ornaments, only some images and five chandeliers were found. The parish books had disappeared from the convent. And the town turned into a miserable settlement of forty to fifty shanties. The former residents had dispersed to the adjoining towns. Only in Carmona had the people set up four barrios. Dasmariñas displayed a Dantesque scenery. Fr. Jiménez reported one thousand deaths. Its church and convent suffered serious damages during the violent battle that preceded its capture by Spanish troops.

Imus suffered the same fate. The rebels, who occupied the general headquarters in the estate-house, defended themselves bravely, leaving behind about 500 dead in the area. The estate-house had been set on fire and its roof and walls had collapsed. The roofs of the warehouses had crashed to the ground. The parish church of Imus, however, was almost intact. The lateral nave suffered the impact of a grenade blast. The images were still on the altars. At that moment, the church served as barracks, infirmary and warehouse. The sacristy accommodated the arsenal. The tabernacle had been desecrated. Solely the church edifice remained

⁸Camilo García de Polavieja (1838-1914) was governor general in 1896-1897.

standing and inside it the Spanish troops set up a hospital with a hundred beds, leaving a single room for the religious. This room was his kitchen, sleeping quarters and office. After a month, one-third of its population had gone back to their homes. Amadeo had been respected. The convent had turned into the military officials' quarters; the church served as the soldiers' barracks. The parish books had been moved to safety at the residence of the former barrio chief.

Another dire consequence of the Revolution was the deterioration of religious practices. Parishioners seldom went to confession, children remained unbaptized, marriages not solemnized, as observed by the parish of Las Piñas. Communion and confessions were greatly decreasing in Naujan, Mindoro. Pilgrimages to Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage were suspended on account of the revolutionary groups lurking in the vicinity of Antipolo. Many parishes were bereft of religious services because the curates had abandoned them. However, in Zambales, Mindoro and Batangas their absence was rather brief, for a few weeks only. But in Cavite, the pastors were absent from their curacies for months. When they retraced their steps in March 1897, many towns were half-deserted. Dasmariñas and Amadeo were annexed to Imus and Silang, respectively.

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A Historical Account of My Arrest and Incarceration in 1898¹

Blessed José Rada

6 November 1898. It was about twelve-thirty in the afternoon when the two undersigned—Father José Rada and Father Benito Cañas—were in the convent of La Carlota (Negros Occidental) and three or four armed men declared in all arrogance to us that we were held prisoners in the name of the Revolutionary Government. We could not offer any resistance against such declaration either for lack of guts



Blessed Jose Rada (1861-1936)

or because the mob was immediately upon us. We were thereupon subjected to humiliation by such great multitude of people that we were not aware of what was happening.

¹ARCHIVO HISTÓRICO PROVINCIAL DE MARCILLA [Provincial Historical Archive of Marcilla, Saint Nicholas of Tolentino Province, Order of Augustinian Recollects, Marcilla, Navarra, Spain [AHPM], *Memoria de la prisión del padre José Rada*, Legajo 20, Sección 6. I thank Father Ángel Martínez Cuesta for a photocopy of the manuscript which I deciphered and translated into English. A brief biography of Blessed José Rada is appended at the end of this historical account. Both account and biography were originally published as *Memoir of My Arrest (1898)* in Handurawan. *Visita Iglesia Negros y Recoletos*, 104-108, edited by Dennis V. Madrigal and published in Bacolod City in 2006.

After the rabble had barged in, their leaders commenced to ransack the convent first by robbing my companion's money and mine in the amount of 700 pesos and jewels from all the chests and trunks whose value could be estimated at about 500 pesos. All this was taking place in the room of the parish priest when a Spanish peninsular named Don Nicolás informed the chief of the insurgents that in the room of the associate priests or that of the guests the furious hurling of all the items from some trunks—locked but forced open—out of the window to the public street was being perpetrated by the mob. They succeeded in robbing not only items of very high value but even insignificant objects like razor blades, eyeglasses, two watches and many other items difficult to count.

After the pillage the over-all leader of the mob [illegible] in the town of San Enrique had hinted to us that we should follow them. But several people in the town opposed this. They were able to keep us prisoners in the convent until a new order from the government in Bacolod would come. We were informed that we should be reunited at all costs with our confreres in the town of Bago. At about six in the morning of the designated day—that was Tuesday following that week—we embarked on the journey without being able to communicate with the companion about our wretched impressions. The whole time we were imagining they would take us to another place and kill us villainously so much so that we sometimes surprised each other with glances. We found ourselves making acts of contrition in the forethought of a treacherous death. All this was due to the behavior of the crowd that brandished their weapons, giving us the impression and threats of murdering us.

When we arrived at Valladolid, they took us to the *casa tribunal* and... arrival we were left... and impudent words of that [illegible] who derived pleasure from vilifying us with all kinds of effrontery and dreadful things to say, except for a gentleman whose name I do not recall and who during the Spanish rule held the office of [illegible]. This man behaved like a... person who showed pity and compassion to us. He pointed out to the others that they should

not behave that way with defenseless persons like us and, more so, that they should take into account that we were priests. With that they somewhat calmed down, kept silent and withdrew. They left us alone until lunch time when they took us to the private house of a man surnamed Montinola. Here they treated us with all kinds of respect and kindness and served us a fine meal prepared for us in an instant.

After our meal we headed for the town of Bago. Along the way we encountered countless roving armed bands who when they saw us brandished their weapons and displayed gestures as if to injure us with them. At the outskirts of Bago we were ordered to get down from the [cart?] where we had been driven by two men who guarded us with all kinds of consideration since we pulled out of La Carlota.

In one of the streets where we passed we were invited to go up to the house of a man who was unknown to us but whose surname was Matti. Here we were invited to partake of some sweets and anise-flavored liquor that we gladly accepted on account of the terrible thirst we had since we left Valladolid. This stemmed from the extreme heat we suffered during the journey. Although that man treated us well, nevertheless we were very annoyed by him when he narrated about endless iniquities he attributed to others, especially to Father Andrés Torres [Gomes?], Father Andrés Ferrero, Father Manuel Navarro and Father Mariano Lasa, who, according to that man, were “executioners of natives.” In order to discredit them, he invented a bunch of lies that even the most foolish man would be incapable of believing for their impossibility from all perspectives that such cases could be done by men so highly acknowledged by the multitudes of natives as their liberators and endearing fathers who in all occasions, especially in their needs and tribulations, had assisted and delivered them from all kinds of vexations committed by civil and military authorities.

Finally, it ended with us being dispatched to the revolutionary court. The distance from that house to the place of the *tribunal* was one of the most angst-ridden moments for us because we had always believed we would be overpowered by the rabble and we would pay so many sufferings, trials and hardships with our

perfidious death for the well-being of those unfortunate ones who were blinded by passions and steered by secret societies in every corner in order to find asylum. God wanted us to be reunited with our brothers in the *tribunal* of that unhappy town of Bago, a town that excelled most in defaming the Church. And all of us were reunited in that town and each one was comforted by the same spirit of fortitude and submission to the will of God who willed those things that way. For some days we awaited new orders from the Revolutionary Government.

Again we then moved on towards the capital until the place where they led us in the company of many soldiers who commiserated with our situation without any doubt and treated us less wretchedly along the way. As it was impossible for us to make it to the capital of Bacolor [Bacolod] without consuming any food at all, the chief of the party issued an order that in the town of Sumag—located between Bacolor [Bacolod] and Bago—we were to eat some food that would be served to us in the parish rectory. The food was more abundant than what we had earlier believed. Given the circumstances, and everyone grateful for the attention of the chief and the *principales* of the town, we could only show our gratitude thanking those men for their goodness. After the meal we were asked by the chief if we could already proceed with the trip to Bacolor [Bacolod]. We replied that we were at his disposal.

And immediately we undertook the journey to the capital where we arrived at five thirty in the afternoon. Upon arrival we were taken to the governor's office where they detained us for an hour, we were kept standing, in the presence of a great number of curious onlookers, in the midst of the herd, hearing insults of all kinds, enduring the foolish and arrogant stares by the multitude, already weary of waiting in such attitude and in the uncertainty where they could take us. We spent that hour in some most distressed meditation until finally they took us to the headquarters where they wanted us to be kept in prison, without any dinner during that ill-fated night nor beds where we could lie down but just the hard floor, without any sleeping mat that could protect us from the humidity, and without water we could quench our thirst

with, but of the [illegible] without rest, we were all suffering. God be praised!

But there was a man—may God reward him for it—who on the day after our arrival, carried away by charity and inspired by compassion, prepared breakfast for us which did not fully satisfy our needs, nevertheless it helped us alleviate them and bear everything until such time when they would serve us some food—certainly in paltry quantity—to reduce our hunger pangs which had left us without strength any more.

For several days they detained us in prison, giving us very little food and providing us with miserable sleeping mats so that we could have some rest from our fatigue. Not without a moment when once in a while persons would enter and would insult us with words that are so revolting that they should not see print here (so as not to offend with these [words] those pious persons who would read this in the course of time).

And as if this were not enough, they did their best to isolate us from the rest of the world, putting it into practice and throwing us in a public jail (called *cota*), in some filthy dungeons, filled with wretchedness. We were in this plight—held incommunicado—for fifteen days. Entry was permitted only for people who came especially to bring insults and [...] to the Fathers whose hands in other times they had kissed, full of deference and cognizant of the favors they had frequently received from them.

As we entered the *cota* (as if the pillage of our convents and churches were not yet enough), the prison warden once again subjected us to frisks and robbed us even of the insignificant undergarment we kept to change what we were wearing, heaping on us at the same time with abuses and uttering words which, were they spoken by Satan, would have fitted well and we could believe that the former must have been the son of the latter, judging from what he had said and done. From this point on, we already suffered the same fate and as the Father who is to copy this [historical account] was also among the prisoners, I leave the description of all the rest of our imprisonment to his pen.

Life and Martyrdom of Blessed José Rada (1861-1936)¹

Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos

A native of Tarazona of the Spanish province of Zaragoza, the future martyr of Motril was born to Alejandro Rada and Timotea Magallón on 17 November 1861. An Augustinian Recollect religious since his profession of the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience on 4 September 1878, Fray José Rada de la Virgen de los Dolores boarded the steamer *Isla de Cebú* in Barcelona for Manila with thirteen confreres. On 11 July 1884, he was sent to Liloan, Cebu and was ordained as priest in November 1884. He was named coadjutor of San Isidro Labrador parish of Bilar, Bohol, in May 1885.

Father Rada worked for two months in Dimiao, also in Bohol, before his transfer on 1 May 1886 to Our Lady of the Pillar parish of Old Sierra Bullones, now Pilar town. The inland town, created in 1863, had solely 1,700 inhabitants. Its fertile farms produced palay, wheat, sugar cane, corn, abaca, coffee, cacao, cotton, vegetables and root crops. Through his assiduous exhortation, the abaca yield of the town increased significantly every year. Toward the end of 1889, he supervised 249 workers in laying the foundations of the new parochial church. Five years

¹Originally published as *A Biography by way of Introduction* in Handurawan. *Visita Iglesia Negros y Recoletos*, 104-105, edited by Dennis V. Madrigal and published in Bacolod City in 2006.

later, the main altar and the presbytery were completed in time for the annual town fiesta. The hitherto unfinished ground floor of the parish rectory was inaugurated during his term.

The canonical visit of Cebu Bishop Martín García Alcocer O.F.M. in 1887 was a festive occasion for the whole parish. The curate had earlier prepared over “one thousand young children and adults of both sexes” to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Three hundred and fifty children were confirmed by the Franciscan bishop when he visited the curacy again in 1894.

In the *Libro de Cosas Notables* of Old Sierra Bullones, Father Rada happily recounts the diocesan prelate’s overjoyed reaction to the fast-paced church project: “He was much impressed with the ongoing work of the new church. Filled with awe, he could not believe how in so short a time and with so few parishioners could a project be in such an advanced stage as it is now.” He had profuse words of encouragement for the hardworking Recollect minister. In his desire for its early completion, the bishop decided to defray further construction expenses with parochial funds from prosperous Maribojoc town, much to the delight of the parishioners of Old Sierra Bullones.

In March 1889, the Servant of God started the devotion to “our glorious Patriarch Saint Joseph with immense joy and satisfaction of the people” of the Marian parish of Old Sierra Bullones; every 19th of the month thereafter a sung mass was celebrated to honor the Lord’s foster-father. The parishioners bade farewell to their beloved parish priest in August 1896 when he was transferred to the adjacent Saint Joseph parish of Candijay. Here he stayed until early November 1898 when the Recollect curates were advised to leave their Bohol curacies and to head for Manila. Rada passed by Negros Island whose parishes were also manned by Recollect ministers. He was arrested at the *kumbento* of La Carlota together with his confrere Father Benito Cañas.

On 5 November 1898, the banner of the Revolution was unfurled in Negros, and thereafter thirty-five Recollect friars—including the transient Father Rada—were arrested and subjected

to untold indignities at the Bacolod jail at the hands of uncouth revolutionary guards.² Hard labor further awaited the captives at a prison camp in La Granja, La Castellana. Freed three months afterward, the friars boarded the *S/S Monserrat* bound for Manila. Father Rada left for Spain, and thereafter to Brazil. His conventual residence at Motril in the southern Spanish province of Granada began in early 1930.

“Harshly dealt with, he bore it humbly, he never opened his mouth, like a lamb that is led to the slaughterhouse, like a sheep that is dumb before its shearers never opening its mouth,” so goes a lyrical passage from a *Song of the Suffering Servant of Yahweh* (Is 53,7). Christian tradition maintains that the songs foreshadow the sufferings and death of the true Servant of God, the Messiah, Christ Jesus. Eyewitnesses associated the behavior of five Recollects and a diocesan priest on their way to the place of execution in the manner of the Servant of Yahweh. “On the way to the place of martyrdom, all went with a meek and humble mettle, not unlike sheep led to the slaughterhouse,” observed the witnesses of the 1936 carnage of the five Recollect religious in Motril, Granada, Spain.

The story of their martyrdom began on 25 July 1936. At dawn of that day, a horde of Marxist revolutionaries, armed with shotguns, rifles and pistols, barged into their convent and seized the conventual residents Deogracias Palacios, José Rada, León Inchausti, Julián Moreno and Brother José Ricardo Díez, and went on to set their priory and church on fire. Earlier the group of religious had been rudely roused from sleep by gunfire and violently herded out of their convent. The five “were very pale,” observed an eyewitness. “With every step they made they would look back to the convent.” No one tried to flee nor offered any resistance. The religious were then led “like sheep to the slaughterhouse” to a roadside not far from the convent. Before a hostile armed crowd, the five were gunned down at 6:00 o’clock in the morning.

²Licinio RUIZ, *Sinopsis histórica de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino de las Islas Filipinas* II (Manila 1925) 455-456; Ángel MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *History of Negros* (Manila 1980) 454-455.

The next day, at 11:00 a.m., another member of the Recollect Motril community—Blessed Vicente Pinilla—was forcibly pushed out of the parochial church of the *Divina Pastora* [Divine Shepherdess] where he had earlier celebrated mass. At the lobby of the Marian temple, the Marxist revolutionists peppered his body with bullets. Moments before he was mercilessly cut down by gunfire, Father Pinilla was heard by witnesses to have uttered: “Forgive them, Lord, for they know not what they do.” In like manner, the diocesan parish priest Blessed Manuel Martín Sierra was driven out of the parish church and was riddled with bullets a few meters from where the Recollect priest had fallen. The eighth martyr of the faith was Blessed Vicente Soler who had earlier sought refuge in a private residence when he returned to the priory and found no one there. The revolutionaries arrested him on 29 July 1936. His conduct in prison was exemplary: at the risk of his life, he led his jailed companions in the recitation of the Holy Rosary and offered them words of solace. He even offered to take the place of a layman with a family about to be executed. Soler was himself no stranger to the perils and nearness of death that he closely experienced during the Philippine Revolution, just like Father José Rada. At daybreak of 15 August, he was put to death along with eighteen other prisoners. The brave Christians were all lined up in front of the cemetery walls. They were forthwith gunned down under the headlights of the truck that had earlier transported them to the hallowed site of martyrdom.

Soler’s confreres and fellow workers in the evangelization effort in the Philippines—Pinilla, Inchausti, Rada and Moreno—comported themselves much like the early Christian martyrs of the violent persecutions under the Roman emperor Diocletian. The 35-year-old superior of their Motril priory, Blessed Deogracias Palacios, was a former missionary in Brazil and Argentina. The seventh member of the Recollect community was Blessed José Ricardo Díez, a religious brother who was assigned to Motril a few months before he received the palm of martyrdom.

“Like lambs led to the slaughterhouse,” the future Blessed José Rada and his fellow prisoners meekly walked—amid mockery and

invectives hurled at them by a raucous rabble—to their martyrdom that summer morning in July 1936. A firing squad ended the lives of the Recollect heroes of the Faith, blameless victims of the revolutionary Marxists in the initial days of the Spanish Civil War. The glorious day of their beatification at Saint Peter's Basilica—7 March 1999—was a joyous occasion. The Church commended the Martyrs of the Faith to the devotion and imitation of the faithful on account of their exemplary and heroic practice of Christian virtues and their brave confession and defense of the Faith. They had bravely given up their lives for Christ Jesus.

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The Augustinian Recollects of Cebu during the Philippine Revolution in 1898

José Luis Sáenz Ruiz-Olalde OAR

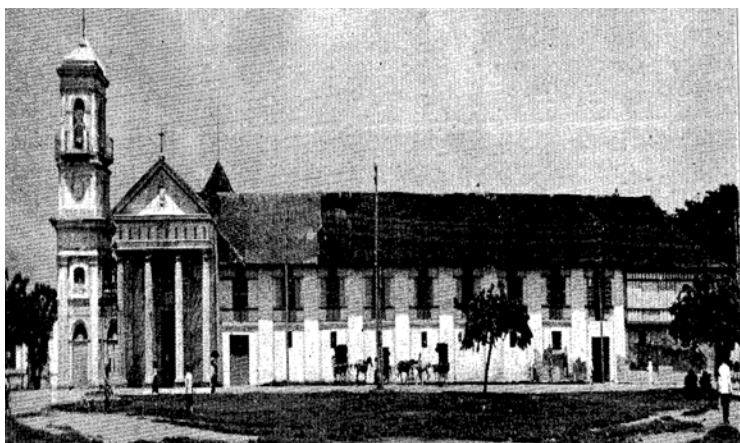
On the 3rd of April 1898, Palm Sunday, the province of Cebu rose up in arms. The Spanish provincial governor Montero gave the order to the few troops¹ who guarded the capital, namely: forty Spanish *cazadores* [light infantrymen], a small number of members of the Guardia Civil and native policemen, to go out and establish peace and order. He entrusted the defense of the city to the volunteers. The revolutionists were so great in number and their resistance so formidable that the government forces had to retreat to the capital in the wake of considerable losses. In the face of the impossibility of defeating the rebels and defending the capital, the governor informed Manila about the critical situation. In the meantime, he ordered all the Spaniards to seek refuge in the *cota* or fort of the city. The Augustinian Recollects found their way to the refuge, including Fr. Manuel Alonso (1831-1898), old and grievously ill. Fr. Francisco García (1849-1913) was tasked to transfer the Blessed Sacrament to the cathedral. Still, there was no way of convincing Fr. Isidoro Liberal (1827-1898), septuagenarian and almost blind, to abandon the Recollect Convent of the Immaculate Conception and seek refuge in the fort. The good Recollect could not get into his head why the Filipinos would rise

up in arms especially against Spain and much less why they had gone astray and vented their wrath against the religious. He was the only one who stayed behind in the convent. Two days later Spanish reinforcements arrived from Manila under the command of General Tejeiro. Once the city was retaken from the revolutionaries whose counterparts in the north were subsequently quelled by General Tejeiro, Governor Montero overwhelmed those in the south.

Initially, Fr. Liberal was treated with respect and transferred to San Nicolas. However, when the Spanish forces arrived and the revolutionaries had to flee, “in blind fury of the flight, they physically tore this priest to pieces.” Because the natives had thoroughly pillaged the Recollect Convent, some religious later opted to travel to Manila. The local prior Guillermo García (1854-1931) remained in Cebu until 30 September 1898. On this date in the company of Bernardino Remírez, vicar provincial of Cebu, Guillermo García embarked on a ship to Macau.

Both had been absent from their posts without permission from the prior provincial in Manila nor any previous notice sent to him. He then demanded from them an account of their actions. Fr. García replied that he had abandoned Cebu for health reasons. The vicar provincial Fr. Remírez penned in Macau a long narrative and sent it to Manila, recounting what became of the ministries of his provincial vicariate. He said when he left the city all the parishes of the vicariate of Cebu had been abandoned, except those of Mandaue and Danao, which continued to be ministered to by native secular priests. It was impossible for religious ministers to remain in their parishes on account of the daily raids perpetrated by revolutionaries. A native coadjutor priest himself had to abandon his parish for fear of reprisals by the rebels. For some time the religious of the vicariate had already gathered together at their convent in Cebu City, except the curate of Liloan who had left for Hongkong on 19 September. The Recollect parish priests of Consolacion, Poro and San Francisco had boarded the ship in high seas and travelled to Singapore.

There were reasons that constrained the vicar provincial to be absent and leave the convent to several confreres. One was the impossibility of embarking all the friars at the same time. The governor permitted only the departure of ailing religious despite the unabated alarming condition in the entire province and the apprehension of the whole Spanish colony that the revolutionaries would overcome the city at any moment with the few Spanish troops available in the province. The incessant rebel attacks in the towns of Cebu, such as Talamban, Catmon, Mandaue, Liloan, Compostela, and Consolacion, were exacerbated by the kidnappers and carabao rustlers. The constant threats were disseminated through revolutionary posters and flyers proclaiming the downfall of the capital in most unexpected moments. Finally, there was an occasion to bid farewell to the local prior who stealthily embarked on a foreign ship that lifted anchor in Cebu at dawn.



The Recollect Convent of the Immaculate Conception along Magallanes Street in Cebu City, built on the 1621 site of the Ermita de la Concepcion

We must mention one good thing done by the vicar provincial who before leaving Cebu forever tried to negotiate for two weeks with the Smith & Bell firm and the Maclan firm for the clandestine evacuation of the friars. Eventually, the Maclan firm pledged to place at the disposal of the Recollects in mid-October 1898 a ship

which was to depart from Cebu. All the religious of the convent in Cebu could embark on it at night. That ship would lift anchor at dawn and would proceed to fetch the religious in Bohol. Then it would proceed to Oroquieta where the confreres in Misamis would await embarkation. The vicar apprised the confreres at the convent of Cebu about these plans. Brother Juan was tasked to inform the confreres in Bohol.

In spite of the vicissitudes in Cebu, the Recoletos church was always open to divine worship. During the absence of the friars, there never was a time when some native priests who took care of the church and celebrated religious services in it.

In March 1899, the American Occupation troops converted the Recollect convent into a hospital. They paid the rental of two hundred Mexican pesos. Later on, when they occupied the warehouses, the monthly rental was raised to one thousand pesos gold.¹ Much later, the whole convent was converted into a military barracks and occupied by the American forces until 20 June 1903. The prior estimated the damages inflicted on the property during the occupation by the Americans to be \$2,000 or four thousand Mexican pesos.

On 6 December 1899, by authority of the prior provincial, Fr. Juan Ruiz (1857-1910) and Fr. Francisco Ortuoste (1856-1930)² travelled to Cebu where they arrived on 12 December. The first thing Fr. Juan Ruiz did was to report to the ecclesiastical administrator and to the Spanish consul who received him warmly. They informed him that there was no inconvenience at all for the two Recollects to fix their residence in the city.

But Cebu at that time enjoyed a kind of autonomy and the civil authorities, tolerated by the American government, were very hostile to the two Recollects priests. They even showed a petition to the provost of the city seeking the expulsion of our friars. Having been apprised of the situation of the city, Fr. Juan Ruiz deemed

¹From December 1901 to January 1903, the Americans did not pay any rental. The prior was told that no rental was paid since the edifice belonged to the Church.

²Ortuoste was appointed prior presidente of the convent in 1902-1906.

it prudent to return to Manila. The Spanish consul was requested to inform him, once the obstacles for the return of the friars were removed. Before leaving, Fr. Juan Ruiz made a tour of the church and convent and inspected them thoroughly. He was satisfied with the good condition, preservation and cleanliness of both edifices. Only two rooms had been allotted to the friars. The rest of the Immaculate Conception Convent was occupied by the American government.

On 15 April 1901, two religious Fr. Francisco Ortuoste and Fr. Bernardo Aráiz (1873-1928) were issued their appointment papers to fix their residence in Cebu. Fr. Pedro Bengoa (1872-?)³ was later given his *patente* to reside in the convent of Cebu. One of the measures taken by Fr. Ortuoste was to repurchase the convent. It had been sold on 7 December 1898 to the German pharmacist Don Andres Krapfenbauer for the sum of ₱70,000 with the contractual provision of selling it back to the vendor. The Recollect priest repurchased the church and convent on 22 May 1902. As regards the activities of the friars, Fr. Ortuoste reported that there was a lot of work during the Holy Week, especially at the confessional. The liturgical rites were likewise attended by numerous faithful. On account of the visit of Mr. Wright, there was a demonstration in the city against the friars.

³Pedro Bengoa was the missionary of Vallehermoso when he was assigned by General Diego de la Viña as military chaplain of the revolutionary troops in Negros Oriental. He later returned to Manila and travelled back to Spain in May 1902.

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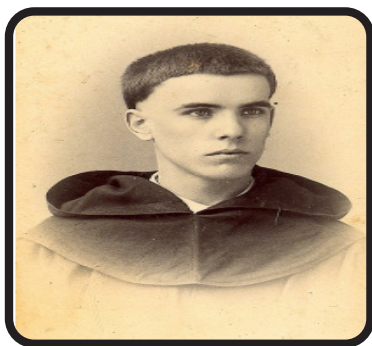
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An Unpublished Letter of Saint Ezekiel Unveils a Model Friar

Pablo Panedas OAR

Thanks to family records, the figure of a hardly known Augustinian Recollect priest—Father Baldomero Abadía (1871-1897)—has come to light. He was under the formative supervision of Saint Ezekiel Moreno. He was a close friend of Blessed Vicente Pinilla. And he was slain during the Philippine Revolution in 1897.

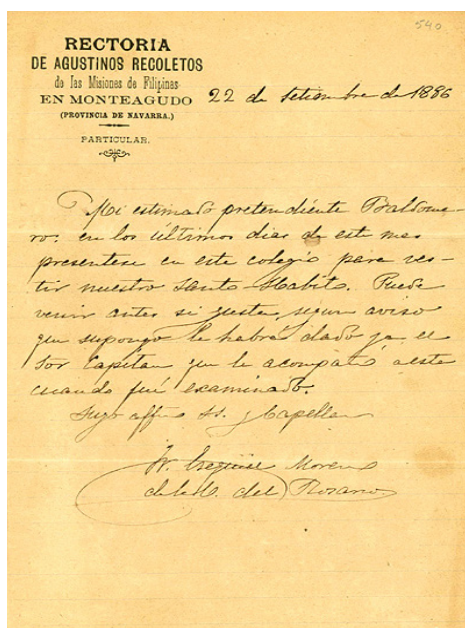


Fr Baldomero Abadía (1871-1897)

Almost three years ago, the Augustinian Recollect historian Father Ángel Martínez Cuesta edited four thick volumes of almost 1,000 pages each where the complete collection of Saint Ezekiel Moreno's known correspondence was published: a total of 1,600 letters and almost 1,000 from letter senders. It was the whole harvest that Father Martínez Cuesta had successfully gathered for some three decades, sifting through thousands of manuscripts of archives, located in the Philippines, America and Europe. And, definitely, it was a gigantic undertaking. Although the historian was well aware that many more letters were still unaccounted for, he was resigned to

the fate. In time he would edit more volumes and sooner or later missing letters would come out.

Thus, it does not seem strange at all when letters indeed come to light. What is strange, though, would be the manner and circumstances of their discovery and maybe their source as well. Only recently such a letter appeared, thanks to various happy coincidences.



Saint Ezekiel's letter to aspirant Baldomero Abadía

A chance funeral

The story began at the public oratory or chapel of the provincial curia of Saint Nicholas Province at Paseo de la Habana, Madrid. A funeral was taking place, not a very common event, and the prior provincial Father Rafael Mediavilla was the celebrant. At a certain point, he mentioned that the oratory belonged to the Order of Augustinian Recollects who evangelized the Philippines.

At the end of the Eucharistic celebration, a man went inside the sacristy and introduced himself as a relative of a former Augustinian Recollect missionary assigned in the Philippines.

The missionary in question was Father Baldomero Abadía who was the brother of his great-grandfather Leopoldo. With some irony in his voice, the man divulged that his great-great-grandfather had many offspring and in order not to complicate things in the matter of providing names for the children, he contented himself with just naming them after the military generals of Queen Isabel II, the reigning monarch at that time. The friar got the name of

General Espartero, while his great-grandfather was named after General O'Donnell.

And, speaking about his great-granduncle, the informant mentioned two more very interesting topics: that he had always enjoyed the fame of sanctity among them and what was more significant was that they preserved some of his letters and papers as relics. Father Pablo Panedas, head of the Commission on Publications and president of the Spirituality Secretariat of Saint Nicholas Province, promised to gather information on that friar of the 19th century, in exchange for copies of family records owned by the Abadía progeny.

Months passed by, but nothing was received at the provincial curia, despite the fact that some photographs of their relative—preserved at the Historical Archive of the Province in Marcilla, Navarra—have been sent by Father Panedas to the address of the Abadías. Creeping in was the growing loss of confidence

when finally an e-mail arrived. There was some delay because they were trying to scan every documentation available, a copy of which would later be sent to the curia. And, at long last, after waiting some more, a DVD reached Paseo de La Habana. It was a very well-made DVD containing abundant information anent Father Baldomero Abadía.

Manila 20 de Enero de 1896
Particular

St. D. Marcos Abadía
Crasobares

Muy Sr mio: A principio de año tuve el gusto de saludar a su hijo el P. Baldomero, quien me dijo había obtenido permiso de los Superiores para mandar a V. una limosna. Los dineros q. le ha dado a el otro Religioso; por que el P. Baldomero no tiene absolutamente nada: de manera que primero que a V. a el le hay hecho ese favor.

Como yo convenci en España al P. Baldomero acepte primero el encargo de escribir a V. para que viera a Monteagudo tan pronto como reciba esta o un par de dias después, a cobrar la cantidad de 70 pesos en 38 cts.

Fr. Sadaba's letter to Marcos Abadía

An unknown letter by Saint Ezekiel

There are 124 letters which Father Abadía wrote to his family—almost all of them were written from the Philippines—between 1887 and 1897. In another folder were the letters of his brother Leopoldo and many other people. Father Panedas' heart jumped with mixed feelings of joy and surprise when he came upon one attributed to Ezekiel Moreno. At once he opened the document to find out if it was so. And indeed, it was from the Saint.

It was a short missive, a letter of few lines with the letterhead: "Rectoría de Agustinos Recoletos de las Misiones de Filipinas en Monteagudo (Provincia de Navarra). Particular" [Office of the Rector of the Augustinian Recollects of the Missions in the Philippines at Monteagudo (Province of Navarra). Particular subject." It bears the date 22 September 1886, and it merely deals with sending a least precise information to its addressee: "Mi estimado pretendiente Baldomero: en los últimos días de este mes preséntese en este Colegio para vestir nuestro santo hábito. Puede venir antes, si gusta, según aviso que supongo le habrá dado ya el señor Capitán que le acompañó a ésta cuando fue examinado" [My esteemed aspirant Baldomero: on the last days of this month, present yourself in this seminary in order to don our holy habit. You may come earlier, if you please, as per advice which the Captain, who accompanied you here when you underwent examination, should have

22.9.86
Comunicación de Presbitero. Monteagudo 8 Setiembre 1886

Mi estimado amigo señor Marcos
El último día que el Baldomero recibí
su carta, lo destinaron para presenciar
sin poder contestarla desde Monteagudo
por eso me ha dado el encargo de
que yo le escribiera sin pérdida de
corros mandando adjuntos su retrato.
El ha dicho que si tiene tiempo
le escribiré al también en este mes
sus correos, de manera que es muy
posible que cuando llegue esta a sus
manos reciba otra de Baldomero.
Ha marchado muy contento con un
muy buen Indio Romano vizcaino.
Esta es la provincia de Guadalupe
en el pueblo de Alaminos.
Haga presente sus recuerdos a toda la familia
y se lo pide de V. su amigo Vicente Pinilla

Blessed Vicente Pinilla writes in 1893 to Marcos Abadilla, Baldomero's father

already given you.” And he bids goodbye, affixing his signature: “*Fray Ezequiel Moreno de la Virgen del Rosario.*”

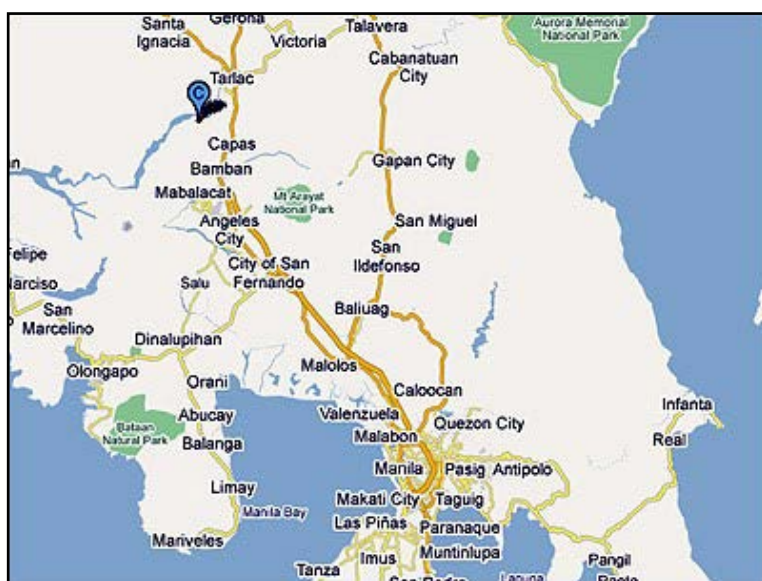
Father Baldomero Abadía was then one of the religious who had the good fortune of having their formation under the affectionate but exacting supervision of Saint Ezekiel Moreno. As prior of Monteagudo, the Saint had returned from the Philippines a year before [1885] and was at the helm of this very important community during the triennium until 1888. On 25 November of that year, Saint Ezekiel would embark on a ship to Colombia as head of a mission—aimed to restore the religious life in that country—which consisted of seven religious all belonging to the community in Monteagudo.

Blessed Vicente Pinilla: Baldomero’s friend and fellow novice

In this community in Monteagudo, Baldomero made his novitiate during the mandatory one-year period, at the end of which, on 4 October 1887, he professed the religious vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. For a little over a month, he had as fellow novice Blessed Vicente Pinilla, who would die a martyr’s death in Motril, Granada in 1936, at the onset of the Spanish Civil War. Both came from the same province of Zaragoza: Pinilla came from Calatayud and Abadía from Jarque del Moncayo. For this reason, they became friends, a friendship that deepened through the five years of formation in philosophy and theology at the convents in San Millán de la Cogolla, La Rioja, and in Marcilla, Navarra. They were on the same transoceanic voyage to Manila. With fourteen other confreres, they boarded the steamer *Santo Domingo* at Barcelona on 19 August 1892 and arrived in Manila a month after, on 18 September. They all belonged to the 92nd missionary group sent to the Philippines since 1606.

Abadía and Pinilla were not solely friends. Their families knew one another well and had contacts. Needless to say, when Pinilla wrote to the Abadías in Spain he did it on Baldomero’s behalf. This is the other surprise given us by the documents. There was not only a letter from Saint Ezekiel; there was likewise another from Blessed Vicente Pinilla. This letter bears the date

of 8 September 1893 and the place where it was written—the mother-house in Intramuros, Manila. The Blessed wrote Marcos, Baldomero’s father, on behalf of his son who had just been transferred to Alaminos, Pangasinan, to learn the language of the place. Baldomero did not have the time to reply to a letter that had just arrived from the family in Spain. He would try to answer it from his new assignment and to send his reply through the mail ship which was ready for departure.



O'Donnell [marked C] between Tarlac City and Capas

In that letter to the Abadías, Pinilla attached a photograph of the son and calmed them down, saying that Baldomero was going there very happy and in the company of “a very good father,” named Andrés Romero. After extending his regards to the whole family, he bade goodbye with the same treatment as friend he had used at the start of the letter. The Blessed simply signed it as “Pinilla.



Present-day Catholic Church of O'Donnell, Tarlac

Historian Father Francisco Sádaba

There was a third letter sent to the family and written by another Augustinian Recollect named Francisco Sádaba. Not unlike the preceding letter, it was written upon the request of Baldomero himself who found it difficult to communicate with his family. On 20 January 1896, when this letter was written, Father Sádaba was in Manila as provincial secretary of his religious province. It was addressed to Marcos Abadía, informing him that his son had obtained the required permission to send him some money. To get it, Marcos would simply go to Monteagudo and there they would give him the 70 pesos and 38 cents remitted by his son. Father Sádaba, who knew Baldomero as a student in Spain, added a comment which gives us an idea of the confrere's character: "This money was given to him by another religious because Father Baldomero possessed absolutely nothing."

Admiration for the young missionary shone through Father Sádaba's lines. In fact, he really felt admiration for Father Abadía. Ten years later, in 1906, Sádaba published a book—an essential reference work for anyone who wishes to gather information on the Augustinian Recollects in the Philippines. The voluminous book bears the title—*Catálogo*—the catalogue of all the missionaries of the Order in the Philippines. In that book, among the hundreds of religious, Baldomero Abadía found his place. In that letter we are commenting on, Father Baldomero was recently appointed parish

priest of a newly-created town named O'Donnell—curiously enough—in memory of the same Spanish general who had given the name to his brother Leopoldo. Well then, in his Catálogo, Sádaba would write about Father Baldomero's apostolate in this Tarlac town: "Allí estuvo llenando cumplidamente las funciones de su sagrado ministerio, pues era un joven de angelicales costumbres y de espíritu verdaderamente apostólico" [In that place he was thoroughly fulfilling the duties of his sacred ministry, as he was a young man endowed with angelic morals and a truly apostolic spirit].

Sacrificial victim at O'Donnell, Tarlac

Apart from all this, those were critical times, exceedingly hazardous for all the Spaniards in the Philippines, a great number of whom were friars. Towards the end of August 1896, the Revolution had broken out and had spread like wildfire from Manila to adjoining provinces. Several Augustinian Recollects were slain and many more were constrained to take refuge in Manila. And Father Baldomero was in a very risky area despite the appearance of calm and security on account of the proximity of a Spanish detachment. In fact, in the last letter he wrote to his family on 24 October 1897, he reassured them saying he was sleeping in the safety of the Spanish soldiers' barracks.

But the truth was that there was absolutely no calm nor safety. Father Baldomero himself clearly affirmed it in a letter he sent to his religious superiors. He did not trust his parishioners. He was afraid they would not defend him if Filipino patriots were to march into



Fr. Baldomero Abadía: an exemplary missionary, a victim of the Philippine Revolution

town. He did not lower his guard, though, and he was ready to flee at the least suspicious movement.

Yet his precaution was of no use to him at all. A week after that reassuring letter to his family, on the 31st October, a patrol of Filipino revolutionaries entered the town of O'Donnell, and in the very words of Father Sádaba in his Catálogo, “lo sacrificaron inhumanamente en odio a la Religión y a España” [without mercy they sacrificed him out of hatred against Religion and against Spain]. Father Baldomero was not 27 years old yet—his date of birth being 18 February 1871—and he was an Augustinian Recollect religious for only ten years and a priest for three and a half years, having received his presbyteral ordination on 24 March 1894. He had stayed in the Philippines for only five years. He had devoted himself to the preaching of the Gospel and was exercising his apostolate well among the people entrusted to him. He was assigned to a town that was extremely impoverished; he himself was utterly destitute as well. His were evangelical ideals, yet he suffered the consequences of a socio-political conflict that pinned him down.

Father Baldomero Abadía was indeed a worthy follower of that Saint who had received him as novice in Monteagudo. A Saint who at that very moment of death at the hands of the Filipino revolutionaries was Bishop of Pasto in Colombia and who was following with anxiety the blood-drenched news that reached him from the Philippines, especially about his Augustinian Recollect confreres and his former parishioners in Cavite and Las Piñas. A Saint who would remember him and who surely admired his brave death but bewailed it much more.

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The Philippine Revolution and the Last Years of Fr. Fernando Cuenca in Talisay¹

Santiago José Martínez Lazaro OAR

It will be too lengthy and then this research is not the appropriate place for that—rendering a judgment on the event of the Philippine Revolution which meant the independence of the Spanish colony. Yes, we can however understand what this event meant for Father Fernando Cuenca (1824-1902) and for the rest of the Fathers who had given the best they had for the islands. The number of Augustinian Recollects who were in Negros during these years was more or less eighty.



Father Fernando Cuenca OAR (1824-1902), parish priest for half a century

Negros was one of the places where the Revolution against the capital commenced and wherein distinguished persons from Minuluan took part with Lacson—a close friend of Fr. Fernando Cuenca—at their helm and he would be the most important leader

¹*El padre Fernando Cuenca, fundador de Negros (Filipinas)*, was published in the scholarly journal *Mayeútica*, 15 (1990) 180-187 and translated by Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos.

in the north of the western part of the Island. According to Angel Martínez Cuesta, the reason why Fr. Cuenca was not disturbed during the Revolution was due to the good relationship the two had kept.²

Father Fernando could not believe that a revolution which would remove the religious from the towns could take place. Father Simonena³ narrated several pertinent instances that took place shortly before Revolution.⁴ He himself was a witness to it all because he was Father Fernando's companion in Talisay since 1896.



One day the politico-military governor of the province Don Luis Arcovendas together with José Luis

Fr. Marcelino Simonena: Cuenca's biographer and assistant priest

²See Angel MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *History of Negros*, 448. The whole topic of the Revolution in Negros is extensively studied in pages 427-474. See Marcelino SIMONENA, *Father Fernando Cuenca de San José, Augustinian Recollect. A Short Biography*, translated from the original Spanish by Mrs. Ma. Soledad L. Locsin (Bacolod City 1974) 34-39.

³Olite, Navarra was Fr. Simonena's birthplace. His birthdate was 2 June 1873. During his Philippine sojourn, he was a missionary of Negros where he ministered to the pastoral needs of the parishes of Talisay, Hinigaran, Carol-an, Kabangkalan. He was a conventual in the Immaculate Conception convent at Cebu City. In November 1898, the revolutionists arrested him in Kabangkalan. He regained his freedom less than three months later and returned to Manila, thence to Spain. He held various high positions in the Order: prior of several houses in the Philippines and Spain, prior provincial in 1919 and general councilor in 1929. He penned the *History of the Recollect convent of Cebu*, a separate chapter in Licinio Ruiz's *Sinopsis histórica*. He authored *Manual del novicio agustino recoleto* [Augustinian Recollect Novice's Manual]; *Lo que debe saber un misionero* [What a Missionary Must Know], *La Medicina aplicada por los padres agustinos recoletos en Filipinas* [Medicine Applied by the Augustinian Recollect Fathers in the Philippines]. Among his unpublished works was the history of Colegio di Sant'Ildefonso, residence of Recollect priests studying in Rome. He was known for his great diligence, wise governance and intense love for things of the Order. He returned to the Father in heaven on 22 October 1959 at Marcilla.

⁴See Marcelino SIMONENA, *Breve biografía*, in BPSN 34 (1944) 107-109.

de Luzurriaga⁵ went to the convent. Very few days were left before the outbreak of the Revolution and the two informed Father Fernando about it.

He answered them: “Governor, the province of Negros Occidental is not bad; it is good and rich, but may the authorities refrain from abusing it because it is very slippery and they can break the backbone.”⁶

On 10 September 1898—continues Father Simonena in his narration—a group of Recollect missionaries gathered at Minuluan to celebrate the feast day of their patron Saint Nicholas of Tolentino. Several religious had been murdered in Cavite in the last days of August [1896]. In their conversation, the Recollects showed some mistrust on the natives of the country, a mistrust Father Fernando did at all not share. “Father Corro had the gall to tell him: ‘Don’t be naive, Father Fernando.’ How could he tell him that! That phrase seemed to pierce his soul, and he got even saying at the same time: “Show-off, look, he called me naive, that Father Pedro!”

The month of November in 1898 came, and almost all the religious of the west coast of Negros were taken prisoners, and slowly they were taken to Bacolod. Father Tiburcio Fernández, missionary of Concepcion, and Father Tomas Preciado⁷ were at the convent of Minuluan. The revolutionary leaders of Minuluan arrived at the convent and relayed to Father Fernando the order to take his two companions to Bacolod. “Well, and what do you want

⁵He was the one of the leaders of the uprising in Minuluan; please refer to A. MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *History*, 44.

⁶M. SIMONENA, *Breve biografía*, in BPSN 34 (1944) 108. Father Cuenca did not close his eyes at the abuses of some provincial governors. He even exchanged heated words with Amadeo Valdés who governed the island in 1892-1894. Cf. A. MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *Historia*, 127.

⁷He was the companion of Father Fernando from October 5 of that year. In November, on that date we refer to, he fell into the hands of the revolutionaries and was set free in initial days of February 1899 (cf. F. SÁDABA, *Catálogo*, 714). The reputation of Father Cuenca protected him during the Revolution (cf. A. MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *History*, 455.) Other religious deemed prisoners continued by force to remain in their respective curacies under house arrest, although they ended up leaving the parishes behind, like Father Mauricio Ferrero in Bacolod, Father Miguel Alvarez in Murcia and Father Pedro Bengoa in Vallehermoso.

to do with me?" Father Fernando inquired from them. "We have no intention of doing anything to you. You can stay in the convent." "No," the missionary replied, "if you want to take me also, I am ready. Then, after I shall have passed Matabang River, I shall take my sandals off and I shall cast the dust at you." They told him again: "No, you do not leave Talisay."

Since his Filipino assistant priest, Father Nicolás Alba, had to go to Silay to administer the parish, Father Fernando stayed alone, he being the only Recollect who never abandoned the Island. He had problems with his eyesight on account of the cataracts.⁸ Without any government pension at all, without the religious stipend, without financial savings, he would have undergone hardships had persons who knew him not given him assistance.



The kumbento of Talisay, Negros Occidental, besides being priests' residence, served also as parish office and hospital during Father Cuenca's time.

As a prisoner, he could not leave the convent.⁹ Ramon Diocsan accompanied him during the day. A young boy or *bata*,

⁸Cf. Letters of 15 January and 6 March 1896. In that 14 December 1895 letter he complained of his ailments, and in another letter dated 8 May about some *granos* [pimples]: saying "I am mortified by my *granos*; and if they say I am in good health I can give them to anybody."

⁹Cf. Licinio RUIZ II, 455; MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *History*, 454-455.

a son of his brother Domingo Cuenca, and Raymundo or Mundo, his faithful servant and assistant during his hydrotherapeutic treatments, spent the night with him in the convent. Father Nicolás customarily visited him every month. Not a single moment did he ask to go to Manila, although he did ask [the superiors] to send him a priest.

He was a sort of monument in the island, the living symbol of the agricultural progress of Negros.¹⁰ There was no American who came to the shores of Bacolod and did not ask to meet the person whom fame had deemed as the founder of Negros.

At last, they dispatched Father Tiburcio Fernández to him after acceding to the petition by the military authorities of Bacolod and Iloilo who manifested to the bishop of Jaro to request the prior provincial to send a companion to Father Fernando. Father Tiburcio did not stay long in Talisay because of the circumstances adverse to the religious habit.¹¹

Later, on 28 June 1901, they sent Father Marcelino Simonena to Talisay. He was able to remain beside Father Fernando until his death.¹² In his account, Father Simonena says how he was able to come in through the protection of the Lacsons. Since his arrival he had to wear the clerical garb because of the aversion that some people had shown against the religious habit. His presence had even caused protests in the newspapers in Bacolod.¹³

Little by little, the Recollects started returning to Negros and they found refuge under the beneficial shadow of the aged Father Fernando.

Illness and death

We continue the narrative begun by Father Simonena who was at his bedside until his death and later succeeded him in the parish

¹⁰MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *History*, 454.

¹¹Licinio RUIZ II, 137.

¹²Francisco SÁDABA, *Catálogo*, 715-716.

¹³We have not found the newspaper in question, although as proof of it there is a document signed by individuals in Bacolod and addressed to the bishop of Jaro, wherein they showed their aversion to the presence of a friar there in 1902, in *Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino*, Marcilla, Navarra, Spain, Legajo 57, núm. 4.

of Minuluan. Besides the oft-cited article, there are two existent letters by Father Simonena addressed to the prior provincial. In those letters he described the development of the illness and the subsequent death of Father Fernando.

“About nine months had passed since I came to Talisay when Father Fernando caught a catarrh, apparently.” He even underwent the treatment of wet blankets and general baths without being able to cure the catarrh. Perhaps, and that was my impression at that time, when—all drenched in sweat—he got out of the blankets and submerged himself in the bath-tub of water, he felt so very cold, or after the bath he did not react enough. What happened was that the catarrh took hold of his lungs and the slight illness got worse quickly until its final outcome.”

In the letter dated 25 March 1902, Father Simonena wrote that at the beginning of the month he had told the prior provincial about the poor health of Father Fernando: “We have no more hope that he would come out of this illness... about three weeks ago he commenced to swell, and far from diminishing the swelling increased all the more.” He recounted how an American physician from Bacolod paid him a visit. He wanted to send him to the capital but “the old man refused [...] He was already starting to become worse and he had moments of great exhaustion. When the moment comes for the swelling to spread to the heart, then it will be the time he leaves us.”

Simonena further commented that he had given him communion two times and the illness had come at the most inopportune moment, without a doubt referring to the difficult plight that the religious were experiencing after the Revolution. At that time, Father Mauricio Ferrero was likewise in Minuluan and he planned to proceed to Bacolod.



A simple tombstone on the tiled floor of Talisay parish church marks the spot where Father Cuenca is laid to rest.

From the night of Maundy Thursday until Good Friday, he became gravely ill and the Sacraments were administered to him when he was still conscious. He sneezed in a very natural but forceful manner once and, followed by another sneeze, and he breathed his last at that very instant.

Simonena added this information in his letter on March 28: "Last night, at one o'clock in the morning our old man Father Fernando gave up his soul to the Creator after receiving all the Sacraments and the blessing of His Holiness. May he rest in peace."

It was Good Friday so they placed the image of the dead Christ in the church for veneration by the faithful. The corpse of Father Fernando was also taken down to the church in an open casket. "The fact was that all the people formed a long queue before the cadaver of the father, kissing his hand, and stopped proceeding to the *Santo Entierro* [Holy Sepulcher] of the Lord. I just allowed it to happen and I acted normally."

The following day the interment took place. His corpse was taken to the parish cemetery. During the rite Father Simonena donned the Recollect habit, something he had not done before in order to shun the attacks by the residents. And from that time on, he did not take it off anymore.

His March 30 letter reiterated the news of Father Fernando's demise. He bequeathed almost nothing at his death, Father Simonena commented: "If he had left anything at all, it was for our survival. That is all we have."¹⁴

¹⁴Perhaps that amount of 200 pesos is the same one we have earlier referred to. In this letter and in a previous one, Father Simonena further recounted the behavior of the family of Don Domingo Cuenca, Father Fernando's brother. In the letter dated 25 [March 1902] visibly annoyed by the manner how the family members had taken away things from the parish rectory, including the inventory of the convent: "This [behavior] updates me on their nobility and manners." Later, in his 30 March letter, he explained that it was Father Fernando himself who had requested them to take everything upon his death in order to surrender it to Father Simonena. As this assistant priest himself had earlier stated, majority of the objects in the convent belonged to the family of Father Fernando, although the manner how they did it was not correct.

As written in the *Book of Noteworthy Events of Minuluan*, on 22 May 1912 his remains were exhumed together with those of Father Manzanares and Father Cándido Medrano. Father Fernando's remains were placed in an open niche on the wall of the presbytery on the Epistle side, following the solemn funeral rites. A simple tombstone with his name on it indicates the place since then.

Towards 1930, Father Licinio Ruiz set up two statues to Father Cuenca and Father Mauricio Ferrero in the garden of the cathedral of Bacolod. The same statues still beautify the place until today. Presently, there is another monument to Father Fernando at the town square of Talisay.



Father Cuenca's monument erected at the portico of the Bacolod Cathedral in 1930.

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Our Lady of Mount Carmel Venerated at San Sebastian Basilica

Blessed Vicente Soler

No one who possesses an average knowledge of Philippine history would consider the phrase— “The Philippines is the land of the most Blessed Virgin Mary”—as exaggerated.

The noble Spanish nation, insatiable during their Golden Age in their enthusiasm to conquer peoples for Jesus Christ, in the same ships that embarked its intrepid warriors in search of new worlds, dispatched likewise zealous missionaries who snatched from paganism thousands and thousands of unbelievers grieving under its oppressive yoke and instilled in them, together with the shining truths of our holy Religion, a tender and loving devotion to the Mother of God. They were convinced that the devotion to the Blessed Mother was the firmest and fitting bond for all the Christian faithful to remain united with the Divine Son. Those workers of the Gospel have toiled without rest until inculcating in the neo-converts the typically Castilian spirit they had imbibed, that is, the Christian spirit, embellished by the characteristic and distinctive mark of the devotion to the most Blessed Mary, a typical characteristic in which Spain has always excelled among other nations.

That the missionaries succeeded in their attempt and viewed their efforts crowned with promising success in this country cannot be denied. I believe that the devotion to most Blessed Mary surged

forth strong and vigorous in this Archipelago and it spread fast all over the land. With pomp and magnificence, the Filipinos have been celebrating her feasts. There is a multitude of religious associations among the laity established to honor her. Then we have the impressive religious processions organized to render due homage to the Mother of God, and most of all, the great number of shrines set up in her honor. Who does not know, even by word of mouth, the shrines of Caysasay, Antipolo, Peñafrancia, Manaoag, and countless others that for three centuries have been the inexhaustible wellsprings of graces and favors for everyone in need, and other sacred shrines where the most Blessed Mary had deigned to listen to her beloved Filipinos.



Our Lady of Mount Carmel
icon at San Sebastian Basilica in Manila.

But I do not wish to retrace here the history of the devotion to the most Blessed Virgin Mary in the Philippines; not even the history of those shrines, monuments of incalculable historical value that eloquently manifest how the devotion to the Mother of God had taken deep roots in the hearts of the people of this beautiful country. With humble objectives in mind, I only propose to make a brief historical account of a renowned shrine that I have not yet

mentioned until now, but the reader shall have seen in my humble work, and that is, the very popular Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in San Sebastian.

It was on 18 July 1617 when Vicar Provincial Father Rodrigo de San Miguel, an illustrious member and distinguished luminary of the Augustinian Recollection, departed from Spain for the second time to these Islands,¹ as he led the third mission of Augustinian Recollects. Even though the number of friars was small, they were equivalent—affirmed the chroniclers of the Order—to many missions on account of their zeal for the conversion of souls, which they were inflamed with and proof of which had been shown thereafter by the missionaries.

The missionaries stayed in Mexico City as they awaited embarkation on the final phase of their journey to Manila. During the brief period of time that they remained there, Fr. Rodrigo de San Miguel, a man of great virtues and vast knowledge and with most genial qualities, knew how to gain the understanding of the noblest and distinguished people of Mexico City. From them he received display of affection and respect. Perhaps the most important display was the fame acquired very soon was what he received from the very observant community of Discalced Carmelite nuns of San Jose Monastery. And this was the prodigious image of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The nuns had deprived themselves of their Marian treasure as testimonial of the affection they professed for the Augustinian Recollect fathers and most especially for Fr. Rodrigo de San Miguel.

Brimming with joy, the missionaries welcomed the image as a priceless gift Heaven had sent them. They all agreed to designate the heavenly Lady, venerated through that precious image, as the captain of the perilous maritime voyage. During the long journey, the Queen of Heaven evidently showed many times her sovereign power over the furious tempests in the rough seas. They reached

¹Fray Rodrigo de San Miguel had joined the pioneering Recollect mission of fourteen religious from Spain to the Philippines that left Cádiz on 12 July 1605 and crossed the Atlantic Ocean to reach Vera Cruz, Mexico, on 17 September, from there they travelled on foot to Mexico City more than four hundred kilometers away. From Acapulco, they embarked on 22 February 1606 on the ship *Espíritu Santo* crossing the Pacific Ocean for their final destination and arrived in Cebu on 12 May after almost three months. It was an “odyssey” that lasted exactly ten months.

successfully these distant shores without suffering any setback at the end of 1617.²

At that time, the noble gentleman Don Bernardino del Castillo, *maestre de campo* and commander of Fort Santiago and a steadfast devotee of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino, from whom he had received very special favors, donated to the Augustinian Recollects a country house he owned in the place called Calumpang near Sampaloc. In that same place, he constructed a convent with rooms for several religious at his own expense. Don Bernardino likewise built a modest church dedicated to the glorious martyr San Sebastian, for whom that virtuous gentleman and his spouse Doña María Enríquez de Céspedes, not less illustrious for her piety than for the nobility of her lineage, professed a special devotion.

Fr. Rodrigo de San Miguel did not find a more fitting place than at the new church of San Sebastian where they would place the revered Marian image he had brought from Mexico. And so, immediately after the church was finished, on 5 May 1621 the Queen of Mount Carmel was solemnly enthroned on the altar prepared for her amid extraordinary festivities. At the same time some religious settled at their new convent of Calumpang. This festive activity was followed by a very solemn novena attended by all the church and civil authorities as well as by a great number of people from Manila and environs.

After the most Blessed Virgin had taken possession of her place—however modest it was in material value yet very rich in the sentiments of love and veneration rendered by her sons who offered it to her, it was evident that the Mother of God very willingly accepted it. She then made them feel her benevolent influence on those who had recourse to her in search of protection and assistance. This mysterious little cloud of Carmel upon elevation in the Filipino horizon grew and spread fast not by the thrusts of a

²Recollect historians unanimously affirm that Fray Rodrigo de San Miguel and his four confreres arrived with first Carmen icon in the Philippines in 1618. Cf. FRANCISCO SÁDABA, *Catálogo de los religiosos agustinos recoletos de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino de Filipinas, desde el año 1606 en que llegó la primera misión hasta nuestros días* (Madrid 1906) 46.

raging storm, foreshadowing misfortunes, but in vivifying outburst of immense love and unlimited mercy, becoming wellsprings of copious graces and blessings that the beautiful Lady of Mount Carmel inundated the hearts of the favored ones with enthusiasm and with consolation and hope the hearts of those who happily looked upon that very rich source that Heaven bestowed on them.

The fame of the countless favors that continually flowed from the throne of the most holy Lady of Mount Carmel spread to the four corners of the Philippines. The church was brimming with offerings that the grateful faithful presented in testimony of favors received. And the devotion to the Blessed Mother of Mount Carmel extended rapidly to all the provinces, penetrated every home, and drew to herself the hearts of these natives through an irresistible force.

To strengthen the growing yet already vigorous devotion, a resounding event that took place in Manila contributed greatly. It was a very special favor in that same year 1621 that the most holy Lady of Carmel bestowed upon Msgr. Juan Vélez, dean of the cathedral church of the Archdiocese of Manila.³ I shall refer to it succinctly since it caused the establishment of the Confraternity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in San Sebastian Church. For a long time Msgr. Juan Vélez was bedridden, suffering from a very grave illness, and he was declared terminally by physicians, with all hopes in human remedy completely lost, awaiting only the time to give up his soul to God.⁴ In such a critical and disconsolate situation, someone suggested to him the fortunate idea that he put into practice at once. With insistence and perseverance, he begged the Recollect fathers for whom he professed affection and respect to bring Our Lady of Mount Carmel to his residence. The Recollect fathers willingly acceded to the pious wishes of the dying man. The holy image at once was brought to the house of the cathedral dean. The ailing prelate then fixed his glazed and weak

³Msgr. Juan Vélez (1602-1661) of Córdoba, Spain, was appointed bishop of the Most Holy Name of Jesus in Cebu by Pope Alexander VII on 26 January 1660. The bishop-elect, however, died in 1661 before his episcopal consecration. See www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bvelezj.html. Retrieved 18 July 2017.

⁴About the healing of Msgr. Vélez, read Licinio Ruiz I, 113-114.

eyes on that Divine Lady, an image of all goodness and sweetness, that seemed to invite him to ask for anything he wanted. He then fervently together with several religious.

The presence of Mary beside the deathbed of her faithful servant who was struggling with the horrors of the death throes, made herself felt instantaneously. The protection of the Virgin in that case was so visibly marked that in very few days the ailing prelate was completely cured. The cathedral dean was so intense in his propagation of the miraculous cure that the devotion to Our Lady grew by leaps and bounds.

Recollect War and Postwar Chronicles of Manila, San Juan (Batangas) and Cebu

Manuel Carceller OAR

Chronicles of the War in Manila, Cebu and San Juan, Batangas¹

The very reverend Father Provincial² and the provincial secretary have arrived in Spain from the Philippines and spent some days in our company. We took advantage of taking down some notes on the details which shall remain as the written evidence for our history, and at the same time they shall serve as interesting information for our readers.

When the war in the Philippines commenced with the Japanese attack, radiograms were sent from Manila to the vicariates of Spain and Venezuela informing them that all our religious in those Islands were all right at that time. Telegrams were likewise dispatched to the superiors of mission in the archipelago, granting them extensive faculties to take convenient measures in accord with the circumstances. In like manner, our prior provincial addressed a brief circular, albeit well-pondered on, on the events, wherein he

¹This chapter has been translated by Emmanuel Luis Romanillos from *De Filipinas. Notas para la historia*, in BPSN 36, no. 400 (1946) 33-40.

²Father Santos Bermejo was prior provincial in 1946-1952. The provincial secretary was Father Diego Izurzu.

mandated special prayers for peace in the world in general and for peace in the Province.

Except for a radiogram received from Spain by way of Shanghai which informed on the celebration of the general chapter with some appointments by the same chapter, the lack of communication was complete and equally upsetting. The fate of our houses and religious from outside the Philippines was unknown. The communications between Manila and the rest of the islands in the archipelago were similarly very limited. On several occasions radiograms and letters were dispatched through the Red Cross, asking for news on the plight of the houses and religious, but no reply ever came back until the time when Manila was liberated and a radiogram from the most reverend prior general³ in Madrid. The prior general greeted all those religious and showed his interest for their welfare and provided them with the news that the houses in Spain remained opened. Sometime later a letter from the prior general was received at the provincial curia filled with paternal sentiments that greatly consoled all the religious.

Augustinian Recollect Hospitality

After the first bombardment of Intramuros by the Japanese, (despite having Manila declared by the Americans as open city), which ruined the convent and church of Santo Domingo, Colegio de Santa Rosa and Colegio de Santa Catalina, etc. Majority of our religious in San Nicolas Convent in Intramuros moved out to the Convent of San Sebastian. A few of them stayed behind at San Nicolás with the prior Father Alegría.⁴ Once the Japanese entered the city, those confreres in San Sebastian returned to Intramuros.

When the Convent of Santo Domingo was razed to the ground, our prior provincial offered our two houses to the Dominican priests,

³Fr. Feliciano de Ocio was prior general from 1944 to 1950.

⁴Fr. Mariano Alegría perished at the hands of the desperate Japanese forces in Intramuros. Five more Recollects—Fr. Hernán Biurrún, Fr. Pedro Crespo, Fr. Ildefonso Vesga, Brother Juan Machicote and Brother Angel Peña—were massacred on 19 February 1945 during the Liberation of Manila. See Martín LEGARRA, *De la tragedia de Intramuros. Entrevista con uno de los supervivientes de*

who gratefully accepted the offer and for some days they lived with our many priests and brothers. Some Dominicans prolonged their stay at San Sebastian for several months. The same invitation was extended to the Australian and Irish Redemptorist priests who risked being detained at concentration camps.

Material Losses in our Two Convents in Manila

Our convent and church of San Nicolás in Intramuros were destroyed by the flames set by Japanese torches and our annexed properties simultaneously disappeared into thin air by the same causes. Of the convent and church solely the main walls, the façade and belfry remained. The pantheon where our religious had hidden some religious objects, sacred vessels, vestments, etc. was intact. Intact as well was the provincial archive that was transferred providentially together with some important books previously taken out of the library which was ruined, and some more things were successfully saved.

The Convent of San Sebastian remained intact, except for the minimal damages caused by machinegun bullets, although the risk of being set afire was imminent when extensive areas of the district of Sampaloc and their environs were razed to the ground, and, most of all, when a man was caught in the act of pouring gasoline in a warehouse within church grounds.

Two cannon shells inflicted damages to the church. A shell pierced the wall of the church at the Gospel side and seriously damaged one of the magnificent stained-glass windows. It was only providential that the accident took place when the Masses were over. That is why very few people were inside the church.

la gran catástrofe, in BPSN 36 (1946) 12-18; 31-32; 60-61; *Libro de Defunciones del Convento de San Nicolás de Manila*, *Los mártires de Intramuros*, in BPSN 39 (1949) 205-207; 228-230; Manuel DEL VAL, *Manila en llamas. La tragedia de Intramuros*, in BPSN 35 (1945) 229-234.

The Recollects' Plight during the Japanese Occupation.

Notwithstanding some limitations imposed on us by circumstances during the Japanese Occupation, our confreres were able to exercise their sacred ministry regularly. Our priests responded to the religious fervor which was awakened by the same war and they redoubled their efforts by contributing that way very effectively to the blooming of the worship especially at our Basilica of San Sebastian. Our Church of San Nicolás like all those of Intramuros was—we can say—practically abandoned, although the religious of that community did great sacrifices in order to confront in the best possible way the economic adversities inflicted on us all by the circumstances. Under harsh weather conditions, they all went to celebrate Masses and assisted the ministry of the priests of different parishes in the city.

In repeated occasions, the Japanese High Command issued orders which wanted to force the priests and religious to explain to the people the principles of what they termed “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.” In the face of those orders, a dignified attitude was maintained with just limiting themselves to preach the Gospel only.

It is our belief to be worthy of mentioning here the incident that took place in February 1942 in our residence and church of San Sebastian. It was about two-thirty in the afternoon when forty Japanese troops more or less showed up. Their purpose what to conduct a meticulous inspection in search of—apparently—a clandestine radio transmitter. They surrounded all our property, forcing the religious and the Augustinian Recollect Sisters of the adjoining Saint Rita College to assemble at the receiving room of our convent and to remain therein in the duration of the search.

The inspection was done by the Japanese in groups of five or six in the company of a religious. They went around and searched each and every room, station and office of the house. Their conduct was exceedingly inconsiderate and vicious, forbidding even the use of the telephone in order to keep the religious from contacting the Spanish consulate. The idea of the puerile mentality of those

Japanese was displayed in the incident that took place in the room of a Dominican religious, guest of the community under those circumstances, who had on his table some notes on physics. As soon as the Japanese saw them, they could not hide their joy of what they had believed to have been the secret codes of the transmitter they had been painstakingly searching for. We exerted great effort to convince them that they were simply notes on physics since they could not understand that a religious could know how to teach that course... They underwent a similar disappointment when they went up to the bell towers of the church they found two boxes in a corner which contained nothing but two typewriters which somebody in the house had placed there to save them from whatever robbery or raid possible.

Yet what was more interesting took place in the church when they wanted to inspect the tabernacle. When our prior provincial⁵ saw that those heathens were ready to commit whatever sacrilege, he stopped them with the greatest courage and declaring to them that only a priest could touch it. He then changed vestments and with all the lights switched on and all the religious present on bended knees, he opened the sacred tabernacle before the amazed eyes of the Japanese. This very scene happened twice because what one group had inspected did not escape the inspection by another group at times.

That search lasted five long hours, without any reason given for it.⁶ The religious believed that they had been harassed for no cause at all, and so a formal complaint through the Spanish consulate was lodged before the Japanese authorities.

The Japanese occupied a large portion of the edifices of the religious orders and our own buildings were not free from it. In spite of the protests made against attempts to install troops in our Convent in San Nicolás, the area which belonged to the provincialate was occupied. The community was permitted to be in the rest of the building but they were in complete *incomunicado*

⁵The prior provincial was Father Pedro García de Galdeano (1897-1969) who held the office from 1940 to 1946.

⁶The search was finally over at 7:30 in the evening.

from the Japanese because the windows and doors through which the Japanese could be seen were hermetically sealed. Hundreds of them stayed there for several months, with the number reaching greatest proportions when the initial bombardments by the Americans destroyed a big number of the ships found in the vicinity.

Not contented with occupying the Convent of San Nicolas, they wanted to do the same thing with the Convent of San Sebastian. The superiors had to make not a few negotiations and availed themselves of several influential people in order to prevent it. Thank God, a Christian soldier was found and he intervened in this matter. Consequently, the residence of San Sebastian was unoccupied.

Our religious in Cebu lived very bitter moments as well when the war erupted in 1941 until its end in 1945. The city of Cebu was razed when the Americans withdrew. Our convent and church were surrounded by a ring of fire because their environs were set on fire with the flames consuming the convent from angles but the religious themselves succeeded in putting out the conflagration. In like manner they underwent great scarcities of food provisions. Notwithstanding the hardships and perils, both church and residence were abandoned. So did our confreres, as the other religious too. But only the religious.

In the last phase of the war the risks intensified, and some of our confreres moved to Bohol in order to assist the secular priests.⁷ Others accepted the hospitality in the convent of the Irish

⁷At the height of the Battle for the Liberation of Cebu and with the permission of Cebu Archbishop Gabriel M. Reyes (1892-1952), Fr. Benito Lozano and Fr. José Lizárraga left for Bohol on 13 March 1945 together with the family of Doña Josefa de Celdrán. A week later, on 20 March, Fr. Miguel Navarro and Fr. Esteban Tejedor in the company of the family of Doña Remedios Cuenco de Borromeo travelled to Bohol. See Pedro ZUNZARREN, *En Cebu durante la guerra*, BPSN 37, no. 417 (July 1947) 163-164. Fr. Navarro and Fr. Lozano stayed long in Calape. The Recollects likewise helped the parish priests in the towns of Tubigon, Inabanga and Clarin. The first to return to Cebu was Fr. Lizárraga who arrived after Easter Sunday and recounted the pleasant hospitality and fruitful mission spent with the secular priests and parishioners of Bohol. See Pedro ZUNZARREN, *En Cebu durante la Guerra*, BPSN, year 37, no. 418 (August 1947)186.

Redemptorist fathers in the city of Cebu itself. When the American returned to occupy the city and the Japanese abandoned it, the little that was left of it was destroyed.

The churches were not saved from the conflagration, three of which were burned down. The church of the Augustinian fathers was greatly ruined but our church suffered little damage. A bomb which fell inside the church failed to explode. The press erroneously published the name of our church as having burned down, but soon it was able to verify the information to be false. In the wake of the entry of the Yankees, part of our residence was occupied by them in accordance with the contract made with the superior. They installed some offices there.

San Juan (Batangas)

The Recollect priest was never absent in this parish during the Japanese Occupation. When the Japanese invasion was imminent, the residents of San Juan fled to the mountains, so did those of other towns. Their parish priest Fr. Domingo Carceller was also absent for a very few days, but he returned daily to the town until he saw that the Japanese were already there. His companion Fr. Benito Aldaz sojourned in a far-flung barrio and attended to the faithful who lived there. They both moved into the town and stayed there all the time exercising the sacred ministry, suffering from deprivations common to the Japanese Occupation period, such as scarcity of clothing and food, turmoil, apprehension and at times terror which reigned all over the land.

“In this town,” we read in a letter, “there were two occasions of what they called ‘zoning’ for the purpose of searching for arms. In the first occasion, they assembled all the people—except those of some barrios: they put the men inside the fenced public school, and the women and children inside the church. They tortured some men diabolically and hurled three shackled men into the river at night. It was an atmosphere of terror that reigned and the mere memory of it breaks one’s nerves down. Thank God, we always lived withdrawn from the Japanese, keeping ourselves busy in

our church and in the administration [of the sacraments] in the town and in the barrios.” The very frequent departures were the cause for the Japanese to say the priests were bad, since they, being heathens, did not understand that the priest had to go out to administer in the fields.

The plight turned very critical in the last months when they already realized that they had lost [the War], and the risk grew bigger and bigger. A number of towns were burned to the ground together with their churches. In this province, they murdered seven priests: two Italians, one Belgian and four Filipinos. My parishioners were especially blest by our Lord, thanks to the protection of our patron Saint John Nepomucene. When the ammunitions were set afire, only two residential houses and a warehouse were razed to the ground.”

And even if the letter does not mention it, we are going to recount what happened: a Japanese, an unbeliever at that, showed up at the convent and asked for the priests. Of the three who habitually lived in the convent, at that time only two were present because the third one was in the field. The Japanese ordered somebody to call the priests; the two who were at home presented themselves before him. They told him that at that moment there was no one else. The Japanese insisted there was one more, and in order to be sure about it, he went down to the church. Once he got there, he opened wide his eyes in an extraordinary manner. He stopped right before the image of Saint John Nepomucene, the town patron saint as we have already said, and he exclaimed: “This was the priest who was squeezing my neck in my dream, telling me that he would strangle me if I burn the town down...” The fact is that the town of San Juan was delivered from the flames and today it is one of the most progressive towns in the province of Batangas.⁸

Lipa is the capital of the diocese to which San Juan belongs. Since the time the Australian Redemptorist fathers were confined

⁸From a website on San Juan, Batangas, we cull this corroborative event whose author, ignorant of the Recollect priest’s historical account, tends to disregard the miraculous intervention of the patron saint: “Despite the enemy edict to punish all those who had fought the Japanese, the town was spared from the infamous massacre and razing of towns in Batangas. Lore has it that the

to quarters, their house in Lipa was put under the administration of the Recollects—Fr. Pedro Peña, Fr. Luis Larrañaga and Fr. Bernardino Fabregat. Our confreres stayed there and carried the burden of the ministry in that church and assisted the [local] priests. They went out of Lipa to the barrios at an opportune moment, saving themselves from the massacre of civilians perpetrated by the Japanese.

Fr. José García for some time took part in conducting classes at the seminary of Tayabas and accompanied Msgr. Obviar.⁹ Fr. García was in the company of the auxiliary bishop of Lipa in his visits to the parishes.

Post-War Chronicles of Manila, San Juan (Batangas) and Cebu¹⁰

With numerous people in attendance, the public worship services in occasion of the preparatory commission meeting for the beatification of Fr. Ezekiel Moreno¹¹ were held at our Basilica in Manila. Days before and on that day itself, *estampitas* with the short biography of Fr. Ezekiel were distributed. In the press, biographic data—with especial reference to his stay in these Islands—were published.

resourceful area guerrillas [*sic*] dynamited a bridge in the night whereupon the enemy platoon designated to implement the massacre in San Juan plunged to their death in the dark as they made their way from Lipa to San Juan in a truck. Since the fortuitous event involved a ‘bridge’, the townspeople like to believe that it was the handiwork of their patron saint San Juan Nepomuceno. See “San Juan, Batangas, in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Juan,_Batangas.. Retrieved 4 February 2013.

⁹Alfredo Maria Obviar, DD (1889-1978). Born in Lipa in 1889, he was ordained as priest in 1919. He was Auxiliary Bishop of Lipa from 1944 to 1950 when he was designated Apostolic Administrator of Lucena. He was Bishop of Lucena in 1969 until his retirement in 1976. Bishop Emeritus Obviar of Lucena in 1978. See “Bishop Alfredo Maria Obviar y Aranda” in <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bobviar.html>.

¹⁰*Noticiario*, in BPSN June 1947, year 37, no. 416, 141-142.

¹¹This must be the Antepreparatory Commission of the Congregation of Rites of the Roman Curia which met in its first session on 18 February 1947 in order to discussion the life and virtues of Bishop Ezekiel Moreno who died of cancer of the nasopharynx in 1906 in the odor of sanctity. Cf. PEDRO DE LA DEDICACIÓN, *El siervo de Dios P. Ezequiel Moreno Díaz*, in BPSN 414 (April 1947) 181-84.

The Holy Week services¹² were celebrated with solemnity and a great number of people were in attendance. Loudspeakers had been earlier installed, which made the religious services more attractive. They were installed permanently for sermons, conferences and Sunday talks, etc. The sermon of the “Holy Hour” on Maundy Thursday was assigned to Fr. Félix Martínez. So was the Adoration of the Cross on Good Friday. The sermons of the *Siete Palabras*¹³ were preached by Fr. Pedro Zunzarren, Fr. Salvador Calsado, Fr. Manuel del Val and Fr. Simeón Asensio.

On the 15th of April, the construction works for the new Colegio de San Sebastián began. It is hoped that the new building under construction now would be finished for the new school year which will start on 1st July. The present school year¹⁴ has ended with seventeen graduating from “High School” and twenty from the “Intermediate.” The graduation ceremony was done in simple rites at the hall of the *Colegio*. There were musical numbers wherein the superior Fr. Clemente Jubera¹⁵ and Fr. Constancio Peña took part as well, and speeches were delivered by the students. The rector of the *Colegio* Fr. Pedro Zunzarren¹⁶ distributed the awards and diplomas. At the close of the ceremony, the guest of honor Daniel M. Salcedo, Assistant Director of the Bureau of Private Schools, delivered an important speech. A summer class was conducted in the old classrooms. Fr. George O’Sullivan, Fr. Alfred Rennix and Fr. Patrick Skelton attended special summer classes at the University of Santo Tomas.

¹²The year was 1947: 3rd April – Maundy Thursday, 4th April – Good Friday, 5th April – Black Saturday. See A. CAPELLI, *Cronologia, Cronografia e Calendario Perpetuo* (Milano 1969) 66.

¹³The traditional sermons of the Seven Last Words of Jesus on the Cross customarily start at noon of Good Friday and end at three in the afternoon.

¹⁴School year 1946-1947. Father Bernardino Fabregat took over the post when Father Espiga returned to San Carlos in Negros. He was rector from July 1946 to January 1947.

¹⁵Fr. Clemente Jubera was the prior of San Sebastian in 1946-1949.

¹⁶Fr. Pedro Zunzarren was rector of Colegio de San Sebastian from January to August 1947.

In our church in Cebu likewise, the worship services were attended by multitudes seeking to ask the Lord for the happy result of the preparatory session. A very solemn *triduum* for the Glorious Patriarch Saint Joseph was held on 17, 18 and 19 March. The Archconfraternity was reorganized with the imposition of medals on numerous confraternity members. The superior Fr. Máximo López, Fr. Esteban Tejedor and Fr. Jesús González delivered sermons. The Archbishop of Cebu¹⁷ welcomed with enthusiasm the idea of converting part of the Recollect convent of this city into a school for laypeople and has already given the necessary permits for that.

Post-war OAR Cooperation of San Juan and San Sebastian¹⁸

Besides the three English priests,¹⁹ as we wrote in a previous news item, Fr. Pedro Zunzarren, Fr. Constancio Peña and Fr. Inocencio Peña attended summer classes at the University of Santo Tomas even as we prepare ourselves for our schools in the Philippines.

With solemnity and an extraordinary number of people in attendance, Fr. Domingo Carceller celebrated the fiesta of his town San Juan (Batangas) dedicated to Saint John Nepomucene. From our Convent of San Sebastian in Manila, the superior Fr. Clemente Jubera, Fr. Inocencio Peña and Fr. Patrick Skelton went there to lend them a helping hand. The auxiliary bishop of the diocese attended the fiesta and administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to 998 children. The priests were very busy hearing confessions. On the occasion of the fiesta, there was a contest of

¹⁷Msgr. Gabriel M. Reyes was designated bishop of Cebu in 1932, archbishop of Cebu in 1934 and Coadjutor Archbishop of Manila in 1949. The Holy See designated him to succeed Archbishop Michael James O'Doherty in 1949. The Filipino prelate three years later, in 1952. See "Gabriel Martelino Reyes," in <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/breya.html>. Retrieved 4 February 2013.

¹⁸*Noticiario*, in BPSN, July 1947 Year 37, No. 417, p. 167.

¹⁹O'Sullivan, Skelton. Alfred Rennix was born in Dublin, Ireland.

musical bands with Fr. Domingo Carceller as head of the board of judges. This priest had Fr. Bernardino Fabregat as his coadjutor.

On 27th May, after a very happy journey, the religious, who embarked on the Philippine steamer *Haleakala* at Barcelona on the 28th of the previous month, arrived safely in Manila.

They have begun the construction works of our convent in Cebu in order to accommodate the school in one of the wings.

Apostolate during World War II in San Carlos, Negros Occidental¹

Gregorio Espiga OAR

It was during the initial days of December² when the Lord's missionaries in the Far East started feeling the bitterness of the War which had gone out of the territory of Europe and has just engulfed the whole world. Here in San Carlos, Negros Occidental, everything had to come to a halt: colleges, schools, and even the very parish work, since the people, fearful of the Japanese invasion, fled to the mountains. Only we, the priests, and a very few people had stayed behind. In this absolute solitude and anxiety we remained for many months.

The invaders arrived. The people then descended from the mountains. But soon enough, they started to feel Japanese maltreatment and majority of the guerrillas returned to the forests, even as they urged the people to follow their steps and foment a general uprising in July 1942.

In view of the risks the missionaries were facing, Fr. Manuel Gómara, Fr. Pedro Zunzarren, Fr. Aquiles Alfaro and Brother Juan Machicote started to leave for Bacolod. Fr. Elacio [Eladio]

¹This chapter was penned by Gregorio ESPIGA, *De Filipinas. Hablan nuestros misioneros*, in BPSN 36 (1946) 228-233, and translated by Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos.

²1941.

Aguirre, Fr. Félix Bartolomé and Fr. Gregorio Espiga stayed in San Carlos. As the situation worsened with every passing moment, we received a warning from the Superior of Mission, Fr. Manuel Gómara, and from the bishop of Bacolod himself to withdraw to Cebu or Bacolod in two groups. And in obedience to such orders, Fr. Aquiles Alfaro, Fr. Francisco Azcárate and Fr. Gregorio Espiga left the people in San Carlos, besieged by the guerrillas and subjected to hunger.

Eleven Recollects were reunited at the episcopal palace in Bacolod. We lent a hand in the assignments at the confessional, preaching, etc. On one occasion Fr. Manuel del Val and Fr. Gregorio Espiga had the pleasure of returning the favor to the bishop by putting us in charge of some sermons during the Holy Week and by conducting spiritual exercises in Spanish to the faithful in Bacolod and in English to those in Silay.

In February 1943, Fr. Aquiles Alfaro and Fr. Gregorio Espiga with the approval of the superior of mission firmed up their decision to return to San Carlos and share the fate of the brothers that some months ago they had left behind with a heavy heart. The plight remained the same. The town was surrounded by guerrillas and the Japanese continued to put their victims to death. Hunger was at its greatest peak since nobody was permitted to go inside the town proper. Sun-dried horse meat or carabeef and some vegetables were our chief sustenance. Sometimes we even had to lament the lack of all this.

There was rice shortage, and the people had recourse to what they had never dreamed of: eating *buri* stalks, bananas and coconuts. For some time the situation had improved a lot, for which we gave thanks to God who deigned keep us alive.

The American forces gradually began to move near the Far East. It was necessary to find means to visit the refugees and dwellers in the uplands in order to save as many lives of the people as possible and to be able to work in that portion of the vineyard of the Lord. For more than two years, they had not received the generous care from the hands of His ministers. We feared for the

hatred and the continued vigilance of the Japanese over us. We were afraid that those in the mountains would receive with much more prejudice. But the time had come to risk it all. In the opinion shared by the other priests, I decided to go up together with Fr. Azcárate, leaving behind a request that they prayed for the success of our undertaking.

We embarked on a small banca from San Carlos to Calatrava, and we tried to evade Japanese sentries, but late into the night a small storm struck us and it almost caused a shipwreck. However, by breaking the sail of our small sea craft we were able to finally reach our destination already very late at night. From there, upon the recommendation of our dear indefatigable confrere and missionary of Calatrava, Fr. Facundo Valgañón, we proceeded with our journey and crossed mountains until we could view the town of San Carlos from on top.

The people in the mountains received us with eyes drowned in tears. It was such a long time without seeing a priest who was so close to them. With our proficiency in English, we were soon able to win over the sympathy of the guerrillas. We celebrated the Holy Mass in different camps. We preached to them. There we heard their confessions. With great interest, those who had shown so much prejudice against us later begged us to remain with them as chaplain. It was not possible.

We should not compromise the lives of our religious confreres who stayed behind in San Carlos. We should go on working in the company of those selfless missionaries who preferred to confront the dangers stemming from one faction or the other out of love for the Filipinos. Two hundred baptisms were administered, quite a number of marriages were solemnized and a good number of confessions were heard.

And having won over the sympathy of everyone, we started our odyssey home. But at two in the early morning, we suffered a shipwreck in the high seas. I had the good fortune of knowing how to swim and with the help of an old man who was our companion by pushing the small banca with the other priest who was half-

submerged until we finally reached the shore at dawn. We gave thanks to God for having saved us. After a long trek, barefoot, with nothing at all, like true shipwrecked, we reached San Carlos.

There was a pressing need to find other means to contact the southern part of San Carlos in order to get into the good books of the guerrillas of that sector. It has been some days that I had been in contact with some people in another place where I had administered more than 150 baptisms, weddings, etc., and I was received with the same expressions of affection and love.

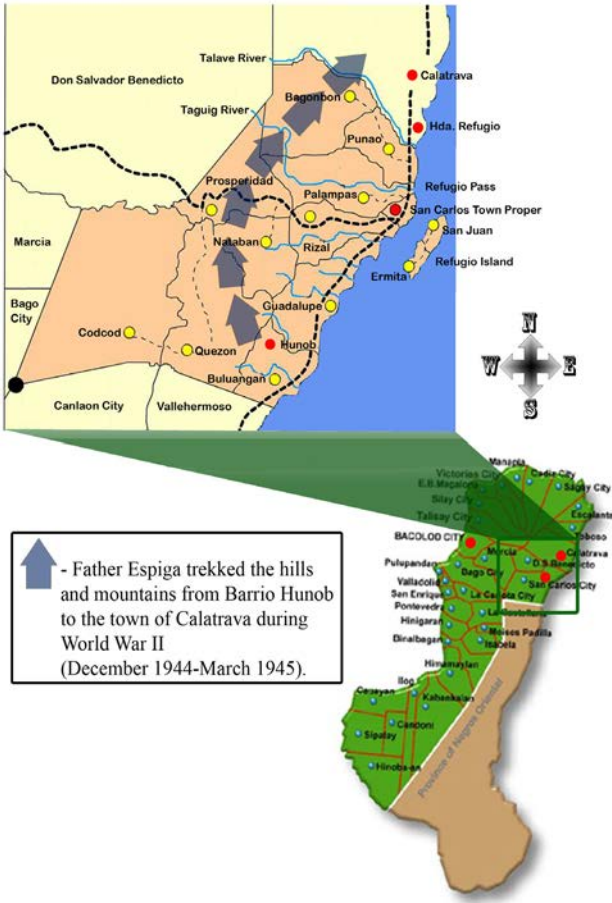
A journey to the south was finally arranged. It was the barrio of Honob,³ about seventeen kilometers away, and I headed for the rice fields in the company of the same confrere Fr. Azcárate. We suffered greatly in the journey, but the consolation that God deigned give us was much greater.

Those people, who had been abandoned for a long time, those people so simple and so good, had lavished with so much good the priests of San Carlos during those days not very long ago, had welcomed us with such joy beyond description. The whole area was encouraged to witness another spiritual rebirth. That was a real mission.

Many people living without the blessings of a marriage underwent instruction. Sixty marriages were solemnized, 420 baptisms were celebrated and a great number of the faithful confessed. A few days after, those good people once again were disconsolate and saddened by our departure. But we assured them that although we had left there our hearts with them, very soon we would return and visit them even risking our own lives.

³It is now known as Hunob.

Gregorio Espiga's Missionary Trips in San Carlos and Calatrava, Negros Occidental. *Courtesy of Renier I. Alviola OAR.*



All this took place in October⁴ when the great squadrons of airplanes had started sowing more and more desolation everywhere. The plight got worse and worse every moment that transpired. The Liberation troops had landed in Leyte. The suffering seemed to have reached its end, but unfortunately it was not so. It was the beginning of a tragedy which would be consummated in a

⁴1944.

catastrophe. It was the 19th of November 1944. The Americans did not arrive at once and the Japanese got ready for the defense. But on that very morning—gloomy, sad and rainy, when we were set to celebrate a Requiem Mass, a horrifying shootout that was to go on for three months and a half commenced. Three thousand guerrillas entered from all directions and forced the Japanese to make the last stand at the Central⁵ of the town, half a kilometer away. A great number of the population took refuge inside the church and many of them lay prostrate on the floor for two days trying to avoid the endless shootout from one faction or the other.

In the end, the Japanese fled and the guerrillas took possession of the town. Since we personally knew the leaders of the guerrilla movement, although it was a terrible moment to do it, I had the little courage to welcome them for the first time in San Carlos. Fortunately, the first leaders were known to us and they treated us with respect. There the priests exerted effort to attend to all the people in the best possible manner. We begged the guerrillas with affection to respect the lives of all the residents and so they promised it to us. We further had words of consolation for the officials of the municipal government they had detained inside the church as collaborators. We begged the guerrillas not to maltreat them and for our part we provided the prisoners with food on the first night. How much the town officials would recall these expressions of affection we had provided them and they had enjoyed!

Finally, the Japanese planes arrived to help their comrades and caused the first victims of the thousands who in the coming months were to perish. The Japanese air attack forced more people, who were scared, weeping or even shedding blood, to take refuge inside the church. We went out to help them but it was no longer possible to maintain peace and order inside the temple. The Japanese had machine-gunned the edifice and we feared the coming bombardment would be upon us. What was there to be done? We were all overcome by the tragic events and were moved so much upon viewing so many victims of the war. We feared for the loss of

⁵The now-defunct sugar central, San Carlos Milling Co. Inc. was locally now as Central.

more innocent lives. With the concurring opinion of the Fathers, I advised the hapless people to make a decision to abandon the town proper. I told them that the priests would follow them in every step of the way and accompany them at every moment.

On the 22nd of November,⁶ at four o'clock in the afternoon commenced the exodus of those unfortunate civilian folks, famished, ragged, who had to abandon their homes. We, the priests with breviaries, small sacks of clothes and beddings, hit the road leading to the south. At times I had to retrace my steps to the town in the company of a young Spaniard—amiable, good and our benefactor—for the purpose of getting some food, knowing we would need it for ourselves and those hapless folks who were dying of illness and hunger. The workers of the various sugar haciendas we passed by received us with affection. The Sisters⁷ got separated from us. They had accepted the offer from a good family in a place which was certainly very far from where we were. Making some sacrifices, Fr. Aquiles Alfaro and the person who affixed his signature below visited the place where the sisters resided and there we took the opportunity to administer the sacraments.

Malaria began to cut down the lives of those famished and stiff bodies that perished everywhere. I asked the confreres to move to Honob, since I was familiar with the place and it was free from all kinds of danger. After several trips, I was able to convince those people in Honob to send us thirty men to help us transfer our things. With the boys already stricken with malaria, we went on our way and we promised the residents there that they would not lack a priest. And we further pledged to exert our best effort to visit all those areas frequently. We arrived at Honob and, frankly, there were no words to describe the affection with which those simple upland dwellers welcomed us to their place. The village head permitted us to occupy his house. May God bless that good family one and a thousand times and all those who knew how to attend to us with so much love. There was no need to remain idle in that place. We have done away with that period of repudiation of missionary activity. Some priests—Fr. Félix Bartolome and Fr.

⁶1944.

⁷Augustinian Recollect Sisters.

Aquiles Alfaro—embarked on missionary sallies to the south, in the direction of Vallehermoso. Fr. Eladio Aguirre and Fr. Francisco Azcárate stayed put in Honob and took care of the people there. The undersigned—because he enjoyed good health—took charge of administering those places hit by malaria from Honob up north to Calatrava. From December 1944 to March 1945 as I crossed those high mountains, I had the satisfaction of being able to visit all those areas, and administered the sacraments, visited the sick, consoled thousands of forsaken people who fought against hunger and death which had sown lamentations and anguish in all that immense region. How I had to witness those so poignant scenes! Houses had turned into hospitals and many others into veritable cemeteries. In order to prevent epidemics, residents burned down their own wretched shanties together with the corpses of recent human victims. In one house I had viewed four ill people in agony beside two cadavers, and there was no one else to assist them or to bury their dead. I had seen a poor young boy dragging the dead body of his own father in order not to infect the whole household. The boy turned out to be sole survivor of his family. In one moment of bitterness, I saw the ailing people who surrounded me, trying to embrace me, begging not for food, not for medicines, but for a blessing. I could not offer them any other remedy! It was exceedingly horrifying, heart-rending! How many times I repeated to myself deep inside: “Until when, O Lord, until when!” In truth, I have never seen a people who had suffered with such resignation, in so deafening silence, in emulation of our Divine Lamb. In every people on earth I have come upon some virtue; for me, in the Filipino people, the greatest was this.

The physician or health officer of San Carlos, a charitable man and endowed with so much self-denial, accompanied me in some trips, and we offered our most selfless assistance with affection to those unfortunate souls. I made a trip to the place where our Recollect Sisters stayed in order to give them some spiritual assistance. They had retreated to the highest point in the mountains and they were so busy spreading all kinds of consolation among the residents of the area. These self-sacrificing religious sisters had

reached the place with few clothes, barefoot, walking always along the riverbed, some twelve kilometers away, suffering and mingling their tears with the waters of the brook.



The rectory, parish church [now cathedral] and Colegio de Santa Rita in San Carlos, Negros Occidental, mute witnesses to the untold horrors of World War II suffered by the townspeople who took refuge in the solid temple of the Almighty.

About 10,000 people had perished. The tragedy seemed to draw to a close. And one day I was ready to resume my journeys to the mountains between Calatrava and San Carlos in the company of my Spanish friend. When we had just trudged about two kilometers, the guerrillas who were in the hospital informed us that the Japanese had left the sugar central of San Carlos and were in hiding somewhere in the adjoining small hills. Heeding his advice, I desisted from our undertaking and returned along the same road to Hacienda Refugio. Those were things that happened in wartime! A Filipino who the day after surrendered to the guerrillas and had accompanied the Japanese troops had seen me pass by about 400 meters away. Why didn't the Japanese shoot at me? Were they afraid of being discovered? I do not know.

Anyway, I went on my way to Calatrava and that night I spent in anxiety in the company of my confrere Facundo Valganón hidden inside the [aroshj church which was the only place of

refuge in the town. At twelve midnight the fleeing Japanese firing aimlessly passed through the town. Thank God, for their sole intent was to flee, they passed the bridge of the town and little by little the rattle of their machineguns and mortar fire were slowly fading in the distance, and everything once again sank into its most sepulchral silence.

The next day, the 4th of March, I hurried at once to San Carlos, and having fully rested there, I continued my journey under the scorching sun towards Honob, in order to tell the Fathers that I had decided to go down to San Carlos at once for the purpose of saving the properties of the church, the convent and Colegio de Santo Tomas. The properties of Colegio de Santa Rita had been reduced to ashes by the incendiary bombs dropped by American planes. All told, I took with me what was necessary and I was accompanied by Mr. [Arturo] Ankerman and some fifteen men and I headed for the town in order to do some general cleaning of the church and convent. What I found in the house of God was certainly the most deplorable conditions ever.



Colegio de Santo Tomas-Recoletos, whose foundation was decreed on 19 April 1940 by the Saint Nicholas Province headed by Prior Provincial Pedro García de Galdiano is the alma mater of prominent citizens of San Carlos, its adjacent towns and islands

And when everything was clean and in order, for the first time a fast boat loaded with American troops landed. I was received and treated well by them and they inquired from me if the civilian population had ever suffered from the bombardment of the San Carlos Central by their warships. I told them about the needs of the hapless people, and the next day a commandant from the PT boat gave me 10,000 tablets of Atabrine. And soon enough I went to assist the ill people in the barrios and with much effort I was able to distribute half of the quantity. The other half was distributed little by little at the convent. What a moving sight! Hundreds of famished and trembling men, women and children arrived at the portals of the convent where the Recollect father could help alleviate them in their ailments in any way.

We were alone in San Carlos for two weeks. I prepared a small fiesta as an act of making amends to God for the profanations perpetrated in His holy temple. That solemn feast was very-well attended and I took advantage of the opportunity and preached a sermon suited to the circumstances. Fr. Francisco Azcárate arrived much later to lend a helping hand in the Holy Week rites. The Recollect sisters likewise descended from the mountains for the same purpose. All the rest of the confreres, who had stayed behind in the uplands to attend to the spiritual needs of those who remained there, arrived in May. We were set to open our Colegio de Santo Tomas. This we could carry out in the coming weeks, thanks to the arrival of Fr. Pedro Zunzarren and Fr. Miguel Navarro from Cebu.

Today the priests went on working with renewed enthusiasm and equal zeal in San Carlos as well as in the rest of the parishes in Negros. The faithful, who were aware of how much sacrifice and how much self-denial their pastors had done in every manner possible in order to alleviate their woes and hardships, loved them so dearly. The memory of the sufferings of the Augustinian Recollect Fathers in the Island of Negros shall always remain in the minds of those very piteous souls who in their most life-threatening moments had received the greatest material and spiritual assistance from the hands of the Lord's ministers.

The war is over. And it left behind a town that was almost in complete ruin. The war had cut down the lives of 25,000 people in this once-flourishing parish. Say a prayer, devout reader, for the eternal repose of their souls.

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II

Historical Studies

by

Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos

History of Guindulman, Bohol (1788-1940) in Augustinian Recollect Annals and Other Sources¹

The first mention ever of Guindulman, Bohol, in historical records is found in the 14th volume of *Historia general de Philipinas*, written by the Augustinian Recollect Juan de la Concepción (1724-1786) and published posthumously in 1788-1792:

Bernardo Sanote declared that he and other leaders in Mount Tambungan² where they had resided for fear of the former fathers [Jesuits] because of the fact that such inconvenience no longer existed, wanted to return to the service of God and the monarch of Spain and if it would please the Governor to grant them pardon and have mercy on them and permit them to set up a town in the area near Guindulman Bay, in order to fulfill their obligations as Christians, as they had requested their spiritual father Fray Pedro [de Santa Bárbara, OAR].³

The context of this ancient text is as follows: The great Boholano patriot Francisco Dagohoy could count in the late 1760s

¹A lecture read before an assembly consisting of the Parish Vicar Fr. Julius E. Azucan, Augustinian Recollect Sisters, Sangguniang Bayan officials, Department of Education teachers, local history enthusiasts and balikbayans from the USA under the auspices of the Guindulman Historical Society on 9 September 2018 at Saint Mary Academy, Guindulman, Bohol.

²Tumbangan in another source.

³JUAN DE LA CONCEPCIÓN, *Historia general de Filipinas* XIV (Manila 1792) 96. Quoted by Gregorio OCHOA, *Historia general de la Orden de Agustinos Recoletos* VIII: 1755-1796 (Zaragoza 1928) 595.

on four allies and leaders and thousands of followers in the huge rebellion that had plagued the Visayan Island since 1744. Eight thousand tributes continued to rebel against the Spanish monarch and his civil authorities in Bohol. The leaders were Ignacio Arañez, Pedro Baguio⁴, Bernardo Sanote and Ligaon who was in his mountain stronghold in Talibon and Inabanga with over five thousand followers.⁵

The eight Augustinian Recollects, headed by their vicar provincial Pedro de Santa Bárbara, arrived in July 1768 to take possession of nine parishes after the last Jesuits had been expelled from Bohol upon orders of the Spanish King Charles III. The Recollect vicar provincial of Bohol climbed not long after the mountain stronghold at Magtangtang to negotiate personally with the Boholano patriot. The Recollect missionary was allowed by Dagohoy to baptize children, solemnize marriages of *amancebados*⁶ and hear confessions as sign of the leader's good faith and willing to return to the fold of Christianity. To set up towns for the rebel followers and families was discussed and approved, but its implementation would unfortunately take place only after the capitulation in 1829. The site of Guindulman had been one of the those negotiated for future towns in 1769 and this would become a reality in 1788.

Dagohoy had demanded the pullout of the Spanish troop detachments from Jagna, Loay, Loon, Maribojoc, and Malibago.⁷ He saw no need for the Spanish civil government to station them under the new dispensation and to avoid future belligerent acts against each other. The troops in Inabanga and Talibon would remain in their post account of the obvious risks as well as the security of tribute-collectors.

⁴Pedro Baguio later sailed with his followers to safety in Maasin, Leyte.

⁵*Ibid.*, 102, the author writes 1,000 tributes or five to six thousand souls.

⁶The Spanish for "those living in sin," or cohabiting or living together without the sacrament of matrimony.

⁷It was likewise called *Malabago* located in the northern part of present-day Cortes.

The Recollect Pedro de Santa Bárbara then travelled to Cebu and relayed the results of his personal negotiation with Dagohoy to the Spanish alcalde mayor Don Pedro Vargas who adamantly denied this last demand for troop pullouts.⁸ And so, the rebellion continued until 1829, eighty-five years after it had begun. In the meantime, the Boholano patriot had passed away around the year 1782.⁹

Guindulman, a town and parish carved out of Jagna

The parish of Our Lady of Consolation in the town of Guindulman was created by the Recollect missionaries in 1788, as revealed by the Recollect town chronicler Father Bernardo Aráiz in his 1916 *Historia de Guindulman, Bohol* narrative. The Mother of Jesus invoked as Our Lady of Consolation or Comforter of the Afflicted has been the patroness of the Order of Augustinian Recollects who traditionally celebrate her liturgical feast every 4th day of September. This special advocacy of the Mother of Christ—typical devotion of the Marian spirituality and tradition of the entire Augustinian family the world over—is one sole solid proof of the Augustinian Recollect origin of the new parish. Guindulman was still a *visita* or mission station of the parish matrix Jagna during the Jesuit administration.

Its parish priest Padre Bernardo Aráiz who chronicled the Guindulman history in 1916 recorded that this curacy was separated from its matrix Jagna on 20 February 1788, but without a resident *cura párroco*.¹⁰ The 60-year-old Padre Gaspar Bellido de San Fulgencio, parish priest of the Parish of Saint Michael the Archangel of Jagna, concurrently administered the Marian Parish of Our Lady of Consolation of Guindulman.

⁸JUAN DE LA CONCEPCIÓN, *Historia general* XIV, 104.

⁹The death of Dagohoy was mentioned in a letter written by Bishop Mateo Joaquín Rubio de Arévalo of Cebu. See his *Carta a Francisco Díaz Durana*, Cebú, 31 julio 1782, ARCHIVO HISTÓRICO PROVINCIAL DE MARCILLA, NAVARRA, ESPAÑA[APM], Legajo (Bundle) 66, Folder 1, f. 2.

¹⁰The manuscript is titled *Historia de la Parroquia de Guindulman*, AHPM Legajo 67, Folder 2, f. 234v.

Padre Gaspar Bellido received the *Libro de nupcias*¹¹ on 31 December 1789¹² from the Recollect prior provincial Joaquín Encabo de la Virgen de Sopetrán.¹³ His provincial secretary Pedro de San Antonio accompanied the future Cebu bishop in his canonical visit of Guidulman parish. The traditional practice of a prior provincial during his canonical visit¹⁴ to a new parish belonging to the Recollect jurisdiction was to personally hand over the four official books to the parish priest. The fifth was the typically Recollect *Libro de cosas notables*.¹⁵ The prior provincial or the vicar provincial examined the contents of the five books during his triennial visit and affixed his signature on the page with the reported events, and attested to by the provincial secretary.

The name of Padre Gaspar Bellido appeared likewise in the *Book of Necrology* and *Book of Baptisms*.¹⁶ Padre Gaspar ended his pastoral ministry in the parish of Our Lady of Consolation in 1797. We must take note that by this time some rebel returnees and their families had already settled in Guindulman. The increase of tributes and concomitant growth of population was a strong reason for creation of the new town and parish.

¹¹*Libro de Nupcias*, the canonical Book of Marriages.

¹²Bernardo ARÁIZ, *Historia de la Parroquia de Guindulman*, AHPM Legajo 67, Folder 2, f. 234v.

¹³Father Joaquín Encabo would be elevated to the episcopal see of the Most Holy Name of Jesus in Cebu and was its bishop prelate in 1808-1818. See Francisco SÁDABA, *Catálogo de los religiosos agustinos recoletos de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino de Filipinas desde el año 1606, en que llegó la primera misión a Manila, hasta nuestros días* (Madrid 1906) 312-317.

¹⁴The canonical visit is the regular visit which is mandated by the OAR Constitutions and conducted at least twice during the triennial term by prior provincial with his provincial secretary in parishes or religious communities under the Recollect jurisdiction in order to check the official books, to personally talk with each religious, among others activities.

¹⁵*Libro de cosas notables* is the Book of Noteworthy Events, which the superior gave to the parish priest with a special directive to write the significant events in his curacy for posterity.

¹⁶Bernardo ARÁIZ, *A History of Guindulman (1788-1916)* 6. The *Libro de Bautismos* refers to the canonical Book of Baptisms; the *Libro de Casamientos* to the canonical Book of Marriages.

On 7 May 1797, Padre Antonio Fernández de San Agustín¹⁷ took possession of the parish of Our Lady of Consolation of Guindulman, as he himself indicated in the official parish *Book of Income and Expenditures*.¹⁸ He was therefore the first resident priest of Guindulman.

Chroniclers unanimously inform us that Guindulman was bordered by its three visitas which were later established as towns and parishes. In the north, it is bordered by Candijay (created in 1854), in the south by Duero (1863) and in the east by Anda (1885).

The pioneering Augustinian Recollect Padre Antonio Fernández de San Agustín worked diligently for the continued increase of the tributes and population of Guindulman. The Spanish missionary was only 27 years old when he was assigned by his superiors in Manila as the first parish priest of Guindulman. Hence, Padre Fernández was definitely a young minister, very eager to fulfill his priestly ministry for God Almighty.¹⁹ In his service to the community of over a thousand believers, he was an energetic and indefatigable minister who labored to disseminate the Gospel of Salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The young Recollect minister then began with the construction of the first parochial church and bell-tower, believed to be made of stone. The finished church of Guindulman was a very solid edifice suited for the worship of God and veneration of the beloved patroness of the parish—Our Lady of Consolation. As in other Recollect parishes in the Island of Bohol, the parishioners were earnestly motivated by their parish priest to cooperate in the construction of their own church. Furthermore, the cleanliness and tidiness of such ecclesiastical edifices was observed by the parishioners. The divine temple dedicated to the Mother of God

¹⁷Read about Padre Antonio's life and ministry on page 22 of this book.

¹⁸The *Libro de Cargo y Data* contains the record of the income and expenditures of the parish.

¹⁹Padre Fernández was 37 years of age when he died and was buried in Guindulman. Therefore, he was only 27 years old when he was first dispatched to the parish in 1797. See SÁDABA, 363-364.

was large enough to accommodate the increasing Christian population.

More parish priests diligently took part in spreading the Gospel of Christ and imparting the ways of civilization to the Guindulmanons. In 1805, Padre Felipe Caballero de San José took over the parish administration from Padre Antonio Fernández who was elected novice master in their San Nicolas Convent in Intramuros, Manila. In 1806, Padre Antonio Fernández was elected provincial secretary only to resign for health reasons and returned to Guindulman where he passed away on 24 July 1807.

Padre Lorenzo del Santo Cristo de la Fe was parish priest in 1808, after his ministry in Mindanao from 1797-1808. During his term the population of Guindulman was 4,894 and 1,022½ tribute-payers. In 1815, it was the tenth most populous of the fourteen existent towns in Bohol after Loboc (10,249), Jagna (9,404), Baclayon (8,804), Inabanga (7483), Dimiao (6,384), Maribojoc (6290), Tagbilaran (5,743), Loon (5,443) and Dauis (5,059). Other towns were Panglao, Cortes, Loay and Calape.

Padre Narciso Hernández, parish priest in 1819-1864

Narciso Hernández de Jesús y María was a native of Pandacan, Manila, on 5 August 1789.²⁰ He was born to José Apolonio and Paulina Bini, according to the official biographer. After his one-year mandatory novitiate at their San Nicolás Convent in Intramuros, Manila, he professed the religious vows in 1813 before the prior provincial. The Recollect general chronicler Manuel Carceller writes that Padre Narciso was surnamed *Hernández*²¹ He exercised his ministry at Paminguitan²² in 1815 and served his parishioners

²⁰*Ibid.*, 765; Manuel CARCELLER, *Historia general de la Orden de Agustinos Recoletos* XI: 1837-1866 (Madrid 1967) 788-789. On Padre Narciso's role during the Dagohoy Rebellion, read Manuel Carceller, *Historia general* x, 526ss, and Licinio RUIZ, *Sinopsis histórica de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino de las Islas Filipinas* I (Manila 1925) 696ss.

²¹Manuel CARCELLER, *Historia general de los agustinos recoletos*, XI, 44. He found this information in the folio 140 of the *Book of Necrology* of San Nicolas Convent in Manila, now kept in Marcilla, Navarra, Spain.

²²Paminguitan is the resent-day town of Cortes.

until December 1818. On 4 January 1819, he received the canonical collation as parish priest of Guindulman. He was its curate for the next 45 years. He remained in this parish a little before his death which took place in Pandacan, Manila, on 21 May 1865.

Padre Hernández and the Dagohoy Revolt

The raid boldly perpetrated against Guindulman and its visita Tugas by the descendants of Dagohoy's allies took place in 1827. They razed to the ground the town and parish church which was erected by Padre Antonio Fernández. Padre Narciso Hernández at once complained to the alcalde mayor in Cebu about such daring plundering attack. In January 1827, the plan for a major offensive against rebel citadels in the mountains got off the ground finally. An Augustinian parish priest named Fray Julián Bermejo, dubbed *El Padre Capitán* of Boljoon, Cebu, led a division of troops from Dalaguete, Carcar and Argao. In May 1827, the two divisions of over 10,000 Spanish troops, Cebuano and Boholano conscripts engaged the rebel forces.²³

Padre Miguel Martínez y Lafuente de Jesús (1771-1844), parish priest of Danao, Cebu, and Padre Narciso Hernández joined the military expedition only as chaplains. Hernández kept a diary of the military operations which began in May 1827. He reported that in January 1828 hundreds of volunteers from Guindulman and Jagna with over twenty regular troops stormed the Inaghuban cave in what is now the town of Pilar. In the hide-out, 300 rebels stood their ground. They refused to capitulate. The assaulting force built a huge bonfire at the mouth of the cave, slaughtering without mercy all the trapped men and women by suffocation. General Mariano Ricafort opted to overlook the Inaghuban cave massacre in his 1829 official report to the monarch. Colonel Manuel Sanz headed the invasion army.

Padre Hernández divulged in his memoir that 201 surrenderees were ruthlessly beheaded upon orders of an officer named Captain

²³Emmanuel Luis A. ROMANILLOS, *The Dagohoy Rebellion (1744-1829)*, in *History of Bohol (1521-1937): Essays, Notes and Sources*, (Manila 2022) 276-289.

Celedonio. This event occurred in January 1829 in Caylagan in Magtangtang, Danao. Captain Celedonio led fifty riflemen and more than 400 conscripts from Tubigon, Inabanga and Talibon to the mountain bastion. Still the Caylagan defenders defied the calls for surrender. Celedonio then ordered the rebels' water supply cut off. About 100 escaped that night. Over 500 people stayed put at the ramparts. In view of their futile stand, the rebels sued for peace the next day. Women and children were taken down to Inabanga. The men were treated like animals: hog-tied and deprived of food for twenty-four hours. Apprised of the incident, Colonel Sanz forthwith sacked Captain Celedonio. He had defied the clemency policy for captives. Sanz ordered the officer's incarceration at Inabanga.

A total of 19,420 rebels capitulated on 31 August 1829. Deprived of their means of livelihood and fearful of dire reprisals, some 3,000 survivors hastily fled to Cebu, Samar, Leyte, Camiguin and Mindanao and settled there permanently. A historian claims that over 30,000 Boholano rebels were brought back to the fold of the law. Colonel Sanz reported the capture of a big cache of arms such as lances, daggers, bolos, *kampilans*, muskets, battle-axes and artillery pieces.²⁴

Hernández set up towns for rebel surrenderees

Padre Hernández put the rebel surrenderees and families in a clustered community or *reducción* in order to facilitate the work of civilization and evangelization, thus establishing the town of Canaugay, present-day barangay of Camangay belonging to Dagohoy town. He administered this new town of Canaugay comprising rebel families where he had resided since December 1827.

Hernández further set up another new town of Batuanan²⁵ where hundreds of former rebels had settled down. In a letter dated 19 April 1828, the Recollect prior provincial Fray Pedro de Santa Rita lauded the efforts of the two Recollect chaplains but

²⁴Emmanuel Luis A. ROMANILLOS, *The Dagohoy Rebellion*, 214.

²⁵The actual town of Alicia.

in the end ordered Hernández and Miguel de Jesús to go back to their old parishes of Guindulman and Danao, Cebu. The provincial acknowledged the hardships and deprivations of the chaplain-turned-parish priests in that same letter:

“abandoning the comforts offered by the towns—old, established and very regular for their subsistence—but moving to the center of the forests of Bohol in order to set up towns consisting of coerced people and enemy of God and State, without any support and comforts except the hardships posed by the mountains, lacking in food provisions, without a roof on their heads, without a church and in continuous jolts whether from the newly resettled or by those who rejected resettlement and who ambushed, cajoled and induced the resettled folks so they would abandon their new lands or lifestyles and return to the ancient customs. All this was their recompense.²⁶

Padre Hernández in Guindulman

Together with Padre José García de la Virgen de los Remedios, Padre Hernández helped in the creation of Garcia-Hernandez, a former visita of Jagna formerly called Sinugbuan, as a town in 1858. The Parish of San Juan Bautista was established on 24 October 1859.²⁷ The town of Garcia-Hernandez, named after the two Recollect missionaries, was transferred from the site of Sinugbuan to the more convenient visita or Manaba in the 1870s.

Padre Lorenzo del Santísimo Cristo de la Fe

Lorenzo del Santísimo Cristo de la Fe (1772-1839) was ordained to the sacred priesthood in the Philippines. He was dispatched to Cantilan in Mindanao and later to Surigao in 1804. On 22 March 1808, he was designated parish priest of Guindulman where he served the People of God for ten years.

²⁶Manuel CARCELLER, *Quelling the Dagohoy Revolt (1827-1829)*, in Emmanuel Luis A. ROMANILLOS, *History of Bohol (151-1937): Essays, Notes and Sources*, 311-326.

²⁷Felipe REDONDO Y SENDINO, *Breve reseña de lo que fue y de lo que es la Diócesis de Cebú en las Islas Filipinas* (Manila 1886) 185.

Padre Francisco Castellano de la Virgen del Rosario

Francisco Castellano (1839-1888)²⁸ joined the Recollects in 1856 by his profession of the monastic vows. He came to the Philippines in July 1862 and months later he was ordained as priest. In February 1863, he was dispatched to Jagna to study the Cebuano Visayan language. He was then sent as parish priest to Candijay in 1864. Three years later, he was named parish priest of Guindulman where exercised his ministry from 1867 to 1870.

Thereafter, he replaced Father Lorenzo Hernández in Duero on 30 August 1870 and finished the parish church.²⁹ He served the parishioners of Duero for 18 years until his demise at age 49 in May 1888 and was laid to rest at the foot of the altar of Our Lady of Consolation. He was remembered as a zealous and hardworking parish priest wherever he was assigned.

Padre Manuel Cabriada del Carmen OAR

Manuel Cabriada (1830-1905) was parish priest of Guindulman briefly, from 1871 to 1872.³⁰ He was assigned in various parishes of Bohol and Negros Oriental is best remembered for his *Colección de sermones en idioma bisaya*³¹ for both young and old Recollect confreres in the parochial ministry.

Padre Lorenzo Hernández de la Virgen de la Esperanza OAR

Lorenzo Hernández (1837-1907)³² was ordained in Cebu City in July 1860. He was dispatched to Dapitan to learn the Cebuano Visayan language. As the first parish priest of Duero in June 1863-1870, Padre Lorenzo himself supervised the construction of the parish church of Duero, “one of the most beautiful churches in the Bohol for its architectural figures.”

²⁸*Ibid.*, 514.

²⁹*Cosas notables de Duero*, in ARCHIVO HISTÓRICO PROVINCIAL DE MARCILLA, NAVARRA, Legajo 66, No. 10, folio 2v.

³⁰SÁDABA, 459.

³¹*Collection of Sermons in Visayan Language*.

³²SÁDABA, 497-498.

When he was assigned to the parish of Guindulman in August 1870, he made frequent visits and inspections to Duero to monitor the construction of the church which he had commenced. Archival documents divulged that Cebu Bishop Romualdo Jimeno had especially charged the parish priest of Guindulman with the continued monitoring of the construction of the Duero church.

He was named parish priest of Guindulman in July 1869. Other sources declared that he took possession of the parish only in 1870. After a brief sojourn in Manila, he was back as parish priest of Guindulman in 1873 and stayed as curate until 1898. Padre Eusebio Ortuoste de la Concepción was his assistant priest in Guindulman in 1890-1891.³³

Padre Lorenzo had finished the *kumbento* of Guindulman in March 1877. Its magnificent church was ready for the roofing when he bade goodbye to his parishioners. He joined the Augustinian Recollect ministers who were ordered by their anxious superiors to abandon Bohol and sail to Manila in November 1898 in the wake of the Philippine Revolution. Padre Lorenzo Hernández, the last Recollect parish priest of the Spanish *Patronato Real* regime, left Guindulman in mid-November. He journeyed to Macao in December, then to Spain where he died in 1907.

Bohol and the Philippine Revolution

The Philippine Revolution that broke out in August 1896 in Luzon did not echo in the Visayan Islands. In Luzon, Spanish soldiers and officers were attacked in their garrisons, captured or killed. The friars bore the brunt of the Katipunan fury in the wake of the anti-friar propaganda. They fell into the hands of the revolutionaries and soon perished in captivity. Many priests were slain in their convents or as they attempted to escape along unchartered routes. Thirteen Recollect priests and brothers were slaughtered in the first revolutionary salvo in Silang, Imus and Bacoar, Cavite, especially in the Hacienda de Imus.

³³SÁDABA, 673.

But the political situation in Bohol in 1896 – 1898 was clearly normal and bereft of agitation and bloody tumult as in decades past. No skirmishes between Spanish regulars and revolutionary troops which were non-existent yet were reported in Bohol. The people went on with their normal lives, unmindful of the bloody upheaval in Luzon and parts of the northern Visayan Islands. They conducted usual trade and business, eking out a living in ordinary circumstances, making out livelihood in their own simple ways. The teachers continued to impart their lessons to schoolchildren.

In 1898, in such islands as Mindoro, Masbate, Romblon and Marinduque, the Recollect prisoners were temporarily quartered at one time or another. They were hauled off from their parishes in Tayabas, Batangas and Laguna. They were isolated in those four islands, but totally free to move around waiting for further orders from Luzon revolutionary leaders. At times the captives were subjected to harsh tirades and verbal abuse, unbecoming their dignity and status as men of the cloth, at the hands of fiery revolutionary officials. The Recollects would gradually regain their freedom in 1899 and 1900.

The Revolution broke out in Cebu on 3 April 1898. Solely one Augustinian Recollect fell victim to the revolutionary upheaval: Fr. Isidoro Liberal, a former missionary in the Marianas and curate of Jagna, Bohol. He refused to abandon the Immaculate Conception Convent in Cebu City and join the other Spanish friars and provincial officials in the refuge of Fort San Pedro. The 71-year-old missionary was captured by the Cebuano revolutionists praying at the conventual chapel. His charred remains were later found in Labangon and retrieved by confreres in the wake of the defeat of the upheaval in Cebu. Fr. Isidoro Liberal was the lone Recollect casualty of the Revolution in the Visayas and Mindanao.³⁴

The Augustinian Recollect parish priests in Bohol went on with their pastoral ministry, celebrating Masses and administering of the other sacraments of Church, like in ordinary days. Meanwhile, the prior provincial and confreres in Intramuros, Manila, expressed

³⁴Emmanuel Luis A. ROMANILLOS, *The Augustinian Recollects in Cebu since 1621*; Studies and (Cebu City 2022) 164-171.

their constant fear and profound worry about their parish priests in the Visayas. The order to abandon the Bohol curacies finally came and the Recollect confreres prepared to leave for Manila. A steamer was hired to fetch them from Cebu.

However, the parish priest of Candijay (August 1896-October 1898)—and future Blessed José Rada de la Virgen de los Dolores—apparently defied legitimate orders sent by his Manila superiors. He boarded a steamer to Iloilo, and from there to the parish of his Recollect co-novice in Negros Island. In that parish of La Carlota, Padre José Rada was captured by Negros revolutionaries on 6 November 1898 in La Carlota. Together with Negros friar prisoners, he was taken to La Granja farm and had to do hard labor. Later the Negros parish priests and assistant priests were taken to Bacolod provincial jail and in February took the steamer to their freedom in Manila in February 1899.

In the meantime, the parish priests of Bohol kept the official books in the safe haven in the kumbentos. The original canonical books in Bohol parishes—*Libro de Bautizos*, *Libro de Casamientos*, *Libro de Defunciones* and *Libro de Cargo y Data* were left behind in the kumbentos, as they were strictly ordered by their major superior.

The Recollect ministers or their parish *escribanos* or *escribientes* had all the time to tediously copy the *Libro de cosas notables* of almost every parish. They left the *Cosas notables* in the parishes. Then the steamer to Manila which was hired by their confreres in Cebu docked at Tagbilaran to fetch them. The Spanish officials took another steamer to Manila according to the eyewitness diary of George Percival Scriven, titled as *An American in Bohol (1899-1901)*.³⁵

The Philippine-American War in Bohol

Cecilio Putong in his *Bohol and Its People* claims that while there was no Filipino uprising against the civilian and church

³⁵George Percival SCRIVEN, *An American in Bohol (1899-1900)*, in [//library.duke.edu/rubenstein/scriptorium/scriven/diary1.html](http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/scriptorium/scriven/diary1.html). Retrieved 4 December 2009.

authorities in Bohol, the Philippine-American War broke out in the Visayan province. Scriven writes in his diary:

It seems that when the Spaniards in December 1898 were withdrawn from Bohol by steamer from Cebu, the island was left in a state of anarchy; no government remained, no army existed, and Cebullaños [*sic*] always, it appears, more or less insolent towards the people of Bohol, came over in numbers robbed the people and levied contributions in the name of the great republic of Aguinaldo which still remained to be created.

Guindulman was set on fire by the invading American troops to avenge their defeat at the daring ambush at Kabantian Pass along the Duero-Guindulman highway by the about two hundred Boholano patriots led by Captain Martin Cabagnet. The parish church, kumbento and government buildings were spared through the placating effort of its municipal president Alipio Libres.

Conclusion

What did the Augustinian Recollects give to Guindulman for that matter, and what did Guindulman give in return to the Augustinian Recollects? Guindulman gave much to the Recollects in the Philippines in particular and the whole Order in general. If gratitude is not the only narrower kind you feel when you receive something, but the larger kind when you are able to give something, then by giving Guindulman some of its best friars, best missionaries Antonio Fernández, Lorenzo Hernández, Narciso Hernández, Lorenzo Zapatel, Manuel Cabriada, Bernardo Araújo, Eugenio Sola, to name a few of its rich history. Guindulman brought out the best from its mission heralds. Guindulman has likewise been giving back to the Augustinian Recollect Order by becoming one of its own: Constantino B. Real, Albert A. Pellazar, Edgar P. Tubio, Joseph D. Granada, Invenzor G. Melgazo, or former Recollect vocations like Benedicto Jayoma, Arsenio L. Escabusa, Victor P. Virtudazo.

Thus I never get tired of reiterating the Spanish adage: *Amor con amor se paga* [Love is repaid by love. Love begets love]. And this is very true in Guindulman, Bohol.

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How the Philippines Saved the Augustinian Recollects from Extinction: Church Confiscation Decrees (1835-1837) of Spanish Minister Juan Álvarez Mendizábal

*No hay mal que por bien no venga.*¹

Refrán español

Every cloud has a silver lining.

Prologue

In this paper,² I will first deal with the historical precedents and reasons for such state decrees that sanctioned the official expropriations and confiscations of convents, churches, lands and properties of monks, friars and nuns in Spain, issued by the anticlerical Liberal government of Minister Juan Álvarez Mendizábal in 1835, followed by those of 1836 and 1837. Then I will narrate the catastrophic effects on religious congregations and orders—confiscations, despoliation, suppression and

¹“This idiom gives an optimistic view of reality because it indicates that from an adversity we can bring out something good and positive, that an adversity can produce favorable outcomes.”

²This paper is mainly based upon the second volume of *Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos* by Angel Martínez Cuesta, published in 2015 in Madrid, pages 145-256, who discusses in detail the *desamortización* which we translate indistinctly as *expropriation*, *despoliation* or *church and monastic confiscation*.

exclaustration—, first those of male religious and shortly after of female religious or nuns with reference to their properties and subsequent acquisitions and purchases by landed owners and rich public officials. And then we focus on the negative effects on the monks, friars and nuns and various reactions. The conventuals were expelled from their monasteries and convents and thrown out into the streets forcibly and their properties expropriated without any compensation at all.

And we delve into the three convents which were exempted from the suppression, abolition and confiscation decrees and their reasons as detailed by the government. We refer to Santo Domingo Convent of Ocaña of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans) in Toledo and to that of Valladolid belonging to the Order of Saint Augustine (Augustinians). And finally the case of the Convent of Our Lady of the Way in Monteagudo, Navarra, very special to the Augustinian Recollect Congregation. We provide a bit of historical background to this Marian convent which served as the formation house of the missionary Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino which celebrates its four hundred years of existence this year 2021. The Monteagudo convent, founded in 1828, was the novitiate as well house of philosophical and theological formation undertaken by those future missionaries of the Congregation who worked in the Philippines. Thus the Order continued to survive in our country by training in that only existent convent the future religious who would work in the missions.

As prelude to this study, we quote the iconic Recollect historian Angel Martínez Cuesta who wrote in 1988: “Between September 1835 and January of the following year, the Spanish government confiscated thirty-two out of the thirty-three convents owned by the Congregation of the Augustinian Recollects in Spain and expelled the conventual residents. Some of them were incardinated to other dioceses and worked there as parochial vicars, parish priests and even as canons. Other confined themselves to surviving on a measly pension provided by the government. Only twelve religious were able to give a new meaning to their priestly

and religious vocation without abandoning the Order, by enlisting for the missions in the Philippines.”³

Political and historical milieu and main characters

The fratricidal conflict and political tumult in Spain commenced in September 1833 after the death of King Ferdinand VII who died without a male heir to the throne. Ferdinand had enacted the Pragmatic Sanction which admitted a female successor. Isabel was still four years old; hence his widow became queen regent María Cristina de Borbón-Dos Sicilias who ruled Spain during the childhood of their daughter. The king's brother Infante Carlos María Isidro de Borbón and his traditionalist, absolutist or legitimist followers whose battle-cry was “God, Country and King” rose up in arms and declared war against the Liberals and later the Republican supporters of the Spanish governments of the period, also known as *Cristinos* (after María Cristina), later as *Isabelinos* (after Isabel II).

The Carlist Wars were three. The first Carlist War was a war of succession, a civil war from 1833 to 1840 between the absolutist or conservative faction that supported Carlos María Isidro de Borbón and the centralists or progressive followers of María Cristina, queen regent of Isabela II, who were Liberals. In the town of Tricio, La Rioja, Marshal Santos Ladrón proclaimed on 6 October 1833 Ferdinand's brother Don Carlos king with the support of the Basque provinces, Castilla la Vieja, Catalonia and Valencia. It was the biggest fratricidal war of succession and fight for the nature of the monarchy. Twenty-three pitched battles were waged and won mostly by the Liberals. They were mostly fought in the Basque and Catalanian regions. Battles were also waged in southern Spain. Volunteers from the German states, Portugal, Britain, Belgium, Piedmont in Italy joined the Carlist and Liberal causes. In August 1839, the war had ended in the Basque region with the Treaty of Bergara, Guipúzcoa, between the Isabeline

³Ángel MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *The Order of Augustinian Recollects: Its Charismatic Evolution* (Manila 1994) 61; *La Orden de Agustinos Recoletos. Evolución carismática* (Madrid 2020) 71.

General Baldomero Espartero and the Carlist General Rafael Maroto. The First Carlist War ended when the Carlist troops in Catalonia fled to France in July 1840. No less than 200,000 Carlist and Isabeline troops perished in the First Carlist War. The state of the economy was in shambles.

Massacres of friars in Madrid, Zaragoza and Barcelona

The Church and the religious orders initially respected the will of Ferdinand VII as well as the regime of Queen Regent María Cristina, in obeisance to the call to peace and harmony. But when the Liberals controlled the government, the Church favored more the Carlist cause. Eventually, Pope Gregory XVI did not recognize the rights of Isabel II. The policies of the Church were deemed reason enough to justify their closure of the convents and monasteries destroyed or abandoned. In March 1834, the first decree was to close all those convents where the one-sixth of the religious community had fled the conventual walls. Days later, on 22 April all novices were ordered to undergo military training and no new novices were admitted. On that same day, a Royal Ecclesiastical Junta, patterned after the policies of the Ancien Régime, was set up in order to work for the systematic reform of the secular and regular clergy. It consisted of four members of the Royal Council and ten bishops loyal to the Isabeline cause who were not in good graces of the Church in Rome. The papal nuncios in Madrid deemed the Junta schismatic and did not recognize it. The Ecclesiastical Junta was aimed to restore “the former glory of the Spanish Church.”

On 17 July 1834, the political disturbances aggravated. In Madrid, fifteen Jesuits,⁴ eight Mercedarians and 45 Franciscans

⁴For mainly political reasons, the suppression of the Society of Jesus took place in Portugal (1759), France (1764) the Two Sicilies, Parma, and in the Spanish Empire in 1767. The Spanish king Charles III (1759–88) expelled the Jesuits in 1767 from Spain and its territories, and from the Philippines in 1768. On 21 July 1773, Pope Clement XIV issued the papal brief *Dominus ac Redemptor* (*Lord and Redeemer*) suppressing the Society. However, Jesuit communities continued to exist in Prussia, Poland and Russia. The Society was restored or re-established by the *Sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum* (*The*

were killed⁵ in their convents by armed mobs on the faked pretext that they had poisoned the water supplies of the city and had caused the cholera epidemic that had killed 3,564 casualties in July.⁶ In the political tumult in Zaragoza on 3 April and 5 July of 1835, eight religious, two priests were murdered and five convents set ablaze. On 22 July the convents of the Franciscans and the Carmelites were set on fire and twenty-one religious perished. In Barcelona, on the 25th of July, incendiary bombs were hurled at five convents and sixteen religious were slain. The total number of religious massacred was 120. Countless convents and monasteries were abandoned, and thereafter occupied either by Carlist or governments troops. One of them was the Recollect convent in Madrid. The government rather than running after the perpetrators saw in the violent upheavals as the expression of the public opinion and took advantage of them in order to accelerate their program of confiscating the properties of the Church and religious orders. The crime simple became a simple misfortune and the massacre of religious and secular clergy a “just and providential chastisement.”

In February 1835, the Junta asked for detailed information on the convents, residents, location and worth of their estates, and other properties. It listed 1,940 convents and 30,906 friars and monks.⁷

Care of all Churches) issued on 7 August 1814 by Pope Pius VII after his papal captivity in France.

⁵Another account writes 73 killed and eleven wounded. See *Massacre of Friars in 1834* in [wiki/matanza_de_frailes_en_madrid_de_1834](#). There were 78 victims of the massacre in the account of Antonio MOLINER PRADA, *El anticlericalismo popular durante el biennio 1834-1835*, in *Hispania Sacra* 49 (1997) 508.

⁶The result of little more than twelve hours of violence was an orgy of blood and revenge. The streets were guarded by the army in the following day, putting an end to the massacre. “It was the first time that the Church had been subjected to the uncontrolled attitudes of its own faithful. As the contemporaries perceived, these events showed, above all, the loss of prestige of the religious in Catholic Spain.” Cf. Antonio MOLINER PRADA, *Anticlericalism and Liberal Revolution*, in Emilio LA PARRA, M. Cortina SUAREZ, *Contemporary Spanish Anticlericalism* (Madrid 1998) 79.

⁷Antonio MOLINER PRADA, *El anticlericalismo popular durante el biennio 1834-1835*, in *Hispania Sacra* 49 (1997) 505.

Suppression of the religious convents

On 25 July 1835, a royal decree of despoliation and confiscation was issued to suppress all monasteries with less than twelve professed members and two-thirds of them were clerics and thereafter those monasteries whose number was reduced. The convents and churches and their landed estates were to be auctioned or handed over to the government. Archives, books, art works were adjudicated to the government libraries, museums, academies, schools or even private families.

The despoliation of Church and monastic properties provided a source of wealth and additional financing for the external debt of the State. The proceeds or income from the public auction were allocated as well for the establishments of future institutes of sciences and arts. The decree further allocated the proceeds to the poor churches after hearing the dictates of the bishops and generals of religious orders with respect to the necessity and convenience. Thus the convents were shut down arising from decreed closure and from the public disturbances that preceded, accompanied and followed the promulgation of Prime Minister Juan Álvarez Mendizábal's despoliation decree of 25 July 1835.

Nine hundred convents were shut down. Included were those which even accommodated more than twelve professed. On 8 March 1836, the Recollects had lost thirty-two convents except that of Monteagudo. The first article decreed the suppression all the monasteries, convents, seminaries, congregations and all other houses of religious, both men and women. The conventual Recollects were working in curacies and chaplaincies. Furthermore, it banned the use of the religious habit and submitted the exclaustrated⁸ conventuals to episcopal jurisdiction and

⁸An indult that is granted by a bishop for diocesan communities and by the Holy See for institutes of pontifical right, and that permits religious to live outside the community for a specified time. The religious remain bound by their vows and by the obligations of their profession so far as they are compatible with their status. *Exclastrar* means *permitir u ordenar a un religioso que abandone el claustro, to allow or order a religious to abandon the cloister*; See *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española* 23rd edition (Madrid 2014) 988.

specified the intended recipients of the confiscated properties of the convents. However, furniture, apparel and books for personal use could be taken out by them. Other provisions of the decree allocated for the exclaustrated religious daily pensions of the same amount given to secular priests. The exclaustrated were disoriented individuals, or had taken part in the political struggle, or had escaped from convents, exiled or even detained in prisons. In August 1834, the Recollect superior general, that is, the vicar general of the congregation Tomás Escobar fled the convent shortly after the massacre of Madrid and took refuge in a remote town of Berzocana in Extremadura near the border with Portugal. He left behind the governance of the congregation in the hands of the secretary general Francisco Tello and the general procurator Juan Villanueva de San Pablo who in March 1835 also fled to safer regions. Fr. Escobar did his best communicate with the provincials in Spain and the commissary provincial of the Philippine province. The confiscation decree of 25 July 1836 put an end to all contacts, but as the years passed, communications between exclaustrated and superiors were gradually restored.

Deemed of public utility, some Recollect churches saved a majority of them were saved from demolition or public auction, but ceded to bishops' discretion. Artworks were deposited in parish churches or private families. Gilded wood were sold in auction. Some solid convents deemed to lack artistic value were ceded to the state. Many were handed over to provincial and local officials. They later were converted to military hospitals, warehouses, residences of indigent people, hospitals, jails or military barracks. Landed estates were put to public auction and the proceeds were went to state coffers. Well-to-do Spanish landowners purchased the thousands of hectares owned by religious orders.

**Augustinian Recollect Convents and Dates
Suppressed, 1835-1836**

Zaragoza (seminary)	5 July	Almagro	26 September
Jarandilla	11 September	Calatayud	20 August
Barcelona	25 July	Talavera	5 October

Sevilla	12-16 Sept	Salamanca	20 August
Valencia	6 August	Benabarre	Early October
Maqueda	18 September	Granada	30 August
Zaragoza (Convent)	11 August	Guissona	November
Santa Cruz	18 September	Luque	30 August
Huesca	15 August	Zuera	3 December
Campilloa	22 September	Santa Fe	30 August
Valladolid	18 August	Borja	5 December
Valdefuentes	September	Toledo	1 September
La Nava	18 August	Alagón	5 January 1836
La Viciosa	September	Toboso	7 September
Portillo	18 August	Alcalá	Prior to 19 January
Almagro	26 September	Caudiel	8 September
Calatayud	20 August	Madrid	January

Sources: Crónicas 10, 668-718; AHPT H, 1329; AHNM Consejos, AGOAR caja 33, leg. 3; Revuela, 348, 351, 353, 355, 359.

Exclaustration of Augustinian Recollect religious

A total of 388 Spanish Recollects were thrown from the conventual cloisters out to the streets, without due consideration to the dignity, their age, health or physical disabilities. During the early months of the despoliation, they were bereft of legal protection. The process was quick and violent. It was only in October 1835 when the bishops were mandated to give preferential treatment to the exclaustrated religious in the provision of curacies and other church positions. However, novices were still ordered to render military service. Professed students were banned from priestly ordinations until 28 February 1844 but on very rare occasions.

The church positions occupied by the exclaustrated Recollects were those of parish priests, treasurers, coadjutors, nunnery chaplains, rectors of churches, canons, cemetery chaplain, musician, school teachers. Some were too old to handle any position and lived on paltry state pension. But solely a third received remuneration. The religious brothers worked in farms, as

organist, school porter, estate administrator, staff in the office of a duke or a lawyer. The lot of these religious was generally harsh.

Chronicles of the period spoke of their human miseries, hunger, abandonment, in an atmosphere of hostility, dearth of savings, lack of income and jobs, material poverty, rejection by families, repudiation by society and identity crisis. Some turned to begging and depended on the people's charity, living wretched lives. When Gabino Sánchez was named by the Holy See as commissary general in 1862-1891, communications with and assistance to exclaustated religious became much more frequent and regular. Only twelve or the 388 Recollects retrieved their religious and sacerdotal vocation by volunteering to Philippine missions. These missionaries were meticulously screened by the superiors in Monteagudo.

Seminaries for missionaries in Asia exempted from suppression

The 4th provision of the 25 July 1835 decree allowed the Piarists⁹ and the “seminaries for missionaries of provinces in Asia.” The Spanish government was aware of the political importance of the missionaries in the Philippines. It knew they were valuable tools in assuring the Spanish sovereignty. The Spanish parliament totally agreed with the policy. The seminaries destined for the formation of such missionaries were exempted from abolition. One member of Parliament even dubbed the convents of Spain where friars were “parasitical plants” while those assigned to missions in Asia were “dedicated themselves to agriculture and the arts.” The officials of these territories, it was argued at the Parliament, sought no funds nor policemen nor armies in order to defend these rich possessions but a few dozen friars. Therefore, the seminaries in Valladolid of the Augustinians, in Ocaña in Toledo of the Dominicans and in Monteagudo in Navarra were exempted from abolition. In 1868, royal decrees approved the continued subsistence of these

⁹The Piarists or the Order of Poor Clerics Regular of the Mother of God of the Pious Schools or *Escolapios*. Founded in 1617 by Spanish Saint Joseph Calasanz (1557-1648), devoted to teaching and providing free education for poor children.

“mission seminaries of Asia.” The government then took care of the good governance of the three convents, fixing the budget for their sustenance in accordance with the demands of the moment and provisions on the acceptance of novices.

Approximately seven kilometers away from the highly progressive city of Tarazona is Monteagudo. In this agricultural town bordering with the province of Zaragoza, was a monastery relatively bigger than their own convent in Alfaro, La Rioja, founded in 1825, but a ruinous monastery with a small church, whose patroness has been Our Lady of the Way, acquired in 1828 by the Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino. Following major repairs and improvements on the spacious convent, the Recollect religious community of Alfaro moved to this new home towards the close of 1828. In this new formation house, the young novices, philosophy and theology students resided for five complete years prior to their departure for the missions in Asia. The team of formators consisted of seasoned missionaries—mostly from the Philippine missions—who were to instruct the young aspirants to the religious and priestly life in the love of God and their neighbors, besides philosophy, natural sciences and theology.¹⁰

Institutional, Spiritual and Charismatic Consequences¹¹

The despoliation could have put an end to the Recollects. Religious orders like the Order of Saint Jerome [Hieronymites] and the Order of Saint Basil the Great [Basilians] did not survive. From a human viewpoint, the Order’s survival was due to the missions in the Philippines. In the bosom of the Order there were no attempts of resistance, not even a passive resistance. The hardships were enormous, especially in the initial period, but with the passage of time, they could have thought of establishing a house or mission abroad as other orders had done, or opening up communications with governments and bishops in America, among whom there

¹⁰Emmanuel Luis A. ROMANILLOS, *Bishop Ezekiel Moreno, an Augustinian Recollect Saint among Filipinos* (Quezon City 1993) 18.

¹¹This subtopic is edited mostly from MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *Historia II*, 252-256.

were those willing to welcome Spanish missionaries. But they did not even take advantage of assigning more exclaustrated friars to the Philippines. A few—twelve—saved their religious vocation by offering themselves as volunteers to the archipelago. None of those solutions would have had an easy path. Perhaps the efforts to make them a reality would have resulted in vain, but the dearth of any attempt gave way to lukewarmness and lack of illusion.

Fortunately, the Spanish government aware of the political importance of the missionaries, did not abandon them and it hastened to exempt from suppression “the seminaries of missionaries of Valladolid, Ocaña and Monteagudo for the provinces of Asia.” Later it continued to be interested in them, even interfering in its internal governance, in their provincial chapters and in the admission and formation of novices and professed. That interference at times degenerated into oppression. But other interventions turned out providential. Even before 1835 the government had already exempted the convent of Monteagudo from a contribution enforced by the governor of Tudela and allowed it to admit novices against a law enacted in 1834. In 1835, it excluded the conventuals from the prohibition to receive the holy orders and in 1856 it excluded as well its properties from the another confiscation law enacted in October 1855. In 1868, when a radical minister wanted to revise the anticlerical policies of the previous Liberal governments that suppressed “monasteries, convents, schools and congregations and the rest of the houses of religious [...] established in the Peninsula and adjoining islands from 29 June 1837,” the Recollects saved their convent of Marcilla in Navarra because the Overseas Ministry considered it as a mere extension of Monteagudo, therefore outside of the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice and Home Ministry.¹²

The second article of the general law of despoliation in 1835 not only saved the convent of Monteagudo but also saved the whole Augustinian Recollection from extinction. Stemming from

¹²*Dossier anent the missionaries for the Philippines that are exempted from the decree of expulsion of religious orders enacted by the Ministry of Grace and Justice on 18 October [1868]*, ARCHIVO HISTÓRICO NACIONAL MADRID, Overseas, bundle 2215, dossier 67.

that decree, it reorganized itself and began to with the establishing of more college seminaries and convents of Marcilla (1865) and San Millán de la Cogolla in the province of La Rioja (1878). The Recollects formed groups of young friars who multiplied their presence in the Philippines. Starting in 1888 it provided the apostolic commissary with missionary personnel to restore the province of Colombia and ten years thereafter it spread out of the old Hispano-Filipino confines.

The despoliation affected the charismatic roots of the Augustinian Recollection by changing its spiritual and apostolic configuration. Until 1835 it had been a community with a contemplative leaning. In 1835, it commenced a period wherein oftentimes it ran the risk of being converted into an apostolic and missionary congregation. Until 1835 what was prevalent in it was a life conventual in style where fraternity, simplicity, prayer, silence and withdrawal were the most esteemed values. Its friars lived in austerity, wore hampen footwear or at most sandals, observed fasting half of the year and practiced self-flagellation three times a week.

The apostolate still occupied a secondary position even if it was no longer marginalized. In the daily life perhaps it had even risen up already to its primary importance. But its statutes and the historical memory kept on recommending a way of life, that was simple, withdrawn from the mundane hustle-and-bustle and submissive to asceticism and contemplation. The missions in the Philippines were a supplement of the community. Its nucleus was constituted by thirty-nine convents of Spain and Colombia, even though it might be already a split nucleus that was incapable of ascertaining the identity and unity of the whole body.

Now that the Augustinian Recollection was dispossessed of its convents, without compensation and without the possibility of living a community life, it adopted a lifestyle where everything—goals, formation, governance, daily life—favored the apostolate. Common life was confined to the convent of Monteagudo which was dedicated to the tasks of formation and to the convent of San Nicolás in Intramuros, Manila, seat of the provincial

administration and refuge of religious—ill, ageing and removed from the ministries for disciplinary reasons. The bonds within the congregation weakened as well as the requirements of tradition and superiors reached the friars very debilitated. In the isolation of the parishes, the ministers were more aware of their own personal interests and those of their parishes than those of the religious congregation. Little by little the congregation was turning its back to communitarian spirituality which was their undeniable legacy of Augustinian inspiration in order to adopt another with individualistic and priestly hue. If the transformation was not completely accomplished it was because of the training provided for in the seminaries, especially in the novitiate, and of the statutes that always reverberated in groups of friars more or less numerous.

Another consequence of the despoliation was the *Filipinization* of the Order, its identification with the Asian archipelago. For many years the Philippines was its sole horizon. That attitude was, by itself, worthy of respect, and in certain persons it deserved praise. It revealed an intuitive anticipation in the life of the country where they worked. Among the superiors this turned out less comprehensible, especially, as the years passed by.

It displayed a little clear-sightedness, an evident lack of foresight which impeded them to take advantage of the possibilities that the Spain of Antonio Cánovas del Castillo (1818-1897) was providing the religious institutes. Between 1876 and 1898, in the span of twenty-two years old and new religious orders, national and foreign, sprouted and repopulated Spain with convents, seminaries, hospitals and residences. The Recollects made the foundation of the convent at San Millán de la Cogolla only in 1878. The attempts to establish themselves in Gijón, Madrid, Aragón or Extremadura did not move forward from being mere whims of the moment. There was hardly any thought of foundations in other nations of Europe, Asia, America or Africa.

The term *Filipinization* did not express a mere geographical concept. It entailed a way of understanding the Recollect life that was hatched in the Philippines throughout the 19th century and from the archipelago it spread out to South America at the outset of

the 20th century. Dozens of religious who established themselves in Panama, Venezuela, Trinidad and Brazil between 1898 and 1904 travelled with statutes which they tried to set up their pastoral ministry on such foundations that they tried to avoid the defects that had muddled their evangelization effort in the Philippines during the 19th century. They should give more attention to community life, forget about personal money, strengthen the bonds among themselves and with their superiors and cultivate more assiduously mental as well vocal prayer. The “Filipino” individualism would give way to participation and to the spirit of the whole body. Missionary activity would supersede parochial activity; and only in extraordinary cases would a religious be permitted to live alone; and all religious necessarily were to live in constant contact with the superiors, to whom they would regularly render account of their activities. It was even considered to have the title of parish priest was the exclusive jurisdiction of the superior and that all the other religious might administer “their” parishes in close dependence upon him. In all the houses, there should be “one hour of mental prayer every day and the rosary would be recited in honor of the Virgin Mary.”¹³

The heads of the missionary expeditions insisted on the compliance of these statutes. But with meager success. They stumbled upon subjective and objective drawbacks that rendered their efforts useless. They were constrained to accept what the bishops offered them and these prelates above all looked for parish priests to minister to rural areas that were impoverished and isolated and could hardly sustain more than one religious. Furthermore, this parish priest used to stay for hours and even for days away from their confreres. The towns did not favor pastoral residences or nuclei (what we now know as team ministry) and they insisted on having their priest nearby. On their part, the friars who were used to living alone did not want companions to share their life nor to divide the income. In America, at least during the early years,

¹³*Acta del venerable definitorio provincial sobre fundación de residencias en América e instrucciones que se dan a los padres misioneros, Manila, 19 agosto 1898: De Filipinas a América del Sur, in Recollectio 25-26 (2002-2003) 567-570.*

they could equal the level that they had acquired in the Philippines. Therefore, they opposed the statutes applied in the missions for the pastoral ministry in America and ended up scattered and persistent in the habits acquired in the Philippines. In 1909, not a single one of the nine Recollect parishes in the Triangulo Mineiro region had more than one religious. The situations in other Brazilian states and in Venezuela were very similar and it lasted for several decades, in spite of the attempts made to put an end to it. Similarly in the Philippines, autonomy and personal money were contested, and an attempt was done in order to concentrate the personnel in small communities especially after 1930.

However, those ideas of autonomy and personal money commenced to gain consistency in the period after World War II with the start of the province in the educational apostolate, the acceptance of native vocations and the determination of Fr. General Eugenio Ayape (1950-1962) who pushed for the observance of the orders mandating the return of parishes with only one priest to the bishops.

Conclusion

The despoliation and confiscation decrees obliterated the monastic orders, their convents, their religious communities and properties in Spain in the second quarter of the 19th century, so did the concomitant Carlist Wars decimated the population as well. The Piarists and three religious convents of Ocaña of the Dominicans, Valladolid of the Augustinians and Monteagudo of the Augustinian Recollects—deemed as seminaries for missionaries in the Spanish colonies of Asia—and were exempted from the despoliation decrees and exclaustation. The Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino of the Augustinian Recollects in the Philippines was providentially saved from extinction. Thereafter, the government of Antonio Cánovas del Castillo in the last quarter of the 19th century offered a political climate favorable to the restoration of monastic orders. By then the Augustinian Recollects had established the convents of Marcilla, Navarra and of San Millán de la Cogolla, La Rioja,

that assured the continuation of the training of missionaries for the Philippines and the Marianas Islands.

Unfortunately, the Philippine Revolution grievously affected the apostolate of the religious orders in the country, driving away the missionaries from their parishes and convents. Majority of the Augustinian Recollects therefore travelled back to Spain and a good number crossed the Pacific to establish missions in South and Central America. The Philippine Revolution again caused the foundation of many more Augustinian Recollect communities in Spain and Latin America that spread thereafter to the United States. The Philippine Revolution had occasioned the growth of the Augustinian Recollect Order in the global village. The 20th century saw their gradual return to the Philippines and the subsequent foundation of the Recollect missions in China.

Divine Providence truly works in mysterious ways. Indeed, it did work wonderfully in the Order of Augustinian Recollects as well. Thus there is much truth to the Spanish dictum that says *No hay mal que por bien no venga*, behind every cloud is a silver lining.

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Jesuits and Augustinian Recollects in Mindanao in the 19th Century¹

Would that I were here to talk about the Jesuits and Recollects in the 20th century when relationships have never been so good! Spanish Recollect superiors really took a bow before the Jesuit brand of education. Consider how Fr. Simeón Asensio—and Fr. Germán Chicote after him— would go to San Jose Seminary of the Society of Jesus in Quezon City every Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning of the school year to fetch all those fine young Filipino seminarians of the Augustinian Recollect Order, who were then being trained by the Jesuits, and bring them all to San Sebastian Convent in the late fifties and early sixties. You have Fr. Emeterio Buñao, Fr. Hubert Dunstan Decena, Fr. Pedro Escanillas among you, to attest to that. Recall the closeness and camaraderie of the Sacred Heart Jesuits and the University of San Jose-Recoletos religious in Cebu City.

Quite aware am I of how the Jesuits dealt with the Recollects in return in our century. I know of an old Jesuit priest, assigned for quite some time in Sacred Heart School of Cebu City and presently an Ateneo chaplain, who never said mass whenever he was in Madrid in any church in the Spanish capital, except in Santa Rita parish church along Gaztambide, which belongs to the

¹This is an updated version of my reaction paper which was published as *Jesuits and Recollects in the Philippines in the 19th Century*, in Leander V. BARROT [ed.], *Recoletos: History, Legacy and Culture* (Quezon City 2005) 177-182.

Augustinian Recollects. It was probably because the Jesuit priest lived just across the street along Cea Bermúdez, a stone's throw from Santa Rita, but more because of his closeness with those Recollects he had met in Cebu City. I learnt later that in June 1954 the Sacred Heart School solely for Chinese boys first opened its classes at the classrooms of Colegio de San Jose-Recoletos and the Jesuits resided the Recollect convent.

I also know an Ateneo school administrator who used to come to our home to meet his *Johnny Walker* and I, with my imbibed Spanish traits and culture, would have my own *Carlos III* or *Fundador* and we spent the night discussing both important and trivial matters, of course, not necessarily related to history at all.

I have nothing against the Jesuits, of course. It's hard and excruciating, though, to delve into the past and talk about the Jesuits and Recollects in Mindanao in the 19th century without the rancor there was in the context of history. But we have to do this in order to clarify gray areas of research on the controversy that was most crucial in Philippine history.

It was fortunate for me that in August 2002 I delivered a lecture before students and faculty, mostly from the Department of European Languages, on the two unpublished letters of Fr. Pedro Peláez on the secularization controversy. It was at the audio-visual room of our Department, Bulwagang Rizal, University of the Philippines Diliman. The professorial chair lecture was a result of my research in 1997 in Sevilla and Madrid, Spain where I was given a *beca hispanista* [Hispanist research scholarship] by the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to do some extensive research on Baler, Tayabas, now part of Aurora province, [*in the stone church of Baler the last of the Spanish troops dug in for almost a year not knowing that the war was long over*], and on other favorite topics related to Hispanic research: Bohol, San Sebastian Church, Cavite, Recollect legacy and culture. On the topic of the Jesuits and Recollects in Mindanao in the 19th century, therefore, I know whereof I speak.

During those almost three months of stay in Marcilla (Navarra), Madrid and Sevilla, I discovered two letters—actually,

a whole dossier of letters and other communications—penned by Fr. Pedro Peláez, the governor general, the assessor as well as two letters of the Augustinian Recollect archbishop of Manila José Aranguren. You have to bear in mind that after this Recollect archbishop died, his *secretario capitular de cámara y de gobierno* Pedro Peláez became the vicar capitular of the Archdiocese of Manila *sede vacante*. You have to bear in mind too that Fr. Peláez eventually adopted many ideas and policies of the Recollect Archbishop José Aranguren on the secularization issue.

When the Franciscans wanted to grab a parish here in Sampaloc, the Recollect archbishop adamantly opposed the move, saying: “No, this parish belongs to the secular clergy.” When the Recollect confreres wanted to grab a parish in Cavite, and they were able to get it eventually owing to the governor general’s order, the Recollect archbishop in a letter of the voluminous dossier, where the letters of Fr. Peláez were also found, said: “No, my Recollect confreres (he was a Recollect too), you have no right to get the parishes in Cavite because they rightfully belong to the secular clergy.”

So, where did Fr. Peláez get such pro-secular clergy ideas, his love and support to the cause of the Filipino secular clergy? No doubt from the Recollect archbishop of Manila. I am not trying to denigrate Fr. Peláez and his unsullied reputation, his struggle for the rights of the secular clergy, but we got to put the controversy from some perspective. He acquired for sure his ideas from the friar archbishop of Manila, and this archbishop was a Recollect, of whom Peláez was his secretary. We got to give credit where credit is due. Some brilliant ideas and great deeds of defending the rights of the Filipino secular clergy did originate from friars.

Let’s go back to history now, meaning, let’s talk about the chronology of events. On 26 November 1857 the Dominican bishop of the Diocese of Cebu—the jurisdiction of Cebu included Marianas, Mindanao and the Visayas—Msgr. Romualdo Jimeno asked Madrid to have the newly restored Society of Jesus assigned to Mindanao. [*Surigao and Misamis were to remain under Recollect jurisdiction.*] According to the Recollect sources basing

on the *Novísima Recopilación de Indias*, there was no due process. Why? Because Bishop Jimeno did not consult the Recollects who would be most upset with the dispossession of Mindanao parishes, who would be most affected by his request for Jesuit replacements.

Remember when the Jesuits left Mindanao, they only had a handful of chaplaincies or mission stations where Spanish garrisons were located. So when the Jesuits were given Mindanao a century later, the Recollects in Madrid and Manila moved heaven and earth not be dispossessed of their twenty-seven parishes in Mindanao. When the powers-that-be refused to see their side, the Recollects simply complied with the royal order.

And the Recollects' main point of contention: no due process at all. They were not consulted neither by the bishop of Cebu, nor by the governor general in Manila, nor by the Spanish Overseas Minister in Madrid. And where would you send all these twenty-seven Recollect priests who would be thereafter jobless? Where would you assign them? So the Recollects kept on harping on the argument that there was no due process.

If you read carefully the dossier of notes and letters in the *Archivo Histórico Nacional* in Madrid (*I think there were more than 70 manuscript pages. I had to copy all of them by hand because that was in 1997 and I had no laptop computer*). The ideas of Fr. Pedro Peláez were quoted, patterned or literally lifted from Archbishop José Aranguren's two letters. Aranguren in one of his letters also defended his Filipino secular priests, when asked by the Spanish governor general: "What are those priests doing there in Cavite? Are they doing some revolutionary activities?" The good archbishop said no. His priests were simply doing their job, going about with their pastoral tasks.

Let me likewise comment on that oft-repeated phrase, *la perla de los curatos* that has now become a cliché we can find in almost any historical account or in any major history book whose author anyway copied one another's idea or account. They say that when the parish priest of Antipolo passed away, they at once attached *la perla de los curatos* to Antipolo, if you know what that

means. It means *the pearl of the curacies* which was deemed as the richest parish of the country, maybe up to the present (*but, of course, there is that of Baclaran, teeming with countless people every Wednesday*). Why do historians have to put the tag *la perla de los curatos* every time the death of the secular parish priest of Antipolo is mentioned?

It is sadly understood that the Recollects immediately grabbed *la perla de los curatos*. The parish grab was done in exchange for some god-forsaken parish of Isabela in Basilan, now horrendously terrorized by the notorious Abu Sayyaf Group. These historians or history book authors in question have not read at all the letters of the Recollect prior provincial Fr. Juan Félix de la Encarnación to Fr. Peláez because they have not read the available *Historia general de la Orden de los Agustinos Recoletos* of Fr. Manuel Carceller. Fr. Juan Félix de la Encarnación did not immediately send a *terna* for the governor general to choose a parish priest for the Antipolo vacancy. Later on, Fr. Peláez begged him not to do it. Fr. Juan Félix was all too cautious. He was sensitive to the delicate situation in the Philippines. Fr. Juan Félix was very much aware and even said so in a letter he wrote to Fr. Guillermo Agudo in Madrid on 19 February 1862: “There are many vacant parishes around, but I don’t make any move up to now. The case is very compromising... It could be the bottomless fount of disgusts, hatreds...” He was very cautious in assigning a Recollect parish priest immediately to any vacant curacy in the Archdiocese of Manila, although the royal decree of 10 September 1862 mandated him to do so. This prudent attitude stemmed from the fact that he was very much aware that any misstep would cause dire consequences. Some respected historians simply do not want to know about the Recollect side of the controversy that wracked the Philippine colonial church towards the end of the 19th century.

Another thing: about Fr. José Apolonio Burgos, the disciple of Fr. Pedro Peláez in the UST [*By the way, Fr. Pedro Peláez was born of true-blue Spanish parents. The full-blooded Spaniard was born in Pagsanjan, Laguna. He was not a Filipino but his Spanish lineage didn’t matter at all; his love and concern for the*

secular clergy was beyond any trace of a doubt.], who penned the manifesto *Manifiesto to the Noble Spanish People which the Loyal Filipinos Address in Defense of their Honor and Loyalty that Have Been Grievously Offended by the Newspaper La Verdad of Madrid* which was published anonymously in Manila on 27 June 1864, indeed mentioned that the Filipino secular priests Juan Zita, Modesto de Castro. Hermenegildo Narciso, were doing very well in their parishes. You might not know it, but these names were also taken from another letter of the *cabildo catedralicio* [cathedral chapter] of Manila which mentioned the accomplishments of these Filipino secular priests and this long letter was sent to Fr. Peláez. Indeed Fr. Burgos was the student of Fr. Peláez, and Fr. Burgos got his ideas from the letter of the *cabildo catedralicio*, which Fr. Peláez had requested so that he would include this letter in the memorial he sent to the Spanish monarch.

Still there is another thing I would clearly point out: it would be very good to say that Fr. Peláez was a Filipino just like other historians would say and have said, like Zaide, Molina, Corpuz, and they keep on saying that. I don't think they have gone to the Archdiocesan Archives of Manila where the life of Fr. Pedro Peláez is there written in black and white. It is in Spanish and the handwriting is too bad. But if you try hard you can understand the manuscripts. I would like also to make this clear that Fr. Pedro Peláez did not stay only for three months as vicar capitular of Manila. He stayed, according to one historian, "as acting archbishop of Manila," (they don't know this) for over a year.

Archbishop Gregorio Melitón Martínez came to Manila in 1862. Actually he was preconized as bishop by Pius IX in 1861 and was consecrated in Madrid. He came to Manila in 1862. Another thing that I would like to point out further is what this Archbishop Melitón Martínez in his letter to Fray Francisco Gainza and to the papal nuncio in Madrid. He said that this guy Pedro Peláez should be kicked out of the Philippines. He should be kicked upstairs, though. He should be made a bishop in South America so that he would not be creating more trouble here in the Spanish colony. But

Divine Providence intervened; Peláez died in the earthquake that struck the colonial capital on the eve of the Corpus Christi in 1863.

Back to history, in 1857, therefore the Jesuits were requested by Bishop Jimeno to go to Mindanao. Immediately the Recollects made some maneuvers in Madrid. They wanted to stop the implementation of that decree, the dispossession of the Recollect confreres in Mindanao. For your information, the royal decree expelling the twenty-seven Recollects was signed on the eve of the feast of St. Ignatius. Of course, the royal order assigning the Recollects to vacant parishes in the Archdiocese of Manila that would become vacant was dated 10 September 1861, feast of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino.

According to a historian, the original desire of the Bishop was to add more workers in the vineyard of the Lord in Mindanao, as if the twenty-seven Recollects were not enough. Truly there was enough work for everybody, enough room for everyone, for able-bodied and committed missionaries. Originally, the bishop wanted to have Recollects and Jesuits “living happily ever after” together in Mindanao. I don’t know what happened but there were manipulations and maneuvers in Madrid, so the expulsion of the Recollects from Mindanao was decreed on the eve of the feast of Jesuit founder. What a strange coincidence indeed! We don’t know what transpired, but I guess I have to go back to Madrid, and if there is any offer for a research scholarship grant I would be willing to get it, in order to research about those persons who were so intent on kicking the Recollects out of Mindanao when in fact Bishop Jimeno was not of that idea.

My last point: Why do you, revered historians, have to add immediately *la perla de los curatos*, when you mention the curacy and shrine of Antipolo during the secularization uproar? *Para bang matakaw, ganid ang mga Recoletos*. They were the victims in Mindanao, victims in the jurisdictional conflict in Mindanao and in the secularization controversy, as the opening salvo made by Fr. Ángel Martínez Cuesta in the first lecture this morning. I repeat, the Recollect friars were the victims in Mindanao, they were not the actors. They were victims, plain victims of political maneuvers

in Madrid. They were not the protagonists in the conflict, but they were later deemed the antagonists in the First Philippine Revolution.

The Recollects got the parish or mission assignment from the expelled Jesuits on account of the mandate by the colonial government and in return for their great evangelization efforts and untold sacrifices for the glory of God and His Church, they were to be expelled. What kind of compensation was that? All of a sudden came the royal decree throwing them away, dispossessing them of their parishes, making twenty-seven Recollects jobless just like that. So, it is only natural for them to ask for reassignments. Recollect chroniclers dubbed them indemnifications for the loss of their Mindanao parishes and missions. They have to be indemnified for the loss of what had worked for since 1768 when the Jesuits were expelled from Spanish dominions, including Mindanao, as well as for the loss of other missions and parishes they themselves founded in the 17th century.

Also I would like to comment on Fr. Arcilla's lecture when he said that the Recollects had taken over the missions in Mindanao, Bohol and Negros after the Jesuits were expelled from the Philippines. He should not have included Negros Island. I don't know if that has been rectified.

So, it's really nice to talk about 20th and 21st centuries after all, when the relationship between Jesuits and Recollects has never been so good. You consider the Recollect priests who were sent to Rome. Where were they sent for graduate ecclesiastical studies? Most of them went to the Jesuit-owned Pontifical Gregorian University and *Pontificio Istituto Biblico*. One Filipino Recollect even had the good fortune of teaching at the Pontifical Gregorian University.

Most of these Filipino Recollect priests who are now professors in Recollect formation houses or those priests occupying high positions in the Philippines, in Spain and Latin America were trained by Jesuits—at least in Sacred Scriptures, Dogmatic Theology, Biblical Theology, Philosophy, Spirituality and Canon

Law. Think of Benedicto Jayoma, Felipe Maraya, Pastor Paloma, Huberto Dunstan Decena, Leander Barrot, Samson Silloriquuez, Rex Bangcaya, Bernard Amparado, Joseph Philip Trayvilla and Ferdinand Hernando. Recall the Church History graduates of the Gregorian University, both Filipino and Spanish: Rene Paglinawan with a Licentiate in Church History, or Emilio Edgardo Quilatan, José Javier Lizarraga and Ángel Martínez Cuesta, all three with Licentiate in Church History and then Doctorate in Church History. The list of Augustinian Recollects who studied at the Gregorian University is rather lengthy.

See how the Recollects extol the Jesuit brand of education.

The Bohol Parish Ministry of Blessed José Rada (1885-1898)¹

A native of Tarazona in the Spanish province of Zaragoza, the future curate of various parishes in Bohol in 1885-1898 and the future Martyr of Motril venerated by the universal Church since 1999 was born to Alejandro Rada and Timotea Magallón y Royo on 17 November 1861.²

He pronounced his monastic vows of poverty, chastity and obedience as an Augustinian Recollect religious on 4 September 1878 at the Convent of Our Lady of the Way in Monteagudo Navarra. He took the religious appellation as Fray José Rada de la Virgen de los Dolores. Like his confrere Fray Leon Inchausti, Fray José continued at Monteagudo his study of philosophy and science and then proceeded to the Recollect convent of San Millán de la Cogolla in the adjoining province of La Rioja where he professed his solemn vows. He eventually finished his theology at the convent in Marcilla in northern Navarra. Thereafter, the two religious were ready for travel in a steamship to the Philippine missions via the Suez Canal which had been opened in 1869. The maritime journey via steamships at that time ordinarily would last

¹A revised online lecture read at Recoletos School of Theology for the congregation gathered at San Nicolas de Tolentino Parish Church, Dimiao, Bohol on 17 November 2021 under the auspices of Fr. Marcelo F. Operiano Jr. of the Ministry for Christian Education and Formation, Diocese of Tagbilaran.

²Francisco SÁDABA, *Catálogo de los religiosos agustinos recoletos de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino de Filipinas desde el año 1606, en que llegó la primera misión a Manila, hasta nuestros días* (Madrid 1906) 635-636.

a month. Thus, on 1 June 1884, with other Recollect missionaries he boarded the steamer *Isla de Cebú* in Barcelona for the voyage to the Philippines. The 80th Recollect mission expedition to the country was headed by Fr. Benitor Tutor, a former parish priest in northern Mindanao and minister of Cortes and Dimiao in Bohol. There were fourteen missionaries in that mission expedition. They disembarked in Manila on 1 July 1884.



The Augustinian Recollect Convent of Monteagudo, Navarra, Spain, where formands underwent a year of novitiate and studied philosophy during some periods in history.



The Augustinian Recollect Convent of San Millan de la Cogolla in La Rioja, Spain, where formands studied some years of theology.



The Augustinian Recollect Convent of Marcilla, Navarra, Spain, the main school of theology of the Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino since 1865, where the formands studied before their departure as missionaries for the Philippine, Japan and the Marianas.



On 1 June 1884, Augustinian Recollect missionaries, including [extreme right, 2nd row] Fray José Rada and [extreme right, front row] Fray León Inchausti, boarded the steamer *Isla de Cebú* in Barcelona for the Philippines via the Suez Canal.

The travel-weary Augustinian Recollect religious rested at the spacious and age-old Saint Nicholas Convent (built in 1608) in Intramuros, Manila. The ancient convent and church are both extinct now, having been destroyed during World War II in February 1945 and demolished thereafter. Fray José and Fray León were then sent to Liloan and Compostela, respectively, to study Visayan Cebuano, a *sine qua non* for the parish ministry in the Visayan Islands.



After their stay in northeastern Cebu parishes for their study of Visayan Cebuano and parochial ministry, Fray José and Fray León sojourned at the Immaculate Conception Convent, now site of the University of San Jose-Recoletos, in Cebu City in November 1884 and Bishop Benito Romero anointed the hands of the two young Recollects at their presbyteral ordination rites on 22 December 1884.

Fr. Jose Rada then received his official appointment papers on 7 July 1884 as companion of the parish priest of San Fernando Rey in Liloan, a prosperous town in the province of Cebu. On 11 July, he boarded a steamer that took him to Cebu. He served the parish as companion or assistant priest of Fr. Manuel Jiménez (1835-1893),³ its parish priest in 1876-1893. But it was the priority task of Fr. Rada to learn the Visayan Cebuano language. According to 1882 parish census, Liloan had 1,480 tributes and a population of 7,797, in terms of tributes and population much bigger than Catmon, Compostela, Carmen and the towns in the Camotes Islands.⁴

After four to five months in Liloan, he went to reside at the Immaculate Conception Convent in Cebu City where on 10 November 1884 Prior Provincial Juan Cruz Gómez issued the dimissorial letters to Bishop Benito Romero for his ordination to the sacred priesthood on 22 December 1884.

During the Spanish colonial era, the Augustinian Recollect statutes declared it as mandatory for a future minister to be proficient in the language of the parish where he would be assigned. An Augustinian Recollect priest was never assigned to a parish if he was not proficient in the language of that place. Having passed the obligatory proficiency examination in Visayan Cebuano, he was assigned as assistant parish priest of San Isidro Labrador [Saint Isidore the Farmer] Parish of Bilar, Bohol, on 7 May 1885. In the yearly census report sent to the provincial curia in Manila, Fr. Rada reported that Bilar had 1,527 tributes and 6,871 souls during his parochial ministry.⁵

Blessed José Rada was thereafter assigned to Dimiao as assistant parish priest on 7 March 1886 under the parochial administration (1882-1888) of Fr. Juan Santisteban.⁶ A few days later, on 27 March, he was joined by Fr. Leon Inchausti who came from his parish assignment in Loay. Fr. Rada worked for a month in

³SÁDABA, 498.

⁴FIDEL DE BLAS, *Labor evangélica de los padres agustinos recoletos en la Islas Filipinas* (Zaragoza 1910) 33-34.

⁵FIDEL DE BLAS, 37.

⁶SÁDABA, 540.

this San Nicolas de Tolentino Parish. Dimiao was a relative bigger town with 1,717 tributes and a population of 7,959 according to the report of 1887.⁷ On 6 April 1886, he was appointed parish priest of Our Lady of the Pillar parish of Old Sierra Bullones.⁸ The old Marian parish of Sierra Bullones is now Pilar.⁹ In this town, he stayed for two years. On 1 May 1888, he was transferred to San Isidro Labrador Parish in Bilar. Almost six months later, on 27 October 1888, Fr. Rada was sent back to Old Sierra Bullones. He replaced Fr. León Inchausti who was assigned to Dimiao on the same day.

The landlocked town of Old Sierra Bullones, created into a parish in 1863, had 389½ tributes and 1,754 souls in 1887.¹⁰ Its fertile farms produced palay, wheat, sugar cane, corn, abaca, coffee, cacao, cotton, vegetables and root crops. Through his assiduous exhortation, the abaca yield of the town increased significantly every year. Toward the end of 1889, he supervised 249 workers in laying the foundations of the new parochial church. Five years later, the main altar and the presbytery were completed in time for the annual town fiesta in October 1894. The hitherto unfinished ground floor of the parish rectory was inaugurated during his term. In 1895, he ordered from Manila the three church bells still existing to this day. One church bell has the inscription of Fr. Rada who donated it to the people of Sierra Bullones.

The parish church of Sierra Bullones was described by the Cebu presbyter-author Felipe Redondo y Sendino in 1886 as made of excellent wood and was in good condition: twenty-six yards long, seven yards wide and six yards high up the roof.¹¹ The cemetery of the town was fenced by bamboos and its measurements were fifty-eight yards long and twenty-five yards wide. In that year (1886) the *kumbento* was still unfinished. Nevertheless, it was

⁷FIDEL DE BLAS, 37.

⁸SÁDABA, 635.

⁹*Lungsod Daan*, Old Sierra Bullones was created into the town of Pilar on 26 December 1960 through President Carlos P. Garcia's Executive Order No. 460.

¹⁰FIDEL DE BLAS, 38.

¹¹Felipe REDONDO Y SENDINO, *Breve reseña de lo que fue y de lo que es la Diócesis de Cebú en las Islas Filipinas* (Manila 1886) 189.

in excellent condition as it was made of fine wood. It was thirty yards long, twenty-four yards wide and ten yards high.

The canonical visit of Cebu Bishop Martín García Alcocer OFM in 1887 was a festive occasion for the whole parish. The curate had earlier prepared over “one thousand young children and adults of both sexes” to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Three hundred and fifty children were confirmed by the Franciscan bishop when he visited the curacy once more in 1894.

In the *Libro de Cosas Notables* of Old Sierra Bullones, Fr. Rada happily recounts the diocesan prelate’s overjoyed reaction to the fast-paced church project: “He was much impressed with the ongoing work of the new church. Filled with awe, he could not believe how in so short a time and with so few parishioners could a project be in such an advanced stage as it is now.”

Fr. Rada was described as “a pastor sensitive to the spiritual and material needs of his parishioners. In the Philippines he merited the commendation by the diocesan bishop for his zeal in preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation and in constructing the parish church and rectory. The colonial government of Bohol awarded him with the Medal of Civil Merit for his interest in promoting the resources of the town.”¹² He had profuse words of encouragement for the hardworking Recollect minister. In his desire for its early completion, the bishop decided to defray further construction expenses with parochial funds from prosperous Maribojoc town, much to the delight of the parishioners of Old Sierra Bullones.

In March 1889, the Servant of God started in Old Sierra Bullones the devotion to “our glorious Patriarch Saint Joseph with immense joy and satisfaction of the people” of the Marian parish of Old Sierra Bullones; every 19th of the month thereafter a sung mass was celebrated to honor the Lord’s foster-father. The parishioners bade farewell to their beloved parish priest in August 1896 when he was transferred to the adjacent Saint Joseph parish of Candijay. In this parish he served the parishioners for two years until 10 April 1898. On account of the Philippine Revolution which occasioned the death of many confreres in Cavite and elsewhere in Luzon, the

¹²Enrique EGUIARTE, Ángel MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *Holiness and Heroic Witness. Augustinian Recollect Saints and Blessed* (Quezon City 2014) 50.

Recollect major superior in Manila advised the ministers in Bohol sometime in February 1898 to leave their parishes and head for Manila.

Blessed José passed by Negros Island whose parishes were also administered by Recollect ministers. On 6 November 1898, he was arrested at the *kumbento* of La Carlota together with his confrere Fr. Juan Benito Cañas (1873-1933).¹³ In November 1898 the banner of the Revolution was unfurled in Negros, and thirty-five Recollect friars—including the transient Fr. Rada—were arrested. Hard labor and tribulations were their daily fare at La Granja in La Carlota for three months. Hard labor further awaited the captives at a prison camp in La Granja and hiked to Bacolod City with many parishioners providing them water, food and shelter along the away.

The private memoir of Fr. Rada disclosed how he commended his life to his Maker and prepared himself to receive the palm of martyrdom. At the provincial jail of Bacolod, they were further subjected to untold indignities at the hands of rude revolutionary guards.¹⁴ Freed three months afterward, the friars boarded the *S/S Monserrat* bound for Manila on 2 February 1899. The ministers from Negros obtained their freedom and reached the safety of Manila on 6 February 1899. Fr. Rada then left for Spain in 1899. His parish ministry in the Philippines lasted fifteen years. His last parochial assignment in Bohol was the parish of Saint Joseph in Candijay where he served the parishioners from August 1896 to November 1898.¹⁵

Fr. Rada was dismissed abruptly from his Congregation of the Augustinian Recollects for a case involving some property in Cebu as soon as he arrived in Spain. He appealed declaring he was not given a fair trial. Furthermore, his case was decided without due process, that is, his side was not heard. Thus he sought a proper review of the case that eventually resulted in his

¹³SADABA, 724-725.

¹⁴*Sinopsis histórica de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino de las Islas Filipinas* II 455-456; Ángel MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *History of Negros* (Manila 1980) 454-455.

¹⁵SADABA, 635- 636.

exoneration and consequent reinstatement in the Order in 1912. He was affiliated to the new Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova and then volunteered to the missions in Brazil. He was appointed parochial vicar of Estrella do Sul and in 1921 he performed his pastoral ministry Fazenda do Centro in Espirito Santo. At age 66, in 1927 he returned to Spain and lived at the convent in Lucena in the province of Córdoba as conventual. His residence at the Convent of Motril began in early 1930 until he met his martyrdom on 25 July 1936.

From Fr. Angel Martínez Cuesta, author of many articles and booklets, on the Martyrs of Motril, we quote a pertinent narrative on Fr. José Rada in the Brazilian missions:

The same characteristics adorned Fr. Rada's activities in Brazil, especially during the six years he worked at Fazenda do Centro (Espírito Santo), a ministry that combined pastoral care with a special attention to the material needs of Italian immigrants. Between 1909 and 1910, the Recollects acquired a large estate, which was abandoned after the release of the slaves (1888). They subdivided the land into 118 lots which were distributed to an equal number of families.

Rada's zeal attracted the attention of the bishop who required his presence in pastoral visits, and even summoned him to the episcopal see in Vitoria to hear the confession of the clergy or, in his absence and "not having anyone whom he could trust" to serve the parish of San Gonzalo and the chaplaincies of the hospital and the convent of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The chronicles highlighted his fondness for horticultural work.¹⁶

A few days before their heroic death, the Augustinian Recollects of Motril were warned by close friends about their perils of their continued stay at the convent. Nevertheless, they all refused to abandon it, declaring that they had complete confidence in God's mercy. The Marxist revolutionaries, it was revealed in the beatification process, executed the eight Martyrs of Motril "for being ministers of Christ and for defending the Catholic Faith."

¹⁶Enrique EGUIARTE, Ángel MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *Holiness and Heroic Witness. Augustinian Recollect Saints and Blessed* (Quezon City 2014) 50.



An early parish church of San Isidro Labrador Parish in Bilar, Bohol.



The Kumbento or Residence of the Parish priest in Bilar, Bohol.



San Fernando Rey Parish Church of Liloan in Northeastern Cebu.



Parish Church of San Nicolás de Tolentino in Dimiao, Bohol built by the Augustinian Recollects.



The Kumbento or parochial house of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino Parish in Dimiao, Bohol



A school house in Dimiao constructed by the Augustinian Recollect parish priests.

sa y en la estratificación debida a las constantes corrientes y obligando en algunas ocasiones a los monjes, al aumento de las prestaciones de dicho textil, se ha conseguido que su producción haya llegado en este año novena y una, a la cantidad al mas de cincuenta pices segun valen a priori monedas.

En el año novena y cuatro que por el estado ruinoso de la Iglesia vieja de este Ministerio, tuvo necesidad el P. Ministro de habilitar el Presbiterio de la nueva, habiendose ya celebrado en ella la fiesta de la Purísima la Virgen del Pilar.

En este mismo año de novena y cuatro y en diez y ocho de Junio hizo la Santa Visión diocesana en este Ministerio el Illmo. Sr. Obispo de la Diócesis Don Fr. Martín García y Navarro, habiendo administrado el Santo Sacramento de la confirmación a trescientos cincuenta niños y niñas en el Monasterio de haber desamuestrado en el convento tiro de bien organizando trabajo de la nueva Iglesia en construyéndose y llevar de admiración no podía decirse cuanto se como en tan poco tiempo y con tan pocos fondos y trabajadores se habia podido llevar la obra tal como estaba, dando animo al P. Ministro y agitando la pira en un tiempo mas pronto con fondos de la Parroquia de Maribohor.

Acordaron en este mismo año se estableciera la instrucción del pueblo, y por consejo del P. Ministro la devoción a la Santísima Virgen de la Correa haciéndole todos los años la fiesta en su día con toda pompa y solemnidad y proximidad de la Correa habiendose podido establecer la cofradía por no haber suficiente número de cofrades y por lo que en vista, todo el pueblo en pagar los gastos con gusto de la fiesta en su día.

Y por veracidad de todo lo que llevo escrito lo firmo en este nuestro Ministerio de Sierra Bullones
Fr. José Rada.

Folio signed by Fr. José Rada OAR, attesting to the veracity of what he has written in *Libro de cosas notables de Sierra Bullones en Bohol*, Legajo 66: Bohol, Folder 4, f. 152r, in JUAN DE LA CONCEPCIÓN ARCHIVO RECOLETO, Bulwagang Recoletos, Mira-Nila Homes, Quezon City.

The Parish Ministry of Blessed León Inchausti in Bohol and Romblon (1885-1897)

León Inchausti y Minteguía was born in Ajanguiz in the Spanish province of Vizcaya on 28 June 1859.¹ His parents were Benito Inchausti and Juana Minteguía, belonging to humble but devout families.² He entered the Augustinian Recollect convent of Our Lady of the Way in Monteagudo, Navarra which belonged to the Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino and pronounced the simple religious vows of poverty, chastity and obedience on 11 November 1878. He took the religious appellation of León Inchausti de la Virgen del Rosario. He studied likewise in Monteagudo his philosophy and sciences. He started his theological formation at their convent in San Millán de la Cogolla and professed the solemn vows of poverty, chastity and obedience on 12 November 1882. He finished his theological training at their convent in Marcilla, Navarra. On 1 June 1884, he took the steamer *Isla de Cebú* with Fray José Rada de la Virgen de los Dolores and twelve other confreres at Barcelona.

A month after, on 1 July, the 80th Recollect mission group arrived in Manila. He was then sent to Compostela in Cebu to study Visayan Cebuano. On 10 November 1884, the superiors issued

¹SÁDABA, 636-637.

²*Like Sheep Led to the Slaughterhouse*, in Emmanuel Luis A. ROMANILLOS, *The Augustinian Recollects in the Philippines. Hagiography and History* (Quezon City 2001) 78.

to him the dimissorial letters for his priestly ordination which he received in Cebu City on 22 December 1884.

Fr. León was thereafter sent to the Saint Anthony the Abbot Parish of Carmen in Bohol where he worked as assistant parish priest from March to June 1885. In July 1885 he was transferred to the Holy Trinity Parish of Loay where his name was listed in the 1885 parish census of the town. Here he served the parishioners until March 1886. On 27 March 1886, he was assigned to the Parish of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino of Dimiao. He did not stay long in Dimiao since in 1887 he was named parish priest of Banton Island in the Province of Romblon.



Blessed León Inchausti de la Virgen del Rosario

The island-parish of Banton had 3,286 inhabitants.³ Banton, located in the northernmost point of the Romblon province was a mission founded by the Recollect missionaries in 1635. It was invaded and plundered by boatloads of Moro pirates in the 17th and 18th centuries. Defenseless Christians were either massacred, properties and harvests were seized or men and women were taken captive to their southern lairs. The famed Padre Capitán built forts in the islands of Romblon and Banton to defend the Christian settlements.⁴ A year after, on 30 April 1888, Fr. León was sent from Banton back to Bohol and was appointed parish priest of Sierra Bullones. On 26 February 1890, he was put in charge of the parish of Ubay as parish priest. He bade farewell to his parishioners of Bohol, the land that witnessed his first pastoral ministry as a newly-ordained minister of God in Carmen.

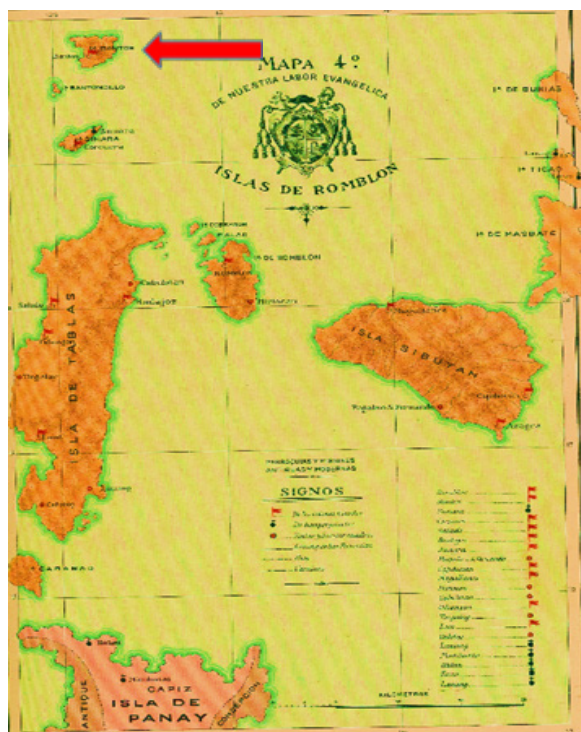
A month afterward, on 20 March 1890, he travelled to Azagra, a small mission post south of San Fernando town in Sibuyan Island of the province of Romblon. He spent some time as missionary of Azagra which today is a barangay of San Fernando with 1,800 residents. He served the capital town of Romblon in 1891. On 13 June 1892, he transferred to the northern island of Banton again as parish priest. In this island-parish of Banton which already had about 4,000 inhabitants, he stayed for five years from June 1892 to October 1897. On account of the Philippine Revolution, many missionaries, including Fr. León, returned to Spain in October 1897. Cebuano, Boholano and Romblomanon parishioners witnessed thirteen and three months of his apostolic zeal. He resided at Marcilla until early September 1903 when he volunteered for the missions in Brazil.

In Brazil, he was mandated to learn another language—Brazilian Portuguese—and after being declared proficient in the

³FIDEL DE BLAS, 27.

⁴Charlemagne MARIN JR., *The Augustinian Recollect Contributions in the Evangelization of Romblon (1635-1937)*, (MA Theology Church History Thesis Recoletos School of Theology, Quezon City 2019) 35-36.

language, he was assigned to Coromandel.⁵ Thereafter, he was parish priest of Abbadía dos Dourados until 1921 when he was elected as delegate of the provincial chapter of the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova. This Recollect province was created in 1909 which comprised the convents and parishes in Andalusia Spain and the missions in Brazil. After eighteen years in the Brazilian missions, Fr. León retraced his steps to Spain to attend the chapter.



In 1887-1888, Blessed León Inchausti served the Island Parish of Banton in Romblon Archipelago and was reassigned in Sierra Bullones [present-day Pilar] parish, then in Ubay where he ministered to its parishioners until 1890 when he traveled back to Spain.

⁵Miguel AVELLANEDA, *Continuación del Padre Sádaba o segunda parte del 'Catálogo de los religiosos de la Orden de Agustinos Recoletos (1906-1936)* (Rome 1938) 288.



After his 18-year missionary work in Brazil, Blessed León returned to Spain and lived at their residences in Granada [lower arrow], then in Motril [indicated by the star], and later in Bilbao in northern Spain. Finally, in 1928, he lived at Motril until his martyrdom on 25 July 1936 during the Spanish Civil War.

He thereafter resided for some time in their Recollect residences, first in the city of Granada, and then in Motril also in Granada province and in Bilbao, before finally fixing his residence at Motril in 1928 where he lived for fourteen years until his martyrdom.

At the beatification process in Motril, several witnesses described the Augustinian Recollects as edifying, exemplary religious who led lives of virtue and holiness. As chaplains, Fr. Inchausti and his confreres celebrated masses, heard confessions and offered spiritual guidance to the Motril communities of Augustinian Recollect and Dominican nuns. They were “occupied solely with exercising the sacred ministry with holy zeal, practicing works of charity for their neighbors and seeking God’s glory and the sanctification of souls.”



The lateral chapel with the painting of the Martyrs of Motril by Antonio Molina Torres inside the historic Church of Our Lady of Victory in Motril, Granada, Spain.



The Church of Our Lady of Victory [Nuestra Señora de la Victoria] in Motril, Granada, Spain, set afire and razed to the ground at the outset of the Spanish World War in 1936-1939 and thereafter reconstructed.



Interior of the rebuilt Church of Our Lady of Victory today.

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University of San Jose – Recoletos: Towards Another 75 Years (1947-2022)

Great enterprises often have lowly beginnings. The University of San Jose-Recoletos, one of the excellent universities in the Visayas and Mindanao today, can trace its pedagogical roots to the traditional basic education and Christian doctrine taught by Augustinian Recollect missionaries at the parish level. Imparting such education had been embedded in their long tradition since the 17th century in the Philippines. Initially, parochial schools were mandated by the *Modo de administrar*, the parish manual of the Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino, which since time immemorial was wholeheartedly implemented by Recollect missionaries. The idea of a formal education finally became a reality with the diocesan seminary in Vigan, Ilocos Sur, which the Recollects administered in 1882-1895. It was followed at once by their foundation of Colegio de San Jose in Bacolod City in June 1896 which closed down on the eve of the Revolution in Negros in November 1898. Then the provincial chapter of Saint Nicholas Province decreed in 1940 the setting up of Santo Tomas de Villanueva Institute—present-day Colegio de Santo Tomas-Recoletos—at San Carlos, Negros Occidental. A year after in June 1941, the future San Sebastian College Recoletos in Manila was

opened. The educational apostolate in two schools was cut short by the Second World War.

In Zaragoza, Spain in 1945 Fr. Santos Bermejo, the new prior provincial, had posed to Fr. Martín Legarra, who would be the first rector of the school from 1947-1958, the following question: “What do you think if we assign you to teach in a college that would be in Cebu?” In February 1947, Prior Fr. Máximo López together with Fr. Fermin Samanes consulted Cebu Archbishop Gabriel Reyes on the Recollect school plan which counted on his enthusiastic support and was approved on 16 March. The official rescript of approval was issued by Archbishop Reyes on 28 March.

The school project was then deliberated on at the provincial council of Saint Nicholas Province in Zaragoza, Spain. On 27 May 1947, the prior provincial and his council firmed up their decision and approved the Cebu school project and an initial budgetary allocation of ₱40,000 was allotted for the construction of classrooms and offices at one wing of the age-old of the Immaculate Conception Convent.

The school was aimed to offset the looming influence of Protestant and public learning institutes which could not meet the postwar need for education in the province. In 1947, Fr. Martín T. Legarra then worked in processing the papers in Manila and in June he closely worked with Esteban Tejedor, Alfred Rennix and Miguel P. Navarro. Other priests—Manuel Gómara, Jesús González, and Simeón Asensio—helped in finalizing the physical set-up. Seventeen classrooms were built in the ground floor under the supervision of Engineer Manguera.

On 7 July 1947, Colegio de San Jose commenced its first school year. The student population in both high school and elementary departments was 940, a figure beyond their expectations. The college department opened its first classes in the summer of 1948.

Classes were held at newly built classrooms in the ground floor of the convent whose primitive structure was the Immaculate Conception Shrine donated by Bishop Pedro de Arce in 1621. The new school had Fr. Martin Legarra as its first rector. In 1951, a

two-story building fronting Magallanes Street was built, followed by San Agustin Hall inaugurated in 1955. San Agustin Hall Annex rose in 1959 to extend it to Leon Kilat Street. In 1964, following an exhaustive deliberation, the age-old Immaculate Conception temple was torn down to give way to the present-day spacious Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in the upper floor and the ground floor occupied by both the school and future parish offices.

In 1968, the imposing edifice along P. Lopez Street was erected to accommodate more classrooms, offices and library facilities. The next decades are marked by incredibly amazing growth, expansion and progress in terms of academic accomplishments, curricular offerings, student population increase, feats in sports and accolades. The Recollect institution was awarded with *Outstanding Institution of Learning* by the City and Province of Cebu in 1979 and 1985. In 1982, the Basak Campus in Pardo, Cebu City was inaugurated where the secondary, elementary, as well as more colleges and the sports coliseum were gradually built.

On 21 September 1984, Colegio de San Jose-Recoletos acquired its university status, putting it at par with excellent universities in the Philippines. With such academic prestige, the University of San Jose-Recoletos incessantly implemented relevant and development-oriented courses in the sciences, humanities, business, engineering and information technology coupled with state-of-the-art equipment and tools as well as graduate courses and legal studies. Thus a university president could declare: "USJ-R has fully-equipped computer laboratories, air-conditioned speech laboratories with modern features, fully-furnished audiovisual rooms, air-conditioned conference rooms, typing rooms, business machine rooms, a Certified Public Account review room, basic science laboratories in physics, chemistry and biology, basic engineering laboratories and Hotel and Restaurant Management -Tourism Management mini-hotel, home economics laboratory and practice house, music rooms, a multi-purpose auditorium, a Mass Communications studio and an institutional radio network DYAR; school canteens, study halls, school clinic, school chapel, alumni office, faculty rooms, an expansive Main Library with

extension units in the CPA, Law, Graduate School, high school and elementary departments. The school's Instructional Media Center has modern audiovisual equipment and facilities as well as dynamic monitoring services."

USJ-R lives up to its motto: *Quality Christian Community-Oriented Education*, continuing to pass accreditation and re-accreditation surveys. On top of these developments and feats, the year 1984 marked a milestone in the history of the school when it attained its University Status after months of preparation and evaluation. Soon PAASCU granted the school's accredited colleges, namely, arts and sciences, commerce, engineering and teachers' college, Level 3, making USJ-R at par with the prestigious academic institutions in the Philippines. The prospects of further growth beckon as USJ-R copes with current and relevant thrusts to prove equal to its task of molding well-rounded personalities within the needs and resources of the immediate and larger community. USJ-R graduates regularly landed among top 20 in government board examinations for engineers, accountants or teachers. In 1999, the student population recorded 17,232, the biggest in its history so far.

The school's physical plant and facilities have expanded tremendously. To date, modern structures include the massive Recoletos Coliseum, Open Gymnasium, and the John XXIII Retreat House, all located the Basak Campus. The Talavera House of Prayer-Recoletos, inaugurated in 1998 at Barangay Quiot in Pardo, Cebu City has been the preferred venue for provincial chapters, spiritual retreats, recollections, conventions, seminar-workshops, conferences and residence for government board examinees. The year 2009 witnessed the inauguration of the USJ-R Balamban Campus which offers basic education.

The university continues to foment cultural groups like the USJ-R Ensemble, USJ-R Dramatics Club and the Adelante Dance Troupe as well as student organizations like the Boys Scouts. As a Catholic university, it promoted religious lay and student organizations like the Daughters of Mary, Student Catholic Action. The Campus Ministry Office is now tasked with organizing holy



Quality, Christian, Community-Oriented Education: University of San Jose-Recoletos Main Campus at P. Lopez Street cor. Magallanes Street, Cebu City.

Masses, novenas and Marian exhibits and fosters the Recollect Augustinian Youth. The school in its initial years had students conduct catechism classes in public schools and colleges. It encourages such student publications as *Forward* and research culture through the years with *Synthesis*, *OAR Journal of Research* and *Recoletos Multidisciplinary Research Journal*. USJ-R goes on with charitable outreach activities with its livelihood programs in its prison ministry, assistance to indigenous peoples, feeding programs, climate change awareness and quick responses to calamity-stricken communities in the wake of typhoons and floods, always along the line of Father Saint Augustine' teaching: "Hearken to the call of the Church that sends the Augustinian Recollects where they are needed."

With the firm guidance of the Divine Providence and the steady stewardship of the Augustinian Recollect Fathers, the University of San Jose-Recoletos shall go on serving the educational apostolate of the Church in the Visayas and Mindanao towards another seventy-five years.

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A History of Santo Tomas de Villanueva-Recoletos Formation Center: Seeds of Vocation to the Recollect Religious Life and Priesthood¹

Saint Charles Borromeo, patron of the city and parish of San Carlos, is revered the world over as spiritual protector of seminaries. The title stemmed from the fact that in his own time the holy Italian cardinal exerted great effort in ameliorating the training of his priests and uplifting their morals. As part of his various post-Tridentine reform moves in the second half of the sixteenth-century to assuage the havoc wreaked by the Augustinian friar Martin Luther, Archbishop Charles Borromeo founded three seminaries in his extensive Milan archdiocese in Lombardy, Italy.

Hence it comes as no great surprise that such prestigious seminaries in the Philippines as those in the cities of Cebu and Makati were rightfully put under Saint Charles Borromeo's spiritual patronage. And in San Carlos, Negros Occidental, which had just suffered the ravages of war, the Order of Augustinian Recollects founded a house of formation for young boys in 1948. Moreover, the plans for the minor seminary were conceived a year before. The long process commenced in July 1947.

¹In 1995, I did this history of the Augustinian Recollect high school seminary at San Carlos City in Negros Occidental. In 2007, I revised it for this present anthology.

Colegio Apostólico de Santo Tomás

On 22 July 1947 Vicar Provincial Leoncio Sierra enthusiastically disclosed a plan to set up a *colegio apostólico* [minor seminary] at San Carlos. The proposal was contained in a letter to the director of Santo Tomas de Villanueva Institute Gregorio Espiga. The formation house would be known as *Colegio Apostólico de Santo Tomás de Villanueva* (Saint Thomas of Villanova Minor Seminary). The important need to attract and train more Filipino Recollects who in the future would manage their new colleges emerged as a strong reason for the establishment of such a seminary. Two Recollect schools had opened their portals in two populous cities: Colegio de San Jose in Cebu City and San Sebastian College in Manila. And from their auspicious start, they were destined to become successful financial ventures.

The minor seminary plan, culled from Father Sierra's letter to the rector of San Tomas, is cited in the following excerpt:

What we have been thinking, yes, is the possibility of utilizing the upper floor of that *colegio* [Santo Tomas de Villanueva Institute] as a place for the aspirants to our holy habit; since the [provincial] councilors and the [vicarial] councilors here consider and hold on to the belief that the opening of a novitiate for Filipino Recollects is an urgent matter.

If we are to go on with our project of putting up schools, we'll need Filipino members of the Order. In case we decide to use your school, the aspirants could attend high school classes and further study Latin separately. If we could make arrangements with Father [Leandro] Nieto, we'd rather send them to Puerto Princesa [seminary], but this has yet to be resolved. I am conveying this to you so you would not be caught by surprise when the right moment comes.²

²Jesús SOBEJANO, *Los Agustinos Recoletos: 375 años en las Islas Filipinas* (Quezon City 1981) 75; Rafael E. CABARLES, *The Centenary of the Recollects in San Carlos City, Negros Occidental, and the Golden Jubilee of the Colegio de Santo Tomas-Recoletos Foundation* (San Carlos City 1991) 64-65.

Council meeting

At a provincial council meeting held in Spain from 31 March to 2 April 1948, the plan to establish the minor seminary at San Carlos was a priority on its agenda. We have gathered details of the council meeting from the provincial's reply to queries made by Father Martín Legarra, Santo Tomas director in 1958-1961:

The provincial [Father Santos Bermejo] disclosed the convenience of opening a minor seminary in the school at San Carlos, Philippines, in accord with the wishes of the provincial chapter in its VII Ordinance. Each councilor at length voiced his opinion on the matter. A secret ballot was held shortly afterward. And unanimous was the approval of the opening of the aforementioned minor seminary.

The provincial council discussed at once the convenience of erecting a canonical house. The permission of the local ordinary for this purpose had already been acquired in February 1941. Following a prolonged deliberation, four white balls [ayes] and one black [nay] resolved that the steps for the canonical erection of the new formation house would proceed as planned. After that decision was firmed up, they further deliberated on the nature of the aforementioned canonical house. Everyone expressed his opinion on the particular matter: whether the school [Santo Tomas] would go on operating as a school for externs or it would solely be a minor seminary. But before that, they first agreed that the white ball would mean a favorable vote for the school for externs and the black in favor of the minor seminary. They then proceeded to a secret ballot; four whites and one black came out.³

The outcome of the secret vote: four members of the provincial council favored the continuance of Santo Tomas de Villanueva Institute as high school for externs and setting up a minor seminary. Only one councilor who favored the seminary voted for the closure of the high school. The good news from Spain was immediately conveyed on 15 April 1948 by Father Leoncio Sierra in Manila to the superior of Santo Tomas:

Just today I have received a communication from our father provincial that the venerable provincial council has unanimously

³CABARLES, *Centenary*, 65.

approved the project of opening a minor seminary there and measures must be taken for its immediate realization.⁴

Vicar provincial's instructions

The vicar provincial then told Father Espiga to begin the necessary preparations for the new house of formation, giving him further instructions on the equally important economic aspects of their minor seminary project :

You can begin the process of admitting vocations and preparing beds, utensils, etc., for the boys. With respect to beds, perhaps it would be convenient for you to coordinate with Father Legarra who told me he had acquired some beds for the planned seminary at advantageous prices.

The priests of those parishes, who may give something in excess to be sent to the procurator's office, can remit it there for the expenses of the minor seminary. They can afterward inform the procurator's office so he can take note of it as income and later as expenses for said purpose. We hope God may deign bless our new endeavor. In his letter the provincial reiterated his wish to put Father Félix [Bartolomé] in charge of the aspirants. He expects a lot from him, and we are all happy that the outcome conforms to our expectations.⁵

Leoncio Sierra then had some instructions on the future aspirants and their admission papers, scholastic requirements, tuition, qualifications and his high hopes on the latest project of Saint Nicholas province:

Let it be made clear that to be admitted the aspirants must be deserving ones and that they pledge good outcome as far as we—human as we are—can judge them with prudence. Certificates of baptism and confirmation must be submitted by them. They must be children of legally married parents. They should be of excellent health and, of course, the applicants should present a recommendation of good moral character from their respective parish priests. They must have attained some degree of schooling and age that we shall determine in common accord in a meeting we'll hold there. The fee shall be P200.00 per annum, plus the costs of trips, books, clothes, medicines, etc.

⁴SOBEJANO, 75.

⁵CABARLES, *Centenary*, 66.

The go-signal

A few days following the project's approbation by the Madrid provincial council, the necessary dossier was dispatched at once to the Sacred Congregation of Religious to seek the go-signal from the Holy See. This urgent request to set up a new Recollect minor seminary was favorably sanctioned by the Roman dicastery that same year.⁶ On 8 May 1948 Prior General Father Feliciano de Ocio promptly affixed his signature on the much-awaited decree of canonical erection of the first seminary of San Carlos. On 2 June 1948 from the Spanish province of Zaragoza Prior Provincial Father Santos Bermejo conveyed the happy news to all the members of Saint Nicholas province.

Pioneering seminarians

The first batch of eleven young students entered the new seminary in 1948. Being the first of some 800 students who to this date have entered the seminary portals, the following deserved mention: Aureo Anasco, Romulo Artillaga, Oscar de la Rosa, Aurelio Donales, Alberto Lopez, Faustino Paglinawan, Auxentius Pañares, Raymundo Pinzon, Marcos Pitagara, Emilio Prosia and Manuel Reyes. Of these eleven pioneers, only Oscar de la Rosa and Faustino Paglinawan pursued their career in the Lord's ministerial priesthood. Both were ordained at Marcilla, Navarra, Spain, on 12 July 1959.

Toward the close of the school year, the school director and concurrently seminary rector—Father Gregorio I. Espiga—had already anticipated a considerable increase of the seminary population. He must have received numerous application letters from future aspirants or from their parents requesting for available slots in the new seminary.

As a result, the father rector incessantly worked for the construction of an additional wing to meet the projected population increase. On 22 February 1949 he wrote the new vicar provincial Pedro I. Zunzarren about the foreseeable lack of space for the

⁶SOBEJANO, 76.

incoming seminary aspirants: “We are afraid next year we will not find any suited place for the new [aspirants] who are coming in, a matter that must be settled at once.”⁷ As expected, eighteen new aspirants for the priesthood were admitted in June 1949. Fifteen more aspirants entered in 1950. The total number of seminary students during that year is unknown.

An additional wing

In his letter on 9 February 1950, Zunzarren in Manila informed the Santo Tomas community about some good news from Spain. The provincial council had unanimously granted on 22 January 1950 its approval of the extension project and its budget proposal. The construction of the additional wing began immediately.

On 25 April 1950 Espiga wrote about the progress of the extension project in a letter to the vicar provincial—his last letter to Zunzarren who passed away the following month at the Santo Tomas University Hospital. For the project, the school director had hired Engineer Magbanua of Dumaguete City. The additional wing—perpendicular to the original edifice and parallel to Broce Street—would eventually cost P65,503.27. The upper floor of the new wing was to become the sleeping quarters, dining and recreation halls for the seminary and school administrators. The ground floor accommodated additional classrooms and administrative offices, including the offices of the school director and the high school principal.

The school campus had been expanded with the purchase of an additional lot from Pedro Alfaro and Isidra Mondragon on 31 July 1951. The parcel of land measured 2,252 square meters. Saint Nicholas province acquired it for P10,000.22. A small wooden structure, which for a time housed the generator for the school’s electricity needs, used to be at the newly acquired lot. Before the generator was transferred to another site within the campus, the small building was burned down. In 1965 a new concrete chapel would rise from its ashes.⁸

⁷CABARLES, *Centenary*, 104, note 67.

⁸CABARLES, *Centenary*, 35.

Seminary life, silence and prayer

Absolute silence was most strictly observed during periods designated for meditation, study, afternoon nap and night sleep. At the daybreak, the seminarians were roused from sleep by the loud recitation of the Litany of the Saints. They queued toward the chapel for the morning rituals, singing the Marian hymn *Ave maris stella* [Hail Star of the Sea]. At the brightly lighted chapel, they recited their morning prayers aloud and in unison, after which they had a thirty-minute meditation, followed by the Eucharistic sacrifice and thanksgiving prayers.

A community visit to the Blessed Sacrament and the *Angelus* preceded the communal midday meal. In the afternoon, meditation and the recitation of the Rosary preceded their manual work and such recreational games as soccer, basketball, volleyball or the Spanish game of *pelota*.

Discipline and vigilance

Excellent study habits, rigid discipline, constant vigilance and paternal correction were duly imposed on their religious formation. Beadles or leaders chosen from their ranks were delegated to supervise their daily activities.

Language courses ate up a great part of their studies. Besides their regular high school subjects, the young seminarians had Latin classes every day from Monday to Saturday and a special course in Spanish. To encourage them to master the English language, aspirants were given a special English class by Ms. Elena Caballero who rose to become high school principal. They were further forbidden to speak the dialect. Musically-minded students were given afternoon piano lessons by assigned priests.

As integral part of their training, the seminarians themselves daily cleaned the dormitories, recreation halls, dining hall, corridors, rest rooms, classrooms, staircases and the chapel. The aspirants thus acquired necessary habits of good personal grooming, cleanliness and appreciation for manual work. They also tended the flower and vegetable gardens of the seminary.⁹

⁹*Ibid.*, 35.

Spiritual formation and regular acts of piety

The seminarians' acts of piety included the daily morning and evening prayers, community mass, thanksgiving prayers after mass, rosary, communal visit to the Blessed Sacrament, grace before and after meals, prayers before and after study period. The *Salve* and *Joseph* hymns were chanted every Saturday. The Holy Rosary before the exposed Blessed Sacrament and Benediction was held every Sunday. On First Fridays the priests and aspirants held devotional practices in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which included an Act of Consecration before the exposed Blessed Sacrament. The novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help was introduced in the seventies to foster this Marian devotion, very popular among Filipinos of all social classes.

Confessions were regularly scheduled every Saturday evening. Up to the first half of the seventies, the Recollect priests from the parish used to hear the confessions of the seminarians.

To further strengthen the aspirants' religious formation, talks on spiritual topics were delivered by formators or by any visiting confrere and major superior. In 1978, according to the annual report of the same year, such talks were regularly given every Wednesday and Saturday by seminary formators.¹⁰

The last Saturday of the month was set aside for their monthly recollection. This special day was devoted solely to purely spiritual exercises, like talks on religious themes, spiritual reading, meditation and the customary acts of piety. To maintain an atmosphere conducive for the day's activities, the rule of silence was strictly enforced. A three-day spiritual retreat was also scheduled during the year. A retreat master was customarily invited by the formators to conduct these annual spiritual exercises.

¹⁰Rafael E. CABARLES, *Memoria del Colegio de Santo Tomas-Recoletos, San Carlos City, Negros Occidental del año 1978*, in BPSN 69 (1979) 97.

Formators' tasks

The Recollect formators in the 1960s ordinarily held their spiritual retreat in May. On a regular basis, they engaged in the solution of moral and liturgical cases, as mandated by their statutes. Apart from activities proper to the religious life and the supervision of the minor seminarians and high school externs, the religious priests further performed such pastoral tasks as assistance at the parochial church in the administration of the sacraments. These were usually confessions, Sunday masses and Holy Week rites. Parish priests returned this favor by joining the formators in conducting Latin oral examinations of seminarians.

Hacienda ministry

The hacienda apostolate was one of its customary Sunday activities. Thus they celebrated masses, preached, confessed and baptized in the four haciendas under their jurisdiction, namely, Vascaña, Socorro, San Vicente and Fortuna. One religious was the chaplain of the Augustinian Recollects sisters of Colegio de Santa Rita. For the religious community, he celebrated a daily mass at their conventual chapel.¹¹

Facundo C. Valgañón OAR

It was due to the repeated invitations by the Santo Tomas community under Father Martín T. Legarra that Calatrava's Padre Facundo Cadalso Valgañón de la Virgen del Carmen agreed to celebrate his golden jubilee in the religious life. A well-revered curate of the adjoining town since 1938, Padre Facundo was born on 27 November 1891. He professed his monastic vows on 7 September 1908 and received the priesthood on 22 September 1915.¹²

¹¹Jesús MARTÍNEZ, *Memoria del Colegio de San Carlos*, in BPSN 58 (1968) 274.

¹²*De rebus fratrum*, in BPSN 48 (1958) 239.

A priest's golden jubilee as religious

The occasion of 7 September 1958 was simple but intimate and edifying. In the morning the golden jubilarian celebrated the Eucharistic Sacrifice for the religious community. The minor seminarians with Father Luis Asensio (1926-1959) at the pipe organ provided the solemn liturgical music for the Thanksgiving Mass. At the opportune moment, Father Legarra delivered a short, meaningful talk on the rare import of the inspiring affair. He then congratulated the jubilarian in the name of the religious community.

Padre Juan Manuel G. García (1908-1961) of San Carlos parish and his associate priests likewise felicitated the honored minister. Padre Facundo then gave “a stirring and enlightening talk on religious life and its concomitant sacrifices.” After the poignant affair, the sixty-six year-old jubilarian trekked back to Calatrava to continue his pastoral ministry.¹³

Padre Facundo left for Spain and stayed at the Recollect minor seminary in Lodosa, Navarra. He was able to commemorate the golden jubilee of his sacerdotal ordination in 1965. He rejoined his Creator in Lodosa at age 84.¹⁴

Death comes for a Recollect

It was the first time San Carlos townspeople had witnessed a funeral with such massive attendance as that interment of a beloved Recollect missionary, Father Luis Asensio, which took place in 1959.¹⁵ He was only thirty-two when he died at Riverside Hospital in Bacolod City. At the minor seminary, he was treasurer, Latin and Music instructor and prefect of discipline. At Colegio de Santo Tomas, he was a biology teacher and high school principal in

¹³AVELLANEDA, 151. After his ordination he was named curate of Mabini, Bohol, and stayed there for eight years. His appointment as parish priest of Saint Isidore parish in Lazi of the island-province of Siquijor came in 1928 and he remained there up to 1937. Padre Facundo was parish priest of Calatrava until 1964, where he had been Padre Manuel Gómara's coadjutor in the early 1920s.

¹⁴*Necrología*, in BPSN 65 (1975) 200-201.

¹⁵Martín LEGARRA, *Notas necrológicas sobre el R. P. Luis Asensio de la Purísima Concepción ORSA*, in BPSN 49 (1959) 64.

1956-1959. He had come to the Philippines in 1954 after obtaining his Master of Science in Biology from Villanova University in the United States of America.

San Carlos was his first and final assignment. People knew him as “a simple and congenial religious, always cheerful. One of those good friars who know how to place with his happy disposition a note of peace and good will in communities benefited by his benevolent presence. A practical love for the virtue of poverty was doubtless one of his most distinguishing and exemplary traits.”

Grave illness

Riverside Hospital doctors diagnosed anemia, nephritis and cardiac failure as the causes of his early demise. After the first symptoms of dizziness and retching in September 1958, the prior had to take Father Luis to Bacolod and from there to Manila. A month's sojourn in one of the capital's best hospitals did little to ameliorate his health. He missed his confreres, seminarians, students and friends in San Carlos. In them only could the priest find happiness and rest. He was thus permitted to repair to his beloved San Carlos. Once at Santo Tomas, he had to travel regularly to Bacolod for blood transfusions. Father Blas Montenegro willingly donated blood to his ailing confrere. Another donor was José Gorostiaga, a Spanish friend of the Recollects.

Untimely demise

The last time Father Luis left San Carlos for the provincial capital was on 11 February 1959 with Father Jesús Solabre. Thinking his time to meet the Lord was near, he asked for the last sacraments from Father Juan Manuel García. His uncle Father Simeón S. Asensio (1905-1974), the Order's procurator general, flew in from Manila to be at his death bed. So did Father Legarra in a light plane arrive at Hacienda Refugio.

After some period of the patient's temporary recovery, the rector and Solabre returned to Santo Tomas. Father Montenegro had replaced the two priests and personally accompanied Asensio

up to his last moments on earth. Other Negros parish priests—Valeriano Agustín (1925-1963), Eusebio Zabaleta and Alonso S. Bernal (1923-1964)—comforted the dying confrere with their presence. Msgr. Antonio Y. Fortich, then vicar general and presently bishop emeritus of Bacolod, visited him and gave him words of consolation. Father Luis breathed his last at 11:30 p.m. of 14 February with “tranquillity and peace of soul mirrored on his face.”

A multitudinous funeral never witnessed before

The following day the Recollect’s mortal remains were transferred to San Carlos. Padre Facundo blest them at Calatrava before the long funeral cortege proceeded to San Carlos and reached the place at 3:30 p.m. The parish priest Padre Florentino R. Echávarri (1926-1991) received them at the parochial church where the twenty-four-hour wake was later held. Hundreds took turns at the vigil that lasted without interruption until interment of the next afternoon.

For the funeral mass of 16 February, confreres from Colegio de San Jose-Recoletos—Federico Terradillos (1910-1969), Salvador Lerga, Jesús Martínez, Brother Luis Cuesta—joined the three San Carlos curates, Florentino Echávarri, José U. Gurrea and John Robert Currie (1924-1991), and sixteen other Negros Recollects. Msgr. Juan B. Velasco OP, bishop of Amoy, China, on a fraternal visit to Santo Tomas, recited the final *responso* [responsory for the dead] immediately following the morning Requiem Mass celebrated by the deceased Recollect’s uncle Father Simeón Asensio. The entire Santo Tomas student population and faculty, twenty-five minor seminarians, Augustinian Recollect sisters, and countless friends and loyal parishioners took Father Luis to his final resting place. The mortal remains were buried at the Menchaca-Llantada mausoleum in Hacienda Refugio. It was a generous gesture made by Don Roberto Llantada, “an exemplary Catholic, an old and most generous friend of the [Recollect] community of San Carlos, who sympathized so much with Father Luis Asensio.”

Mission year 1959

Three objectives were set by the Philippine Church Hierarchy when it declared 1959 as mission year: first, to awaken and foment among the Filipino youth awareness for the missions; second, to promote vocations for local as well as foreign missions; and third, to obtain everybody's support for the world mission movement. Santo Tomas enthusiastically contributed to the realization of the aims of the mission year because of its dual role as a minor seminary and a learning center for high school externs.

The school administrators of Santo Tomas and Santa Rita agreed to a joint celebration of what they dubbed as *Vocation and Mission Week*. The cooperative effort, aimed at involving a greater number of participants, was set for 24 September-4 October 1959. Students of the two Catholic schools gladly prepared an exhibit of posters related to the missions. To raise mission funds, creative Riturians made sacred articles, veils, mantillas and other items to be sold to the public.

Vicar Provincial Tomás Cornago (1900-1980) on a canonical visitation was on hand to open the colorful exhibit. A Recoleta priest from Colegio de San Jose-Recoletos arrived at San Carlos to conduct a series of edifying conferences on the missions at both Recollect schools. The week-long affair was capped by a literary musical program on 4 October at Colegio de Santa Rita. The most noteworthy part of the evening program was the tableau, "so full of realism and colors." The tableau was a stirring account of the life of an aspirant to the religious and priestly life, the most salient phases of his preparation in the seminary, the ordination and poignant farewell as he set out for the missions. The audience warmly applauded Blas Montenegro who ably directed the tableau where the minor seminarians and externs took part.¹⁶

Increase of seminary population

A big number of aspirants entered the seminary in 1962. Forty seminarians began their religious formation. Of these, two

¹⁶*De Filipinas*, in BPSN 49 (1959) 235.

were postulants to the religious brotherhood: Joaquin Jamelo and Rolando Pineda of Bacolod City. Fathers Regino Z. Bangcaya, Hernando D. Coja and Cornelio E. Moral belonged to this big group. Five were dismissed at the end of the school year for various causes.¹⁷

The year 1963 saw a stunning total of 84 aspirants to the Recollect lifestyle. At Santo Tomas sixty seminarians were taking up Latin and high school courses. Twenty-three of them entered in 1963.¹⁸ Twelve Recollect seminarians were in their philosophy years in Cebu and Quezon City. Thirteen students were enrolled at San Jose Seminary, while eleven at San Carlos Major Seminary in Cebu City.¹⁹

In 1964 the annual report of the Recollect Vicariate recorded eighty Recollect aspirants in three seminaries. Santo Tomas housed 57 minor seminarians. Eleven students entered San Carlos Major Seminary to commence their philosophy studies. For lack of space, the Santo Tomas superiors could only admit fourteen. Of these, six left before the end of the year. Twelve were enrolled at San Jose Seminary. Two of them took up philosophy while the rest were in their fourth-year and fifth-year Latin courses.²⁰

Antonio S. Ausejo (1923-1993), school director and prior in 1961-1964, reported that the seminary building could only accommodate up to sixty aspirants. It was handicapped by its prevailing inadequacy to go on admitting a greater number of students. What is most desirable, he continues in this annual report, is to work for the immediate transfer of the minor seminary to another town or city. Were this transfer deemed impossible, an additional wing would be an immediate solution. He believed the new annex should accommodate a much bigger number of students.

¹⁷Moisés LÓPEZ, *Vicaría provincial de Filipinas*, in BPSN 53 (1963) 212.

¹⁸The 1963 batch is honored to have three priests among them: Fathers Dionisio C. Cachero, Euben Clemente Capacillo and Lauro V. Larlar.

¹⁹Pedro HERCE, *Ecos de Filipinas*, in BPSN 54 (1963) 268.

²⁰Inocencio PEÑA, *Memoria anual de la Vicaría de Filipinas 1964*, in BPSN 55 (1965) 331-332.

A seminary annex

In 1966 Jesús L. Solabre (1915-1992), then director and superior, spearheaded the project for the construction of the new minor seminary building. Construction often went on late into the night for months. College seminarians, *i.e.*, those who took up Education courses at Santa Rita, pitched in and helped in the construction work as timekeepers or payroll disbursers. Way ahead of its scheduled blessing and inauguration, the prefect of discipline, his assistant, seminarians had transferred to the new edifice.

On 22 March 1966 Msgr. Gregorio Espiga, first rector of the seminary and at that time apostolic vicar of Palawan, traveled all the way from Puerto Princesa for the solemn inauguration and blessing of the seminary annex. That same day a well-attended open house was held to allow parents, benefactors and visitors to view the new edifice. A literary-cultural program was held in the evening.

Two wings form the actual seminary annex. The extension of the original Santo Tomas building constituted the first wing with two floors alongside the present city street named after long-time San Carlos vice mayor Antonio Azcona. Its dimensions are 34 meters long and 13 meters wide. The first floor served as the auditorium and recreation hall for the seminarians. At one time it became a canteen and home economics room. Today the huge hall as the school auditorium for indoor cultural presentations. The second floor is the seminary chapel—well-ventilated and brilliantly illumined—that could accommodate more than one hundred aspirants.

The second wing consists of three floors and measures 40 meters long and 15 meters wide. Seminary classrooms-*cum*-study halls used to occupy the ground floor. The two upper floors housed the dormitories or sleeping quarters for up to 120 students. A room and office for the prefect of discipline was constructed in the second floor and another for the assistant prefect in the third. The old chapel located at the corner of the original building had been converted into rooms of the religious, now high school classrooms. Today

these fathers' quarters are high school classrooms. The aspirants' erstwhile dormitory, adjacent to the new concrete chapel, was soon refurbished into a spacious mess hall. The kitchen divided the fathers' dining room and the seminarians' mess hall. The kitchen and the dining rooms were later moved to the second floor of the annex.²¹

When classes opened in June 1966, a record-high of seventy minor seminarians resided at the new seminary annex. Among them were thirty new aspirants. Six Recollect priests and a brother lived the common life. That year fifteen aspirants entered Seminario Mayor-Recoletos, renamed Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary in 1995, at Baguio City. In 1967, the seminary population was sixty-seven, down from previous year's seventy. Before the end of the year, ten had left San Tomas for various reasons.

Jesús L. Solabre OAR

The new concrete seminary edifice is a lasting legacy of Father Jesús Lazcano Solabre de la Sagrada Familia. Born on 25 February 1915 at Los Arcos, Navarra, he finished his secondary schooling at Lodosa of the same Spanish province. He entered the novitiate house of Monteagudo where in 1931 he professed the simple vows. In 1938 he was ordained a priest in Pamplona, Navarre, after his theology at San Millán de la Cogolla and Marcilla. He worked in the missions of Kweiteh and Shanghai in China for many years before his Philippine assignment. His final years were spent at the convent of Monteagudo where he rejoined his Maker in 1992.²²

Father Solabre would go to various schools in Negros and Panay and talk to young people on the Recollect charism and apostolate. In Antique province, he was assisted by Mill Hill missionaries, especially by Father Henry van den Eeden and Father Cornelio de Wit, who became Manila's episcopal vicar for religious.²³ The Santo Tomas vocation promoter would invite the

²¹Inocencio PEÑA, *Memoria anual de la Vicaría de Filipinas 1966*, in BPSN 57 (1967) 437.

²²AVELLANEDA, 124.

²³Interview with Father Regino Z. Bangcaya, 2 July 1995, SEMN-R, Antipolo City.

elementary or high school boys to San Carlos City. Thus it is no big surprise that there are priests from Antique in the Recollect Order—Regino Z. Bangcaya and Pedro A. Escanillas. A fruit of the cooperation between the Recollects and Mill Hill missionaries is the diocesan priest Father Nicolas Rendon.

Diocesan priests, seminary alumni

Santo Tomas minor seminary can rightfully boast of several alumni priests. These were graduates of its secondary school who also finished the required Latin courses and underwent training in the Augustinian Recollect lifestyle. Some of them transferred to diocesan seminaries where they finished their priestly training. Others went on to finish their philosophy degrees at Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary, San Jose Seminary, or San Carlos Major College Seminary.

Still there were others who professed the evangelical counsels as members of the Recollect Order and received the priesthood of Christ but later opted to be numbered among the diocesan clergy. Erstwhile members of the Recollect Order now serve God in parishes and ministries in the Philippines and abroad.²⁴

In San Carlos diocese, suffragan of the ecclesiastical province of Jaro, we have Father Ricardo O. Pomar. Santo Tomas can take pride in two former students who are now priests working in Jaro archdiocese. One hails from Lambunao, Iloilo, and a Santo Tomas 1968 graduate—Father Noe Lozada. He studied AB at Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary in 1968-1972 and took up theology at Marcilla in Spain. Lozada presently heads San Miguel parish in San Miguel, Jordan, Guimaras. Another former Thomasian is Father Lorenzo Camacho of Leon, Iloilo, who is curate of Saint Isidore the Farmer parish in Navalas, Guimaras.

In the Diocese of San Jose de Buenavista in Antique province is Nicolas Rendon. Father Rendon, who graduated from Santo Tomas in 1965, took up philosophy and theology at the Recollect seminaries of Baguio and Marcilla. He was chairman of the diocesan

²⁴ These are Benedicto Jayoma, Felipe Maraya and Raymundo Esquila.

commissions on Education and on Social Communications and Mass Media. He was also president of San Anthony's College in the capital town of Antique.

Alex Lim of Class 1969 went on to study philosophy at Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary. As parish priest, he served San Lorenzo Ruiz parish in Tisa, Labangon, Cebu City of Cebu Archdiocese. In Manila archdiocese, we have Father Joven Antique, a Santo Tomas graduate of 1980 from Bayawan City, Negros Oriental. He was parish priest of Ina ng Buhay parish at Jordan Heights, Damong Maliit, Novaliches, Quezon City. He was earlier assigned to the Holy Sacrifice parish at UP-Diliman in Quezon City. Father Webino R. Delfin served many parishes in Dumaguete diocese until his death in 1991.

Vocation to the religious life as brothers

The high school seminary had nourished vocations to the religious life as non-clerical brothers. Almost all the religious brothers of the Recollect Order were graduates high school graduates when they commenced their formation. Most earned their college degrees in the Order's colleges and universities. A high school graduate of Silay Institute (Silay City), Brother Santos B. Serrato (1933-2003) began his formation in 1955 and professed his simple vows in Monteagudo, Navarre, Spain in 1958. Bro. Fernando Dizon and Bro. Jose Fandivilla entered the high school seminary in 1961.

Together with another aspirant named Rolando Pineda, Brother Joaquin Jamelo of Bacolod City entered Santo Tomas in 1962 and professed his simple vows in Monteagudo, Navarre, Spain in 1966. Brother Jamelo had been assigned to various apostolates and convents in Costa Rica and Spain, besides long periods of assignments in the Recollect communities of Cavite City, Baguio City, Cebu City, Bacolod City and San Carlos City.

Bro. Jaazeal Estelou D. Jakosalem of San Carlos City finished his secondary school in 1990. He proceeded to Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary where he obtained his AB Philosophy from in 1994.

He professed his simple vows in 1995 in Saint Ezekiel Moreno Novitiate, Antipolo City. He went on to finish his theology in 1999. After his stint at the provincial curia of Saint Ezekiel in Quezon City, Brother Jakosalem was assigned in 2006 to the University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos community in Bacolod City.

A Seminary at the Crossroads

The Augustinian Recollect minor seminary, founded in 1948 at San Carlos, had been begotten from the unstable economic plight that involved the very precarious existence of Colegio de Santo Tomas-Recoletos. The consistent low enrollment of the Recollect fathers' secondary school had been a sword of Damocles on its continued existence. A *raison-d'être* of the formation house was the felt need to foment Filipino religious vocations and train aspirants who would in due time administer the growing number of Recollect colleges in the Philippines.

Unbeknownst to San Carlos parishioners and to countless aspirants to the religious habit of the Augustinian Recollect Order, the formation house has often been subject to intense soul-searching processes by its own administrators and their major superiors in Manila and Madrid. During its almost five decades of existence, the seminary was laid open to suppression, transfer and expansion in the wake of Vicariate-wide surveys and deliberations by its seminary formators and superiors.

Constitutional basis

The ultimate goal of a minor seminary, as decreed in Article V, No. 195 of the Recollect *Constitutions*, “is to help the aspirants discern their possible vocation more easily and to prepare them, by means of solid formation, to follow Christ with a generous and pure heart.” “Although other means,” the Recollect by-laws continue, “may be utilized to obtain this end, according to the circumstance of the various provinces, they should all go to great pains to maintain the minor seminary.”²⁵ The constitutional

²⁵*OAR Constitutions*, Article V, no. 195.

provision would be invoked time and again by staunch defenders of the minor seminary.

The pro-seminary stand would be strengthened by another Recollect document *Studium Sapientiae* promulgated in 1987 which declares: “The Church asks that the minor seminaries be maintained and encouraged.” The *Studium Sapientiae* further urges that “[Recollect] provinces should try, whenever possible, to support the minor seminaries when they have been established.”²⁶

Financial drain

It seemed a foregone conclusion that the existence of the minor seminary—or any Recollect seminary for that matter, whether in the Philippines or in Spain—definitely needed immense financial subvention from the coffers of Saint Nicholas province. What the young aspirants paid constituted a token fee, a mere drop in the bucket of the budgetary outlay of the seminary. Indeed the daily operational expenses of a formation house entailed tremendous drain on the financial resources of Saint Nicholas province.

First Recollect Congress (1994)

The financial drain was a vital issue stressed by Rafael E. Cabarles, superior of the Santo Tomas minor seminary in 1988-1994, in a position paper delivered at the *First OAR Vicariate Congress* at Baguio City on 11-15 April 1994. Its theme was “Journey in and with the Spirit of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines as Recoletos.” The unprecedented assembly of Augustinian Recollect superiors, university/ college presidents, school directors and delegates from various houses in the Philippines and Taiwan was chaired by Lauro V. Larlar of San Carlos City and graced by Prior General Javier M. Pipaón and Secretary General José Antonio Martínez Merino from Rome, Italy.²⁷ Father Cabarles told the assembly:

In our case, presently [1994] we charge ₱400.00 monthly. Dividing this by thirty days, we get ₱13.33 per day. Our budget for

²⁶*Studium Sapientiae*, nos. 140, 144.

²⁷Participants, in First Philippine OAR Vicariate Congress Bulletin, April-May 1994 (second issue) 2.

the food only per day for every seminarian is ₱35.00. That means we have to subsidize ₱21.67 for every seminarian or ₱650.10 monthly (₱6,501.00 in ten months). This does not include other expenses like the maintenance of the seminary.²⁸

Vicariate Commission (1981)

The evident drain on the fiscal resources of Saint Nicholas province was likewise a subject mentioned by the Vicariate Commission of 1981. The nine-man commission had been created on 11 November 1980 by the provincial council in Madrid. The council resolution in turn was in obeisance to the call made by the caputular fathers of the provincial chapter held in 1979 at Marcilla, Navarra: to set up a commission that would “study the present and future of the Vicariate of the Philippines, Guam and Taiwan in order to make the pertinent recommendations to the provincial council.”

The commission members were tasked “to investigate in general a wide range of topics pertinent to the present and future” of the Augustinian Recollect Vicariate of the Philippines and China which at that time included the parishes in Guam, USA. The commission then organized itself into three subcommittees: seminaries (formation), parishes and missions (pastoral ministry), and OAR schools (education). Thus in May 1981, after an exhaustive six-month work, the vicarial commission was able to come up with a lengthy final report that was “offered to the provincial council with the best intentions of helping them make pertinent policies and decisions for the betterment of this vicariate.”²⁹

²⁸Rafael E. CABARLES, *Position paper on Minor Seminary*, in *First OAR Vicariate Congress* (Baguio City 1994) 53-79 [hereafter *Minor Seminary*].

²⁹*1981 Vicariate Commission Final Report* (Manila 1981) 1. The Recollect Vicariate Commission representing the religious assigned to the formation, pastoral ministry and educational apostolate counted among its members four Filipinos (Emeterio D. Buñao, Lauro V. Larlar, Melquiades M. Modequillo, Faustino L. Paglinawan) and five Spaniards (Jesús N. Sobejano, Germán F. Chicote, José María L. Juango, Nicolás P. Salvatierra and its chairman Víctor Francisco Mallada. Divided into subcommittees, the members worked through questionnaires, reports, impartial evaluations of findings and general assemblies from January to May 1981.

Subcommittee on seminaries

The subcommittee on seminaries consisted of three members—Germán F. Chicote, José Ma. L. Juango, Lauro V. Larlar—tasked with assessing the situation of the houses of formation and bringing up recommendations “for maintaining or changing seminary-related policies.” Their findings which were incorporated to the Vicariate Commission’s final report quoted extensively the *Philippine Program for Priestly Formation* that had been enacted in 1980 by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines. The final report cites the episcopal document that declares as follows:

The best materials for the college seminary will come from the high school seminary. Hence, the bishops should be willing to incur the tremendous drain in financial and personal resources that such seminary entails, notwithstanding the fact that only a relatively small number of former high school seminarians are ordained priests. Apparently, their quality of formation makes up for the drain in diocesan personnel and finances entailed in high school seminary formation.³⁰

The vicarial commission further upheld the CBCP document’s forceful arguments favoring the continued existence of high school seminaries. It fully subscribes to the following arguments culled from same *1980 Philippine Program for Priestly Formation*:

It is in the high school seminary where natural human virtues, basic religious values, Christian behavior patterns, good study habits, community life orientation and appreciation for the priesthood are initially and solidly inculcated. During their young and highly formative years, the students are easily susceptible to personality formation and development.³¹

1981 survey favors the high school seminary

Two surveys conducted on all the Recollects in the Philippines drew responses consistently in favor of the continuance of the minor seminary. In the first survey dealing with wide-ranging topics and was conducted in February 1981 by the Recollect Vicariate

³⁰*Ibid.*, 36.

³¹*Ibid.*, 36-37.

Commission, 86 percent of the respondents overwhelmingly favored having a minor seminary. The Vicariate then totaled 87 members: 31 Filipinos and 56 non-Filipinos. Of the 87 religious, 65 (74 percent) answered the questionnaire that was mailed or personally handed out to them. The final report of the vicarial commission underscored the fact that the particular response—86 percent—constituted “the second highest percentage achieved by any single question of the entire questionnaire.”³² It augured well for the future of the minor seminary.

1995 special survey

On 20-28 February 1995, Father Enrico A. Silab, then prior of Saint Ezekiel Moreno Novitiate-Recoletos, was designated by then Vicar Provincial René F. Paglinawan to conduct a special survey in order to clarify once and for all the minor seminary issue. During that period, the San-Carlos born priest traveled to all the Augustinian Recollect houses and parishes in the Philippines to personally interview and assist the 67 respondents out of the total of 79 priests who were in the country and in foreign assignments.

Tasked to make the survey among the twenty-nine formands or theology students of the Recollect Formation Center at Alondras Street, Mira-Nila Homes, Tandang Sora Avenue, Quezon City, was Father Raul M. Buhay, fourth counselor of the vicarial council. The total number of respondents was 96: the sixty-seven religious residing in seminaries, convents and rectories in Luzon and the Visayas, and twenty-nine theology students.

The survey results once more showed another overwhelming majority that voted to continue the minor seminary operations. Seventy-nine religious or 82.29 percent voted to maintain it. Only seventeen respondents or 17.7 percent wanted to close it altogether. Sixty-five percent of the total number of Recollects surveyed came from the minor seminary; 35 percent were not trained thereat.³³

³²*Ibid.*, 14.

³³Raul M. BUHAY, *Selected Data from the Survey Results on the Minor Seminary Issue conducted on 20-28 February 1995* (Quezon City 1995) 1.

San Carlos City deemed inappropriate

The 1981 survey revealed an overwhelming unfavorable opinion on the location of the minor seminary in San Carlos City, deeming it inappropriate. Majority of the 76 religious surveyed (54 percent) considered the location inappropriate. Of this percentage, Filipinos composed 28 percent; the Spanish Recollects, 26 percent. The survey reported that the younger group looked at the present site with disfavor.³⁴ The transfer of the minor seminary to Cebu City was preferred by 38 percent of those who opposed to its San Carlos location. Twenty-six percent proposed either Cebu or Bacolod, while eleven percent specifically opted for Bacolod.

The 1981 Vicariate Commission had thoroughly weighed the pros and cons of the appropriateness of San Carlos City, Negros Occidental, “a second-class city with a total population of approximately 100,000, of whom less than one-half live in the city proper and the rest distributed in a large number of haciendas and barrios.” In addition, the nine-man study group discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the seminary site. The following is the commission’s assessment on its accessibility:

San Carlos is connected by second-class roads (partly cemented or asphalted) to Bacolod City and Dumaguete City. The distance from San Carlos to Bacolod is 154 kilometers and to Dumaguete approximately the same distance. By bus it takes around three and a half hours to travel to Bacolod and four hours to Dumaguete. It is serviced by Ceres Liner, and some other smaller bus companies. There are two or three boats daily to Toledo City in Cebu City (sic).

Lately, a regular boat service to Manila has been started. It takes 27 hours. The boat makes the trip once a week. There is also small private airport but there is no plane service. It is used only by private planes and for emergencies.³⁵

The nine-man vicarial commission then points out that the progressive city of “San Carlos can be considered as the geographical center of the Visayas.”

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵*Vicariate Commission Final Report*, 37-38.

Seminary facilities

In addition, the 1981 final report of the same vicarial commission described in detail the facilities and the physical set-up of the minor seminary:

The building where the seminary is located is a three-story cement structure. Only the second and third floors are used exclusively for the seminarians. The first floor is used for classrooms. It is well-ventilated and sanitary. It contains the dormitory and the rooms of the religious, the dining room, kitchen and study hall. The maximum capacity of the building is from 70 to 80 seminarians. There is also a clean, spacious chapel that can accommodate more than two hundred persons. In the second floor of the old building are located the television room and the recreation hall. There is a complete dental clinic and a music room for *rondalla*.

The beautiful and spacious grounds include a football field, two basketball courts and a volleyball court. There is also a space for gardening. Naturally, these facilities are used by [extern] students but at different hours.

The 1981 Vicariate Commission then assessed the medical and dental facilities that San Carlos City offered to the aspirants and formators of Santo Tomas. It took note of the presence of hospitals: the city public hospital and the San Carlos Planters' and Laborers' Hospital located at the northern entrance of the *población*. Understandably, the commission report did not mention the private hospital for SCMCI employees and their dependents located inside the compound. The city hospital was described to have "very poor facilities." The medical services of the San Carlos Planters' and Laborers' Hospital which "did not possess many things that could be expected of it" were used by minor seminary students and formators.

Santo Tomas had an unidentified official doctor who likewise took care of ill seminary students. According to the final report, his services were deemed good, but they depended mostly on his personal dedication. A school dentist likewise served the seminary. He reported for work two hours a day, three times a week. The dental facilities of the school clinic were excellent.

Advantages and disadvantages

To facilitate the work of the policy makers of Saint Nicholas province, the 1981 Vicariate Commission enumerated the various advantages as well as disadvantages of maintaining a formation house in a small city like San Carlos:

The atmosphere is quiet and peaceful. Life is simpler, less complicated than in larger cities. The environment is cleaner and healthier. More fresh air and life closer to nature, with all the benefits that it carries. The price of food, especially fish, that entails the largest expense in the maintenance of the seminary, is considerably lower than in other places.

The most important disadvantage is the difficulty in traveling. Many possible candidates, especially from far places, are discouraged when they are told of the location of our minor seminary. That is why most of the seminarians come from nearby provinces. The seminarians are also affected in their studies by the lack of interest shown by outside students with whom they attend classes. In small places the students are easy-going, with little concern for their studies and their grades. This is increased by the lack of facilities at home and poor study habits of the outsiders. They are also less refined than big-city students. All these things influence the seminarians greatly in their behavior, in their interest in studies and in their over-all performance.

Among the final proposals made by the Vicariate Commission was to definitely maintain the minor seminary, “but it should be relocated.” Cebu City was the first choice among the preferred sites cited in the report. The Commission further adopted the view “that the seminary be attached to a high school for non-seminarians (co-educational), but that the seminarians attend classes with male students solely.”

1995 survey

The special survey conducted in February 1995 revealed 46.83 percent of the 79 respondents—priests and theology students—who expressly wished to continue the operations of a minor seminary wanted to maintain the status quo, *i.e.*, San Carlos City. Preference for Cebu City was expressed by 33.3 percent. Those who wanted it relocated to Bacolod City constituted 6.25

percent. Metro Manila was considered a fitting location by a mere 4.17 percent.³⁶ A total of 42 respondents or 53.1 percent wanted the seminary out of San Carlos City.

Of the 67 Recollect fathers surveyed, 25 still preferred San Carlos. Twenty respondents opted for Cebu as a more appropriate site for the seminary. Twenty religious wanted it at Bacolod. Only two would rather have it anywhere in Metro Manila. In sum, forty-two priests (62.68 percent) again felt San Carlos was not a suitable site for a minor seminary. Of the 25 Recollect assigned to formation houses at San Carlos, Baguio, Antipolo and Quezon City, only seven formators favored the present location. Eighteen preferred to transfer the seminary to Bacolod.

Preference for Bacolod

The choice of Bacolod City as a minor seminary site was not without deep historical antecedents. As early as 1963, the Santo Tomas seminary administration headed by Father Antonio M. Ausejo (1923-1993) pointed out to the vicar provincial and his councilors in Manila the countless benefits and advantages that transferring the seminary to Bacolod would entail. For one, the seminary population was growing by leaps and bounds, and there were no available accommodations for its numerous applicants.

In a long letter dated 14 April 1963 the father rector expressed in the name of the Santo Tomas community the unanimous preference for the capital city of Negros Occidental as an excellent site for the formation house of the Order:

We, the fathers of this community convinced of the urgent need to give more capacity to the minor seminary—as we have several times pointed out to the venerable council—consider the selection of the place of highest import. Now it seems possible to choose between adding an annex to the actual edifice at San Carlos and constructing a new building at Bacolod where apparently a land parcel of three or four hectares is being offered to us.

After considering both sites, the pros and cons that each one offers to our future projects, we the fathers consider Bacolod more advantageous for several reasons. The land offered to us carries a

³⁶BUHAY, *Selected Data*, 1.

condition that we build a chapel in it and we permit the faithful of Gonzaga Subdivision to attend mass. The site is not populated for now, but it shall be so, as there are already 400 families who have applied for houses and lots in that site. Since the landowners themselves build the houses and impose certain conditions on those applying for lots, we are sure that families who would live there should be at least middle-class. Our guarantee is that we shall have good neighbors.³⁷

Father Ausejo then informed the vicar provincial that many religious congregations had already set up convents and schools at the capital of Negros Occidental. He cites other advantages offered by Bacolod:

Bacolod is a progressive city and proof of this is the abundance of firms, banks, colleges and even religious houses that are being established there in these last years. It has been many years since similar offers were made to us and we always refused. Perhaps in deference to our fathers who had worked hard in this place, they preferred us to the other Orders that did not hesitate to accept what we had refused. A proof of this is the subdivision of Mr. Montelibano who several times offered us land that had been sold to other [religious] communities following our refusal. These have built their colleges and churches now considered the best in Bacolod, to wit, La Salle, Saint Scholastica and the Redemptorist fathers. It has been only a year since—convinced of the convenience of the place—we decided to acquire the University of Negros Occidental despite the fact that there are already several colleges we have to compete with. Had we the minor seminary in Bacolod, this would be benefited in many instances by our university there without having to suffer from the inconveniences stemming undoubtedly from not having our communities clustered.³⁸

³⁷CABARLES, *Centenary*, 69, note 113. The seminary administrator further adds: “The distance from Bacolod [city proper] is relatively short: it only a few minutes by car. Thus separated from the city, we would enjoy the advantages with respect to market, doctors, transport, learning centers, etc. We shall avoid the disadvantages we would have to suffer were the minor seminary inside the city. The land offered to us has a value of at least ₱400,000 (Ps6M). Besides, the conditions imposed on us don’t seem onerous. If these deal with allowing the faithful to assist at religious services, this is what we have been doing in other houses where we did not acquire the lot or the building for free.”

³⁸*Ibid.*, 69-70, note 113.

A similar appeal to Madrid

A letter was also dispatched to Madrid by Father Ausejo to apprise the provincial and his councilors about the unanimous decision of the Santo Tomas fathers to recommend Bacolod City as the new seminary location. This communication bore the same date as that of the letter to the vicar provincial in Manila—14 April 1963. The Santo Tomas prior informed his superiors in Madrid about the urgent need to construct a new building in view of the projected increase of seminary population.

San Tomas could only accommodate 35 aspirants. Twenty seminarians, Father Ausejo said, had been sent in 1962 to San Jose Seminary to pursue their secondary schooling. In that same year thirty-seven new aspirants had been admitted to Santo Tomas thus raising the seminary population to 41. These students had been accommodated with some difficulty, despite the remodeling done to their sleeping quarters and bathrooms. Sixty was the projected population for the opening of classes in June 1963. This number would certainly “create a difficult situation for us,” says the rector, especially with respect to bathrooms.

Father Ausejo reiterated the Santo Tomas community’s requests made in January and June 1962. They had unanimously resolved on those two occasions that Bacolod City would be much more convenient and acceptable than San Carlos City, if the terms imposed by donors of the Bacolod land parcel would be not detrimental to the interests of the Recollect religious community.

Dearth of personnel

Another perennial problem that beset the minor seminary was the inadequacy of personnel. This was coupled with the fact that there is a dual apostolate in Santo Tomas—formation and education. Such set-up was acknowledged by then Vicar Provincial Father Victor L. Lluch where he pointed out in his 1994 annual report that “this community of priests are not only engaged in the

formation of minor seminarians but also as administrators of the high school department.”³⁹

The 1981 Vicariate Commission had earlier observed that the Santo Tomas fathers took care of “all the activities of the seminary, including spiritual direction and the Latin classes.” They were dedicated as well to the school administration, besides teaching Religion classes and some other subjects.

At its inception, the fathers of Santo Tomas even handled such subjects as History, English and Spanish. When the seminary was opened in 1948, some priests had set aside time to impart Latin lessons to the aspirants. A prefect of discipline was always assigned to supervise the seminary students.

Formation or education apostolate?

At the First OAR Vicariate Congress in 1994, Father Rafael Cabarles confirmed that all these “confusing dual responsibilities” of formators of Santo Tomas began in 1948 and continued up to the present. Is Santo Tomas really a house of formation or a high school? To what apostolate or what sector does a CST-R father belong? To the formators’ group or to the educational apostolate?

“Problems arise,” the erstwhile rector of Santo Tomas said in his position paper, “because there are no clear-cut job descriptions for the fathers assigned in CST-R.” “These problems are not felt by the fathers in Baguio or in Mira-Nila because they have only one apostolate, purely formation.”

1994 Congress proposals

Father Cabarles told the Congress delegates that it would be ideal “to create two distinct communities” in Santo Tomas. What he in fact proposed was to allow priests assigned to the formation and education apostolates to reside together as one religious community under one roof. As a pattern for his proposal, he cited the set-up in the Recollect communities of Cebu and Manila where

³⁹Victor L. LLUCH, *Report on the Present Status of the Vicariate of the Philippines and China*, 8 April 1994 (Quezon City 1994) 9v.

religious working in the school and in the parish live as a single community under one prior. However, the *patente* of the religious sent by the vicar provincial to Santo Tomas should indicate his specific appointment—seminary or high school. That there must be a superior who is head of the community of religious separately working in their high school and in the seminary was additionally proposed.

The Vicariate Congress delegates proceeded to draft the minor seminary proposal on 13 April 1994. Two days later, they voted on the proposal that “the CST-R Community shall be composed of qualified and competent members whose functions are clearly defined according to its double apostolate (formation and education).” There was an overwhelming vote for its approval. Thirty-seven delegates expressed views definitely favoring the dual apostolate set-up of Santo Tomas. Six religious voted for its disapproval; one abstention was recorded.

Role of Santo Tomas seminary

The postwar policy for all aspirants to the Recollect habit was for them to undergo minor seminary training and postulancy at Santo Tomas. After a year or two of secondary education or Latin courses for high school graduates, the Recollect seminarians were sent to San Jose Seminary run by the Society of Jesus. This policy was started during the triennium of Joaquín S. González (1900-1978) as vicar provincial in 1952-1955.

These aspirants were deemed minor seminarians although they were high school graduates. They stayed for three more years before admission to the AB philosophy program of San Jose Seminary.⁴⁰ At the same time, other Recollect seminarians were taking up AB courses at the San Carlos Major Seminary of the Vincentian fathers in Cebu City. Vicar Provincial Moisés L. López (1908-1991) allowed Recollect students who were refused admission in the Jesuit seminary to study at the Vincentian seminary.

⁴⁰CABARLES, *Minor Seminary*, 59.

Germán F. Chicote OAR

The Recollect seminarians of San Jose Seminary were directly supervised by Jesuits. But a Recollect priest in Manila was named prefect of discipline. It was Germán F. Chicote who had earlier been prefect of Santo Tomas seminarians.⁴¹ The various activities of the Recollect aspirants' weekend stay at San Sebastian Convent were under the Chicote's supervision who replaced Simeón S. Asensio in 1961.

Chicote stayed in that post even after his designation as high school principal of San Sebastian College in 1963. He remained prefect of discipline until Seminario Mayor-Recoletos was canonically set up in 1965. Two years after, he was named rector of the Baguio seminary for the 1967-1970 triennium

The prefect's duties

Among the prefect's duties was to have the seminarians fetched from San Jose Seminary for the weekend at San Sebastian convent. The regular visits included such activities as communal recitation of the rosary, fraternal meal, basketball game and talks on topics like History of Augustinian Recollects. These visits to San Sebastian were made every Sunday. The prefect personally returned them to the Jesuit seminary in the afternoon in a San Sebastian school bus.⁴² In summer Father Chicote usually took the seminarians to Baguio City and resided for a month at Casiciaco-Recoletos. The young aspirants underwent training on religious and common life.

Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary

During the term of Father Candelas M. Moriones (1912-1982) as provincial, Casiciaco-Recoletos—the Order's retreat house and summer vacation residence at Baguio City since 1953—

⁴¹*Interview with Father Germán F. Chicote*, 22 March 1995, Quezon City.

⁴²*Interview with Father Germán F. Chicote*, 22 March 1995, Quezon City.

was canonically erected as a seminary in June 1965.⁴³ Seminario Mayor-Recoletos was the name given to the new formation house. Thirty years later, on 16 July 1995 the name was changed to Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary. In its initial years, the college seminary offered the government-recognized AB Classical with philosophy as major.

Before long, Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary gathered under one roof all the Recollect aspirants. They had studied at the different seminaries located in three cities: Santo Tomas of San Carlos City, San Jose of Quezon City and San Carlos of Cebu City. Among the pioneer batch of the college seminary were Regino Z. Bangcaya, Rafael E. Cabarles, Delfin A. Castillo and Pedro A. Escanillas, all Recollect priests today.

The Baguio formation house shortly after started accepting high school graduates who skipped seminary training at Santo Tomas. CST-R “lost its nature as a minor seminary/postulancy in which all aspirants to the Order had to pass.”⁴⁴ Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary had effectively absorbed the functions of Santo Tomas.

Another Congress proposal

Among the pressing needs of the times was the restructuring of high school seminaries. This was the urgent call made by the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (Title XII, Section 2, Art. 76): “The CBCP shall study the possibility of restructuring high school seminaries and strengthening pre-college ones.” In response to the challenges and call of the times, it was proposed by Father Rafael Cabarles that only third-year and fourth-year high school students be admitted to Santo Tomas, being deemed “psychologically more mature” and old enough to decide their future.⁴⁵

Reactions to the Cabarles position paper were voiced out by two delegates. The first reactor was Joseph Philip I. Trayvilla,

⁴³Agapito C. STA. ROMANA, *Seminario Mayor-Recoletos, Baguio City*, in Emilio JARUDA JR. [ed.], *Commemorative Album for the 1988-1991 Triennium* (Quezon City 1991) 89.

⁴⁴Cabarles, *Minor Seminary*, 55.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 58.

Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary prior in 1991-1994 and provincial councilor [1994-1997] in Madrid, who stressed the sentiments of some sectors as regards the documents cited by Cabarles. He inquired whether the documents really prevented the possible closure of the minor seminary.⁴⁶ Granted that the minor seminary be maintained but limited only to third and fourth year students, Trayvilla sought clarification as to where the aspirants would come from. He then asked whether the situation would not limit the geographical distribution of aspirants going to Casiciaco Recoletos-Seminary if seminarians originated mainly from one place or region.

Another reactor was Cristituto A. Palomar, then national vocation director, who shared that the objective of the minor seminary “should not be to force high school boys to react to God’s calling in an adult manner, but to make them heed God’s initial call, develop it, perfect and preserve it, and grow with it.”⁴⁷

Congress recommendation

On 15 April 1995 thirty-seven of the forty-four delegates of the First OAR Vicariate Congress had favorably voted on the final recommendation on the minor seminary issue. The recommendation actually contained three proposals and obtained the same number of votes. The first proposal specified the formation and education apostolates of Colegio de Santo Tomas-Recoletos. The second plan affirmed that “for purposes of identity and privacy a new building shall be erected to house the minor seminary.” In no uncertain terms, the third proposal pointed out that only third-year and fourth-year high school students were “to be accepted as aspirants at the Santo Tomas formation house.” As earlier stated, the outcome of the vote was the following: 37 in favor, 6 against and one abstention.⁴⁸

⁴⁶*Bulletin of the First Philippine OAR Vicariate Congress (Second Issue, April-May 1994)* 11.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 16.

March 1995 vicarial council meeting

Father Rene F. Paglinawan, then major superior of the Augustinian Recollects in the Philippines and China, had convoked a meeting of the vicarial council on 21 March 1995.⁴⁹ The vicarial councilors of the 1994-1997 triennium—Fathers Victor Lluch, Lauro Larlar, Antonio Ramón Palacios—and council secretary Raul Buhay, convened at their mother-house in Quezon City to deliberate on important matters that included the minor seminary issue.

At the outset, Father Paglinawan conveyed to the policy-making body the results of the February 1995 minor seminary survey. According to the minutes of the vicarial meeting, the vicar provincial initially reminded the council members that the survey was one of the several bases of their deliberations on the issue. After noting the overwhelming majority's preference for the retention of the operation of the minor seminary (79 out of 96), he forthwith informed them that 42 of the 79 wanted it out of San Carlos City.

The vicar provincial then raised some questions as to the wisdom of transferring it to a better known location like Cebu City. This possible move “may not actually guarantee that the problem regarding its administration will have its solution,” said the vicar. The transfer to another site would entail a much bigger investment and would naturally require permission—as in 1948 when the minor seminary was founded—from higher authorities that included the prior provincial in Madrid, the prior general in Rome and the appropriate dicastery of the Roman Curia.

A new edifice for Santo Tomas

After a very thorough deliberation on the issue, the vicar provincial and his councilors decided to push through with the original recommendations of the *First OAR Vicariate Congress*.

⁴⁹Raul M. BUHAY OAR, *Minutes of the 9th Vicarial Council Meeting*, 21 March 1995. With the vicar's express permission, Father Buhay, then secretary of the vicarial council, furnished me with a copy of the minutes which dealt solely with the Santo Tomas minor seminary project.

In effect, they approved the construction of another seminary building at San Carlos City. The new structure rose from the newly-acquired lot at the Santo Tomas compound between the soccer field and Endrina Street, fronting the public cemetery of the city government. The seminary came to be known as Santo Tomas de Villanueva Formation House-Recoletos. In view of the possible phase-out of the minor seminary, the vicarial council further decided that the seminary structure should be strong and spacious enough to allow any expansion in the event that Colegio de Santo Tomas-Recoletos would be converted into a college in the future. The letter of instruction regarding this new project was coursed through the Augustinian Recollect Vicariate's secretariat of formation.

Two subsequent council meetings

In another meeting held on 8 April 1995 at Quezon City, Father Raul Buhay informed the vicarial council that he had met with the formators of Santo Tomas. He told them about the council's decision to commence the preliminary steps for construction of a building. The councilors suggested that the vicar seek the prior provincial's required approval of the plan in order to proceed to the next steps in the minor seminary project.⁵⁰

On 22 July 1995 Father Lino H. Agunod, school director and prior of Santo Tomas in 1994-1997, joined the council meeting to shed light on the initial proposed building design prepared earlier by Engineer John Marlon Traspadillo of San Carlos City. It was Architect Ricardo Romulo who drew up the final blueprints and brought the construction to a close. The new building was blest on 7 December 1996.

Epilogue

Over 800 youths entered the portals of the minor seminary in 1948-1995. The number includes those who took up secondary education at Santo Tomas as well as high school graduates

⁵⁰ Raul M. BUHAY, *Minutes of the 10th Vicarial Council Meeting*, 8 April 1995.

from other learning institutions who all lived the lifestyle and spirituality of the sons of Saint Augustine and the Augustinian Recollection. Solely fifty-three aspirants were eventually ordained as Augustinian Recollect priests.⁵¹ As the Gospel says, many are called but few are chosen.

The Santo Tomas minor seminary had been around for over half a century now. A homecoming would be one ideal occasion for its hundreds of young men, who tried in their own time to discern the Lord's call, to come together and share memories of their spiritual and academic formation. They could recount the unforgettable happy days of high school life and reminisce the joys and fears of learning Latin syntax, lexicon, Cicero, Caesar, Saint Augustine and Saint Jerome.

They could hearken once more to the melodious Marian chants *Ave Maris Stella* and *Salve Regina* and relive those very precious moments with the Lord of the Eucharist during Sunday Benediction, chanting *O Salutaris hostia* and *Tantum ergo*. They could recall those noisy recreation periods and the mealtime babel after *Benedicamus Domino*.

With fondness, erstwhile students of Santo Tomas seminary could recall their rectors, prefects of discipline, confessors, mentors and class beadies and the culinary preparations of Omê, Kulás and Eping, the school drivers Berting and Fred, the carpenter Regino, and of course the rarely smiling but hardworking Pedro Montejo who appeared to have been around since time immemorial.

⁵¹CABARLES, *Minor Seminary*, 53. We have supplied the name of Father Federico S. Gregorio OAR, whose name does not appear in Appendix II of the position paper among those aspirants who entered in 1965. Father Gregorio had finished his secondary education at University of San Jose-Recoletos 1963. During his postulancy period (1965-1968) at Santo Tomas, he took up BSEEd courses at Colegio de Santa Rita.

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Notes for Biyaheng Recoletos 400/ Saint Ezekiel Moreno Pilgrimage- Caravan (1 May-9 June 2006)¹

After what has been said and done, all I can add is that the Augustinian Recollect priests, brothers, novices, prenovices, nuns, sisters, Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity [SARF] members, school employees and former OAR seminarians had pitched in their no small share, contribution and support that led to the resounding success of the Biyaheng Recoletos 400-Saint Ezekiel Moreno Pilgrimage-Caravan.

I know whereof I speak; I was there and I was an eyewitness to all the all-out support of the Recollect religious communities. Almost every support given to the Biyaheng Recoletos 400 Caravan was done in kind. So we have to rectify erroneous perception of “minimal support” extended by OAR communities and “even religious ourselves,” because it is completely baseless. On hindsight, on the contrary, I realized that the support given by Recoletos communities was all-out, overwhelming. It has dawned

¹This is a revised edition of the article written a few days after the historic 40-day pilgrimage/caravan whose motley group of tireless *biyaheros*[travelers] visited cathedrals, parochial churches, conventual chapel, hospitals, cemeteries, rectories, monasteries, schools, dormitories in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, and brought Almighty God’s message of hope, forgiveness, compassion and love everywhere. It was posted at [www.recoletos.ph/article/article view/431/1/40/](http://www.recoletos.ph/article/article%20view/431/1/40/). For more chronicles written by various authors, you can read the article *Biyaheng Recoletos*. A 40-Day Nationwide Pilgrimage, in *The Recoletos Observer*, vol. 7, no. 2 (April-June 2006) 12-15, 22-28.

on me lately how the OAR communities and individual religious did their best to make the pilgrimage caravan successful. Such amazing support was not trumpeted from rooftops or flaunted in the papers, internet, TV or radio. But it was there all the way, all throughout the forty days and forty nights.

So I have to set the record straight. I have to identify those Recollect priests, brothers, seminarians and SARF members who did their best to make this pilgrimage-caravan—headed by the healing priest Fr. Ferdinand “Soy” Hernando—a huge success.

UNO-R Bacolod City.

Definitely, there was visible and abundant support all throughout and I tell you it was not “minimal” at all. Fr. Tony Limchaypo of UNO-R [University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos] coordinated the successful visit of the pilgrim image and relic of St Ezekiel Moreno in Bacolod City. He met us as we came out of the Dumangas (Iloilo)-Bacolod ro-ro [roll on-roll off] vessel at the Bredco pier with jeeploads of welcomers, including the smiling SARF members of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino Parish. The intermittent rain accompanied our convoy on that late afternoon to Talisay City, a few minutes away.

The cooperative staff of the UNO-R Campus Ministry Office under Fr. Jay Parilla and other university personnel helped us unload our baggage from the ro-ro vessel and load them at the waiting Ceres and UNO-R school buses. Later in the night, in behalf of the Recollect community, Fr. Limchaypo accommodated the caravan members at the retreat house in the far end of the university campus and at the guests’ quarters beside the convent. There were breakfast meals and a lunch for two days at the university canteen. In the evening after our arrival in Bacolod many young people attended the healing mass at the University Oratory; that was proof enough of the good information dissemination of the Recoletos Caravan 400 by the university coordinator.

Monastery of St. Ezekiel Moreno-Bacolod City

The Augustinian Recollect contemplative nuns of Saint Ezekiel Moreno Monastery in Tangub, Bacolod City, likewise did their part. They sent three personnel to the Bacolod cathedral and UNO-R oratory to help promote devotion to St Ezekiel through their distribution and sale of medals with relics, *estampitas*, triptychs on the Recollect Saint and novena pamphlets at the entrances of those two divine temples. Retreat Master Fr. German Chicote permitted the Recollect nuns to have a healing session with Fr. Soy at the chapel. This took place in the afternoon following the holy Mass at the Bacolod cathedral. Shortly afterward, the nuns had a fraternal dialogue with and offered merienda to the small group of *biyaheros* Fr. Soy, Rev. Ian, Bro. Agustin, Edwin, Miriam, Lovely, Romanillos and Bro. Jojo Jadulco.

Recoletos Communications, Inc.

The RCI supported the Recoletos Caravan in every way possible. Fr. Boyax Jaranilla was with us from Antipolo to Balanga and Dagupan. He was there again in Iloilo City, Bacolod City, Talisay City, San Carlos City and Dumaguete City. At a cathedral in Luzon, he was organist and “catcher”. Incredibly, he likewise took turns taking videodocumentary and still photos! Yes, he made those superb and unforgettable video footages with that ultra-expensive videocam. His ever reliable assistant—Squeegee Jakosalem—took color photos. That RCI videocam that was entrusted to the caravan came in handy after both left Dagupan for Manila. Likewise for the use during the whole Biyaheng Recoletos 400 period, Fr. Leander Barrot generously lent his digital camera to Rev. Ian Espartero and to some prenovice who was not careful enough.

The RCI-owned LCD multimedia projector that aided us no end as we showed “Biyaheng Recoletos” videodocumentary in every church, cathedral, convent, social hall and even in a hospital in Alaminos City as well as in a mortuary chapel in Vigan City. The RCI books on OAR history and on Saint Ezekiel which were given free to archbishops, bishops, parish priests, nuns, religious sisters

and university libraries, in order to promote a more profound awareness about the Order of Augustinian Recollects as well as a deeper knowledge of and popular devotion to St. Ezekiel. Many lay people also purchased copies of said books. The proceeds of the book sale were later donated to the dwindling pilgrimage fund. Tonette Salcedo of RCI faithfully uploaded our chronicles in the Recoletos website.

San Sebastian College-Manila

The prior Fr. Dionisio Selma and the San Sebastian-Manila religious community made us feel at home, to say the least. We were treated to a refreshing *merienda* upon arrival from our Malolos-Manila trip. This hot-afternoon journey took only one hour and a half, thanks to the six motorcycle-riding alumni of San Sebastian College-Manila who adroitly directed the traffic and facilitated the itinerary of our convoy.

More “Baste” alumni gave their support as well. In Cabanatuan City Danilo V. Fausto, known for DVF carabao milk everywhere, showed the first-timers among us how tasty and nutritious were his dairy products. But it was former Pangasinan Governor Oscar Orbos who—together with Mrs. Sonia Roco—deserved the pilgrims’ eternal gratitude. “Ka Oca” and his wife coordinated our successful sojourn in Pangasinan, which included church and hospital visits, hotel accommodations, meals, TV coverage, media interviews, etc.

Once again, at the historic San Sebastian Basilica there was a holy Mass with Fr. Ferdinand “Soy” Hernando as main celebrant and Fr. Crisostomo Garnica, Fr. Lino Agunod, Fr. Paulino Dacanay, Fr. Cornelio Moral, Fr. Edcel Celiz and Fr. Leonardo Pauligue as concelebrants. Deacon Rev. Anthony Ireneo was there too to assist the celebrants. A sumptuous dinner was served at the St. Ezekiel Moreno Hall after the Eucharistic Sacrifice for the SARF members, incoming novices, prenovices and other caravan personnel.

Colegio de Santo Tomas-Recoletos in San Carlos City

Father Pete Escanillas deftly coordinated the San Carlos Diocese visit after so short a notice. He and Father Nemesio Tolentin concelebrated with Fr. Soy in that May 27 anticipated Mass and distributed Holy Communion to hundreds of parishioners.

The three meals, sponsored by the CST-R community, energized us in our sojourn in San Carlos City, Negros Occidental. The accommodations at Santo Tomas Formation House were unmatched, at least for the lucky ones who were lodged at the air-conditioned rooms in the Fathers' quarters. On top of it all, our sullied clothes were washed and pressed in the nick of time and the clean and neat ones were available shortly before we left for Dumaguete on May 28. Fr. Escanillas even called up the computer technician who came to repair and clean our laptops then infested with viruses and worms, unwittingly downloaded from internet cafés in northern Luzon.

Casiciaco Recoletos-Seminary in Baguio City

The Casiciaco Recoletos fathers, headed by Fr. Bernard Amparado, provided the caravan pilgrims with board and lodging on those two cool nights and three days in the City of Pines. Fr. Jose Ernil Almayo, Fr. Don Besana and Fr. Radni Caparas concelebrated with Fr. Soy in the healing Mass. And we must bear in mind the free and quick laundry! When the L-300 van of St. Ezekiel Moreno Novitiate-Antipolo overheated along Naguilian Road en route to San Fernando City, La Union, on May 6, it was Fr. Almayo who at once rushed to the site and brought lunch and drinks for the famished drivers Michael and Bro. Agustin Culaton.

San Nicolas Parish in Talisay City (Negros Occidental)

The UNO-R Talisay fathers and guests were all out for us. How could we forget the warm hospitality extended by the prior Fr. Francisco Antonio, Fr. James Bumangabang, Fr. Hernando Coja and Fr. Glynn Ortega? The hundreds (over a thousand perhaps?) of parishioners who attended the healing Mass was

evidence enough of the fine coordination and support the Talisay Recollects had done for the pilgrimage-caravan. Fr James and Fr. Glynn concelebrated in the holy Mass. The lay ministers and SARF members of St. Nicholas of Tolentino Parish did their job with flying colors. The *merienda* before the Mass, dinner and cool atmosphere at the kumbento constituted a welcome fare for our starved and exhausted bodies.

Our Lady of the Abandoned Parish of Valencia, Neg. Oriental

Fr. Niño Cesar Ruiz and Fr. Ronel Gealon of Valencia, Negros Oriental, hauled off a great number of their parishioners to the Dumaguete mega-event. Bishop John Du, Father Soy, Fr. Niño, Fr. Ronel, Fr. Popoy Estioko and many diocesan priests concelebrated in the holy Mass for over two thousand devotees. Valencia religious community helped promote Saint Ezekiel's 100th death anniversary and devotion through their colorful T-shirts which sold like hotcakes. The church leaders of Our Lady of the Abandoned Parish treated us to an unforgettable lunch—with the ubiquitous *lechon* —at the Lamberto Macias Sports Complex on May 29.

Fr. Boyax Jaranilla coordinated with the Catholic radio station of Dumaguete City for the one-hour interview on the objectives of the pilgrimage and OAR history with Fr. Soy and Prof. Romanillos.

University of San Jose-Recoletos in Cebu City

The unforgettable hospitality and warm welcome offered by the Recoletos de Cebu on 2 June 2006 were beyond compare. The USJ-R drum-and-bugle corps inside a school bus raucously met us as we got out of the Tagbilaran-Cebu fast-craft ferry on that balmy mid-morning at the Cebu City pier. There was the youthful USJ-R Campus Minister Fr. Dexter Palagtiosa who brought more sunshine to our St. Ezekiel Moreno healing caravan-pilgrimage from the beginning up to the end of our Cebu sojourn. In a school bus we untangled ourselves out of the traffic snarl in that bustling

Visayan capital. Three days earlier, a USJ-R bus had fetched the baggage for Cebu and Mindanao legs and had taken them from the Argao port to Talavera House of Prayer. From there, we took the ro-ro vessel to Loon in Bohol for our Tagbilaran City activities.

A “banquet” awaited us at the cool Fathers’ Comedor and Sala de Recreo for it was the 47th birthday of the prior Fr. Constantino Real. Fr. Leopoldo “Popoy” Estioko, Fr. Urbano “Banoy” Galanido, Fr. Anthony Morillo, Fr. Dexter and Rev. Jose Joel Nayga joined Fr. Soy in the healing Mass at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel parish church on that same afternoon of the 2nd day of June, the 135th anniversary (1871) of the priestly ordination of St. Ezekiel in Manila. It was already evening when we headed south to Barangay Quiot and found rest at the Talavera House of Prayer.

Talavera House of Prayer in Cebu City

The Talavera community of Augustinian Recollect Sisters and lay personnel did everything humanly possible so that our three-day sojourn would not be wanting in anything. They even provided internet services for those of us in the media documentation committee. The air-conditioned rooms of Talavera were indeed a great respite for our fatigued bodies. We must not cast into oblivion the laundry services done for us there. On June 4, Fr. Soy celebrated the Pentecost Sunday Mass for the caravan core group, Talavera religious sisters, personnel, nursing students of Holy Name University-Tagbilaran and neighbors.

Our Lady of Consolation Parish at Laray, Talisay City (Cebu)

Fr Domingo Saladaga, Fr. Rouel Sia, Fr Federico Gregorio and Rev. Jose Joel Nayga had only open arms for us at the Our Lady of Consolation parish church on June 3. Despite their busy schedule of Masses in various chapels of Laray parish celebrating their fiestas, Fr. Gregorio and Fr. Sia were there to welcome us and offer the Consolation parish church for our conferences on OAR history and on St. Ezekiel’s life and miracles. Hundreds of parishioners and devotees waited for Fr. Soy’s holy Mass and

healing session with the proverbial patience of Job. The native snacks and drinks served by the Laray community at the parish social hall did refresh every caravan member.

Delegates from the Provincialate

We remember Fr. Cornelio Moral and Fr. Edgar “Egay” Tubio [fresh from his mission in Sierra Leone, West Africa] who joined the Biaheng Recoletos 400 on May 2 at Olongapo City and concelebrated with Bishop Florentino Lavarias, Fr. Soy [main celebrant] and the diocesan and Columban priests of the Diocese of Iba. The surprising presence of Fr. Moral and Fr. Tubio proved to be a great boost to our effort in the caravan’s initial stage.

Secular Augustinian Recollects of Antipolo City

The SARF members of Antipolo City headed by Bro. Edwin Ruiz must never be left unmentioned. From Antipolo City they trekked with the convoy on May 1 to Balanga, Bataan, aided the Biaheng Recoletos 400 Caravan members in the healing session and in the sale of St. Ezekiel images, T-shirts and books. With his Crosswind vehicle, Bro. Edwin replenished the ever-ebbing supplies of St. Ezekiel images, novenas, estampitas (in Filipino, Cebuano and English) in Baguio, Angeles and Cabanatuan.

Other SARF members were Sisters Esther Wong, Jaena Lascano, Evelyn Balingit, and Brother Jun Martinez. Bro. Edwin, his better-half Sis. Miriam and Sis. Lovely Morales later flew to Iloilo and returned to Manila from Bacolod. At the Iloilo Airport, somebody saw “Kuya” Edwin carrying on his back a balikbayan box of images. Bro. Edwin further arranged the radio interview of Rev. Ian Espartero as well as the TV interview of Prof. Romanillos in Angeles City.

Sis. Delia Vega, Bro. Edwin and Sis. Miriam, who have been indubitably expert catchers of those slain by the Holy Spirit “since time immemorial,” joined the concluding Cagayan de Oro-Malaybalay-Davao-General Santos leg and assisted us in every way possible. Sis. Delia’s kin treated some caravan members to a

great dinner at Davao City. All this was done at no extra cost nor added burden to the finances of the Biyaheng Recoletos 400!

Former Seminarians of the Order

The For-SOAR [*Association of Former Seminarians of the Order of Augustinian Recollects*] did not wish to be left behind. Although they did not come in droves in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, we should mention the all-out assistance given by Richard Burgos, Ariel Castillo, Romeo Escalona, Manuel Liboon, Leonardo Chiu, Edgardo Ramirez, Ernesto Ortonio, Jojit Foronda and other members whose names are known to Almighty God alone. They either came for their personal healing or met their former classmates or aided the prenovices in the healing session. Indeed we solely have compliments to the excellent writer Richard Burgos for authoring those two beautifully-crafted and informative Caravan chronicles of Lipa City events.

Ian Anthony Espartero OAR

How greatly we admire the myriad jobs performed by Rev. Ian Anthony Espartero who assisted Fr. Soy at the holy Masses in Luzon and Visayas! Customarily, after Mass the Recollect deacon blest St. Ezekiel Moreno images and offered the Saint's relic to be venerated by the devotees. He further authored chronicles for uploading in the Province's website at any available internet cafés. Most of all, he lectured on OAR history and on St. Ezekiel's life and miracles in Baguio, Sual (Pangasinan), Vigan, Aparri (Cagayan), Malolos City, San Jose (Antique), Talisay City (Negros Occidental) and UNO-R Oratory.

Br. Agustin Culaton and Bro. Rey Tripulca

Likewise kudos should go to Br. Agustin Culaton, Br. Rey Tripulca and Baguio SARF Sister Ellen Culaton who contributed their no small share to the success of the gigantic enterprise.

Novices/Prenovices of Saint Ezekiel Moreno-Novitiate, Antipolo City

At this point, we got to name the twelve Recollect novices and eleven prenovices who composed the core group. They belonged to the religious community of St. Ezekiel Moreno Novitiate-Recoletos of Antipolo City. They were young, indefatigable, lively, full of zest for life, filled with enthusiasm and fun. They joined the pilgrimage with the permission of their prior Fr. Leonardo “Leo” Pauligue who also concelebrated at the holy Mass at San Sebastian Basilica.

Words escape me to describe how much these formands have done for the arduous but once-in-a-blue-moon undertaking. They were with the Biyaheng Recoletos 400 through thick and thin. The incoming novices were with it from May 1 to 18: Invenzor Melgazo, Gibran Valleaser, James Castelo, Richard Alvin Plata, Norman Abello, John Paul Liwagon, Ralph Lauren Ciceron, Raul Macaraig, Rellyric delos Santos, Philip Rollon, Nestor Raras and Peter Fritz Ng.

The incoming prenovices worked—and how zealously they did their job—during the May 19-June 9 period of the St. Ezekiel Moreno pilgrimage: Odith Acedera, Marion Rey Navarro, Jose Teodulfo “Jojo” Jadulco, Kenneth Valverde, Harold Victor Dava, Joemar Garboso, Julibert Gorriceta, Mauricio Mandia, Jason Tañales, Jovani Tubiona and Mark Lataza.

Bro. Jojo Jadulco contributed endearing chronicles and Fr. Soy’s transcribed sermons to the Recollect website. He also served as the healing priest’s secretary and man-Friday in the Luzon leg of the caravan, while Bro. Ralph Ciceron did his secretarial job very well in the Visayas and Mindanao legs.

Epilogue

Should we quantify those contributions to the Recoletos 400 Caravan, it would not be a blunder to say they would surely amount to hundreds of thousands of Philippine pesos. Minimal support is not how we call those facts and figures at all. And you please add the Masses and prayers and sacrifices offered by the Recoletos

communities and religious for that once-in-a-lifetime experience of a pilgrimage-caravan.

The Augustinian Recollects' innumerable words of support and encouragement that came our way could never be underestimated. Moral support, you can perhaps term them. And the unabashed outpouring of moral support—so intangible yet so real, so unheralded yet so visible, so inspiring—was evidently overflowing, overwhelming, tremendous. And that was what we needed most in our amazing, grueling odyssey of forty days and nights.

Yes, any activity for Almighty God, any work for His honor and glory could not possibly fail. Our Triune God's graces were unmistakably upon us, undeniably with us throughout our odyssey. We prayed intensely. We daily assisted at Masses. We had healing sessions for our sick brothers and sisters in churches, chapels and hospitals. We visited the Blessed Sacrament. We fervently prayed the Rosary. We chanted the Lauds and Vespers. We had vigils and Benediction. We prayed the Regina Coeli and Angelus. We visited ailing persons at hospitals. We sang hymns during Mass.

We talked of the great wonders—cathedrals, bridges, schools, belfries, mortuary chapels—wrought by the Recollect missionaries of yore, while spreading the Word of God, the message of Christ's Love and Salvation. We recited the grace before every meal. We sought the invocation of Our Lady of the Way and the intercession of St. Ezekiel every time we began our trip yet to another destination. We sang with fervor the San Ezequiel Moreno hymn composed by Prof. Alfredo Buenaventura to wind up the healing rite. We invoked the Most Holy Name of Jesus in every healing session. Truly we did those activities and adventures for the Triune God, for the Order of Augustinian Recollects, for Saint Ezekiel Moreno.

We did those myriad activities for Mama Mary too. We commenced our nationwide journey of "sharing the Faith and building lives" at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage in Antipolo City with a holy Mass on the First of May in the year of Our Lord 2006. We ended our odyssey also with a holy

Mass at Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage Parish of General Santos City on the ninth day of June. A great coincidence?

The Holy Mass at the Antipolo Cathedral was celebrated by Fr. Soy and concelebrated by Prior Provincial Fr. Lauro Larlar and Prenovitiate Master Fr. Corvin “Owen” Maturan on the First of May. The prior provincial was not feeling well at that time, but he was there with us just the same, right at the start of the pilgrimage. He had always kept us in his prayers, as evidenced by his text messages dispatched to the some of the caravan members.

So, it was only fitting and proper that the Biyaheng Recoletos 400 Caravan members deservedly paid the Recollect major superior a courtesy call at the provincialate on the 9th June right after we had landed at the NAIA Centennial Terminal.

Mabuhay si *San Ezequiel Moreno*!

Mabuhay ang Recoletos 400!

Mabuhay ang mga Rekoleta community!

Mabuhay ang *Sambayanang Pilipino*!

The Story Behind the Recollect Markers and Saint Ezekiel Promotion Campaigns

Before and after the fiesta on 19 August 2020, through the Facebook Messenger, Viber or email, a number of concerns anent Saint Ezekiel Moreno reached me, such as requests for details of his role during the cholera epidemic in 1882 in Cavite, for copies of my past talks with photographs and illustrations, for Pope John Paul II's 1992 canonization homily in English or for a relevant article for a website.

Likewise received were queries on that *sui generis* San Ezekiel Moreno historical landmark installed by the National Historical Commission of the Philippines [hereinafter NHCP] in 2014 in front of the Immaculate Conception Cathedral at Puerto Princesa City. On the Saint's feast day itself, Bishop Pablo Virgilio David of Caloocan mentioned Saint Ezekiel in his homily as deserving of the moniker *Third Filipino Saint*. Later, on his online Sunday Mass at Christ the King Seminary in Quezon City, Fr. Jerry M. Orbos SVD called him the *Unknown Saint*. Hopefully, this article now addresses some queries.

Recollect Historical Markers in Manila

I now try my best to recall the antecedents of Augustinian Recollect historical landmarks and the requests for markers from the National Historical Institute [NHI], later reverted to its old name

NHCP. These recollections are based mostly upon my memory of events and people as well as captions of pertinent photographs.

In 2003, the Recoletos 400 Executive Committee [ExeCom] under Fr. Regino Z. Bangcaya firmed up its decision to hold the *National Conference on Recollect History and Legacy* at San Sebastian College Manila, inviting leading historians and cultural heritage experts to speak on Recollect legacies. This decision was reached in the wake of earlier recommendation to publish a book on Augustinian Recollect contributions to Philippine history and culture, but only Spanish Church Historian José Luis Sáenz from Marcilla, Navarra, Spain submitted his article on Recollect contributions to agriculture in the Philippines for that anthology project. The first *National Conference on Recollect History and Legacy* took place at San Sebastian College Manila in December 2004. Its lectures subsequently saw print in the book *Recoletos: History, Legacy and Culture*, edited by Fr. Leander V. Barrot and published in 2005.

The Recoletos 400 ExeCom with the approval of Prior Provincial Lauro V. Larlar further made the request for markers from the National Historical Institute on the sites of defunct Recollect structures in Manila. Request approved. Eventually, two historical landmarks were installed: one for San Juan de Bagumbayan Church located at Maria Orosa Street in Luneta and another for the Recoletos Church at Recoletos Street beside the Manila Bulletin Bldg. Both were installed on 7 December 2006 at the end of the Third OAR World Mission Congress held at San Sebastian College Manila. The unveiling and turnover events were attended by Vice President Noli de Castro, Recollect bishops, superiors delegates from various parts of the world, religious men and women, formands, NHI, Intramuros Administration, Philippine Tourism Authority, *Manila Bulletin* and Manila City Hall representatives.

The 7th of December was fixed for such unveiling/turnover activity to coincide with the Third OAR World Mission Congress held in 4-6 December 2006. ExeCom Chair Fr. Bangcaya and I dubbed ourselves as *Markers Committee of Two*. We did an ocular



Recollect Markers at Intramuros and Maria Orosa Street in Manila.

inspection of the proposed marker sites at Luneta and Intramuros with the assistance of Regalado Trota Jose, noted historian of churches, now UST archivist.

I drafted much of the two texts myself since the NHI-proposed texts customarily spoke of construction, earthquakes and destruction, bereft of Recollect-related information and such pastoral concerns as being the formation house of missionaries in the Philippines and Japan, residence of Saint Ezekiel, Martyrs of Japan, Martyrs of Motril, shrine of *Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno* icon, *Virgen de la Salud*, etc. Before the requests for markers were made, I asked Fr. Larlar and Fr. Bangcaya, to donate to NHI all available publications, Spanish and English, related to OAR history, cultural legacy, especially Saint Ezekiel books, so the researchers later could not complain that they lacked sources needed for their research on the first Recollect missionaries and convents. I went to the NHI office in Luneta and handed over the books. A couple of years later, Fr. Ángel Martínez Cuesta visited the NHI and the National Library to donate the four volumes of *Obras Completas* [Complete Works] of Saint Ezekiel Moreno

for their future reference. Of course, we gave our publications in exchange for theirs which were intended for the Recollect archives in Rome and Marcilla, Navarra. Much later, we requested more books for our libraries in the seminaries of Mira-Nila and Baguio.

A Marker for the 390th Anniversary in Mindanao

Sometime in 2011, I helped draft the letter of Prior Provincial Regino Bangcaya requesting Maria Serena I. Diokno, National Historical Commission of the Philippines [since 2010, NHCP] Chair, to put up a historical marker in Surigao for the then upcoming 390th Anniversary (1622-2012) of the Arrival of the Augustinian Recollects in Mindanao. Request denied. Reason: Historical landmarks are for 400th or 450th anniversaries.

A Marker for the 250th Anniversary in Bohol

In 2018, I helped draft the request for a historical landmark for the 250th Anniversary (1768-2018) of the Arrival of the first Augustinian Recollects in Bohol after the Jesuit expulsion. Prior Provincial Dionisio Q. Selma sent the request to the NHCP, headed by Rene R. Escalante. Request denied.

Reasons: I was furnished a copy of the NHCP response by the provincial secretary Jose Ernil Almayo, and I learned that the NHCP letter spoke of the glories and accomplishments of the Augustinian Recollect missionaries in Bohol pertinent to history and cultural heritage, especially the enduring tangible legacies like churches, rectories, roads, public buildings and school houses. However, the NHCP said the two markers of 2006 were sufficient. They feared that other religious orders might also follow suit once our request would be granted and, a precedent having been set, they might request for markers for their arrival at every mission territory. The NHCP suggested to the prior provincial to request instead from local government units, provincial or local, such markers commemorating the 250th Anniversary.

The Saint Ezekiel Moreno Marker at Puerto Princesa City

I recall that it was Dr. Rene R. Escalante, then NHCP Commissioner in 2013 and since 2016 its Chair, who initiated the project to put up the Saint Ezekiel Historical Landmark. He wrote a letter on the project to Prior Provincial Lauro Larlar in response to which he immediately dispatched a favorable reply to the NHCP proposal. The prior provincial assigned Fr. Rene F. Paglinawan of the Province of Saint Ezekiel Moreno Commission on History, Culture and Heritage, and me as contact persons whom the NHCP was to deal with on the proposed project. Subsequent communications were channeled to the provincial curia and eventually we were furnished with the following NHCP marker draft text faxed in October 2014:

SAN EZEKIEL MORENO

1848-1906

PARENG REKOLETO, MISYONERO AT SANTO. SINIL-
ANG SA ALFARO, LA RIOJA, ESPANYA, 9 ABRIL
1848. TINANGGAP SA ORDEN NG MGA REKOLETO,
21 SETYEMBRE 1864. DUMATING SA MAYNILA,
10 PEBRERO 1870. KABILANG SA MGA NAGTATAG
NG BAYAN NG PUERTO PRINCESA, 4 MARSO 1872.
NAGING KURA NG MARAMING BAYAN SA PIL-
IPINAS. YUMAO SA ESPANYA, 19 AGOSTO 1906.
IDINEKLARANG SANTO NI PAPA JUAN PABLO II
DAHIL SA KANYANG APOSTOLADO SA PILIPINAS
AT IBA PANG MGA GAWAIN, 11 OKTUBRE 1992.

I had to modify and improve the original NHCP marker text by adding more significant lines before it was finally approved jointly by the NHCP and the Province of Saint Ezekiel Moreno. However, Fr. Rene Paglinawan suggested an important and timely addition. The recommended phrase “*at Colombia*” [and Colombia] which we both presented in November 2014 to NHCP staff Ellen Samonte at her Luneta office, was at once added thereto. The final text was the following:



Saint Ezekiel Moreno NHCP Marker in Palawan



Unveiling of the historical landmark on 5 December 2014.

The heavy cast iron marker can be carried only by six strong men from the plane to a waiting vehicle. The marker pedestal should faithfully follow the dimensions prescribed by the NHCP installation manual. At least six workers were further needed to place the marker on the pre-built pedestal in front of the Immaculate Conception Cathedral. The local preparations were ably supervised by Fr. Raul M. Buhay of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Inagawan, Puerto Princesa City.

NHCP staff Ellen Samonte later confided to me that the Palawan pedestal was the best that she had ever seen in the country. The Saint Ezekiel NHCP historical landmark cost ₱66,000. The cost, which depended on the number of lines in the marker text, was defrayed solely by the NHCP. When queried if it was possible to install another marker with an English text for foreign tourists, the NHCP official replied yes, but the cost of the English marker would be charged to the Province of Saint Ezekiel Moreno. The two Recollect markers at Maria Orosa Street and Intramuros, Manila with relatively brief Filipino texts in 2006 cost ₱40,000 each. I was happy to learn that an identical historical marker had been installed at the Saint Ezekiel Moreno Park in Molino, Bacoar City, near the Molino Dam which was repaired by the saint during his time.

On hindsight, I remember I first mentioned my proposal for a Saint Ezekiel Moreno marker or for any historical event in Palawan in the 390th Anniversary of OAR Missionary Presence in Palawan Conference in December 2013 at the Provincial Capitol in Puerto Princesa City, organized by the Commission on History, Culture and Legacy under Fr. Paglinawan—in the wake of the Super Typhoon *Yolanda* [international name *Haiyan*] that hit land on 8 November.

The Puerto Princesa Landmark is *sui generis*

The Saint Ezekiel Moreno Historical Marker proposal became a reality in 2014. It was a *sui generis* landmark, known for its trailblazing, unprecedented characteristics. It was the first marker installed by the National Historical Commission of the

Philippines for a Spanish national, as Ellen Samonte disclosed to me, saying its statutes mandate markers to be installed or reserved solely for Filipino citizens. It was the first historical landmark for a Saint since at that time —2014—no marker was petitioned for Saint Lorenzo Ruiz, Saint Pedro Calungsod, Saint Pedro Bautista OFM. It was definitely the first one for an Augustinian Recollect religious. It was the first historical marker for a penal colony chaplain and military chaplain, a title keenly observed and given by the AFP/PNP Vicar General Bishop Leopoldo S. Tumalak in his 19 August 2012 homily at the Puerto Princesa Cathedral.



The official turnover of the NHCP historical landmark to Saint Ezekiel Moreno Province and the Puerto Princesa Cathedral Parish, 8 December 2014

The Saint Ezekiel marker was approved by NHCP because of the international character of Saint Ezekiel, a missionary in the Philippines but globally known, furthermore because the common Hispanic and cultural bond of the Philippines with Spain and Colombia is strengthened. The Philippines shall forever be linked to Saint Ezekiel Moreno and the story of his life and ministry shall always mention our country.

The unveiling of the Historical Landmark, 5 December 2014

The momentous event took place on 5 December 2014, the 426th anniversary of Birth of the Augustinian Recollection. The date had been jointly approved by the Prior Provincial and his Council and the NHCP. The Pontifical Mass of Bishop Pedro D. Arigo, Apostolic Vicar of Puerto Princesa, at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral built in 1961 by the Recollect Bishop Gregorio Espiga, the first Apostolic Vicar of Palawan, was concelebrated by diocesan and Augustinian Recollect priests.

The Eucharistic celebration was at once followed by the official unveiling of the historical marker in front of the cathedral by Palawan Vice Governor Dennis Socrates and Puerto Princesa City Mayor Lucilo Bayron, assisted by Fr. Paglinawan, Fr. Bangcaya who blest the marker, Fr. Buhay who did all the local preparations and the physical installation of the marker, Fr. Anthony P. Irineo who emceed the brief program in the presence of San Jose Seminary students, Recollect religious (Fr. Ceferino C. Añez, Fr. Carmelo V. Borces) as well as Augustinian Recollect Sisters, Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity, Recollect Augustinian Youth, parish office staff, parishioners of Inagawan and numerous devotees. A photo-exhibit was mounted near the marker by Fr. Alexis Mansueto.

The historic event was covered by local print and broadcast media, including the ABS-CBN Puerto Princesa whose reporter interviewed some officials on the significance of the marker. The guests thereafter proceeded to Saint Ezekiel Moreno Spirituality and Development Center of the Augustinian Recollect Sisters at Brgy. San Jose for my lecture with power-point presentation *Saint Ezekiel Moreno in Palawan and the Augustinian Recollects*, which was followed by a late lunch.

Came the 8th December, Puerto Princesa's patronal fiesta and the day of the official turnover of the historical landmark by the National Historical Commission of the Philippines, represented by Deputy Executive Director Carminda Arevalo and Heraldry and Markers Division Head Ellen Samonte, to Prior Provincial Fr.

Lauro Larlar and to the cathedral parish represented by its parish priest Fr. Juan Felipe Torrecampo. It was a simple turnover program officially witnessed by Fr. Paglinawan and Prof. Romanillos. Thereafter, for posterity they all affixed their signatures on the official transfer certificates.

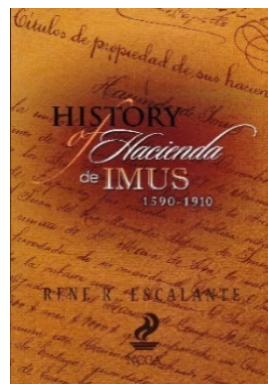
Who is Dr. Rene R. Escalante?

Who is Dr. Rene R. Escalante, PhD? He is the present Chair of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines. Escalante and I have known each other since 2004. He was then Chair of the History Department of De La Salle University in Manila and since 2010 he was NHCP Commissioner. We were both speakers at the 2004 National Conference on Local and National History sponsored by the Philippine Historical Association, Cavite Studies Center, Cavite Historical Society and National Historical Institute, which was held at the Cavite State University Campus in Indang, Cavite. Thereafter, Escalante hired me as proofreader, peer-reviewer and editor of the draft of his forthcoming major book *History of the Hacienda de Imus. 1590-1910*, published by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts in 2013.

I further assisted Escalante by providing vital sources for his book, such as bound photocopies of research articles done by Recollect historians José Luis Sáenz, José Manuel Bengoa



Dr. Rene R. Escalante PhD



History of Hacienda de Imus

and José Javier Lizarraga on the Hacienda de Imus, and most especially a photocopy of Emilio Edgardo A. Quilatan's published doctoral dissertation excerpt. Earlier, the Cavite Studies Center and the DLSU historian had photocopied Quilatan's Church History Licentiate thesis. And one day Quilatan, Escalante and I had a long informative discussion at the Dean's Office of the Recoletos School of Theology in Mira-Nila Homes, Quezon City on salient points of his Hacienda de Imus draft book, content and sources. The future NHCP Chair further acquired hard copies of digital archival manuscripts from the Archivo Recolecto.

Consequently, the NHCP Commissioner was fully cognizant of Saint Ezekiel Moreno's exemplary life, zealous pastoral efforts and management of Hacienda de Imus of in the 1882-1885 triennium. It was a *motu proprio* that inspired and moved Dr. Rene Escalante to initiate and propose the marker project in 2014. It was not a surprise to receive much later his proposal for a marker.

Bishop Ambo David: Saint Ezekiel, the *Third Filipino Saint*

In his online homily delivered on 19 August 2020 the feast day at the San Exequiel Moreno Parish in Caloocan City, Bishop Pablo Virgilio "Ambo" David of the Diocese of Caloocan declared that Saint Ezekiel should be considered the third Filipino Saint.

It is Bishop David's prerogative to propose the declaration of Saint Ezekiel Moreno as an "Adopted Filipino Saint" [if that term exists] for the right reasons to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. Perhaps the proposal may be co-sponsored by Bishop Cosme Almedilla of Butuan, Bishop Socrates Mesiona of the Apostolic Vicariate of Puerto Princesa, where Saint Ezekiel Parishes are found. Of help too can be Auxiliary Bishop Broderick Pabillo of Manila, former parish priest of Saint Ezekiel Parish in Macarascas, Puerto Princesa City, or Bishop Jesse Mercado of Las Piñas-Parañaque where the Santuario de San Ezekiel Moreno is located. Or Archbishop Gilbert Gacera of the of Lipa where Saint Ezekiel is secondary patron saint of Santo Tomas, Batangas.

We can ask the support of other prelates related to the Saint's sojourn or assignment, like Bacolod Bishop Emeritus Vicente

Navarra, Bacolod Bishop Patricio Buzon, Imus Bishop Reynaldo Evangelista, Bishop Warlito Cajandig and Msgr. Nestor Adalia, Apostolic Administrator of Calapan, Bishop Emeritus Antonio Palang and Bishop David Antonio of San Jose, Mindoro Occidental. And we may enjoin teachers, students, devotees and parishioners to write letters to those bishops concerned urging them to support Bishop David's proposal.

Saint Ezekiel Biographies for Bishops and Priests

In 1994, Fr. Pablo Panedas, Fr. Ignacio Jiménez Castellanos who were erstwhile faculty members of the Recoletos School of Theology and I were assigned by Fr. Germán Chicote, head of the Secretariat of Pastoral Ministry of the Vicariate of the Philippines and China, to dispatch copies of the red-covered Saint Ezekiel biography to all the bishops in the country, appropriately deemed religious influencers and possible leading promoters. We complied with his request.

Furthermore, I was informed that the Vicariate provided complimentary copies of the same 1993 biography to the clergy of Manila on the occasion of Cardinal Jaime Sin's birthday. In 2017, the prior provincial sent copies of the same biography to Bishop Reynaldo Evangelista and his parish priests in Imus Diocese after the closure of the Fourth Centennial of the OAR Presence in Cavite (1616-2016) at Bacoar City.

Through the years, I have personally distributed complimentary copies of Saint Ezekiel books to Archbishop Jose Advincula, Bishop Palang, Bayombong Bishop Ramon Villena, Archbishop Socrates Villegas, Archbishop Paciano Aniceto, Bishop Navarra, Bishop Buzon, Bishop Mercado, Bishop Mesiona, to now-deceased prelates Ozamiz Archbishop Jesus Dosado and San Carlos Bishop Nicolas Mondejar.

Fr. Victor L. Lluch, Fr. Lauro Larlar or Br. Jaazeal *Tagoy* D. Jakosalem further dispatched books, novenas, *estampitas* or statues to parish priests of Saint Ezekiel Moreno Parish in Butuan City, San Exequiel Moreno Parish in Caloocan City, Santo Niño Parish of

Molino in Bacoar, and Santo Tomas Parish in Batangas. I had also sent Saint Ezekiel Moreno books to Bishop Socrates Mesiona of Puerto Princesa Apostolic Vicariate and Bishop Broderick Pabillo of Taytay Apostolic Vicariate.

Continuous Promotion of Saint Ezekiel

The Commission on Spirituality, Charism and Permanent Formation of Saint Ezekiel Moreno Province must now take the cudgels of campaigns to promote the history and spirituality of the Augustinian Recollect Order by promoting and spreading the devotion to Saint Ezekiel, as what was successfully done in the past when the Memorial of Saint Ezekiel was included in the liturgical calendar of the Philippine Church through a petition sent to the CBCP.

Biyaheng Recoletos Revisited

The *Biyaheng Recoletos-Saint Ezekiel Moreno Pilgrimage* to various towns and cities for forty days and forty nights in May-June 2006 was a tremendous success! Fr. Ferdinand T. Hernando delivered lengthy homilies on Saint Ezekiel and celebrated holy Masses as well as healing sessions. Fray Ian Anthony R. Espartero and I took turns in speaking to the people about the history and legacies of the Order of Augustinian Recollects in our country and about the holy life, ministry and miracles of Saint Ezekiel. The various venues were the cathedrals, parochial churches, chapels, gyms, seminaries, retreat houses, hospitals and schools.

Fr. Hernando and I were interviewed on TV, radio programs and in public fora in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao on the glories and present apostolate of the Recollect Order which was then commemorating its Fourth Centennial (1606-2006) and on Saint Ezekiel, the epitome of Augustinian Recollect charism and spirituality. But that glorious and phenomenal event took place fourteen years ago now. We must never rest on our laurels past.

Every Augustinian Recollect friar must be aware of this important mandate of the OAR Constitutions and oft-repeated

determinations of the provincial chapters to promote devotion to Saint Ezekiel, Saint Magdalena of Nagasaki, Augustinian Saints, Blessed, Martyrs and Servants of God. It is an unending task, a continuous challenge to all members of the Augustinian Recollect Family who live today in this internet age.



Augustinian Recollect Community of Colegio de Santo Tomas-Recoletos, headed by Local Prior Vicente L. Ramon, San Carlos City, Negros Occ.

Book launch events in Negros, Cebu, Manila and Baguio

In September 2019-February 2020, the launch of two new Saint Ezekiel Moreno books in various venues was organized. It was a combination of book launch, sale and lecture. I had to contact UNO-R, USJ-R, STV-R, SSC Manila, CaReS and prepare launch programs. The local house priors and religious communities, especially university presidents, gave their all-out support. Coauthor Dennis V. Madrigal and I launched the books at the President's Hall of UNO-R in Bacolod City and at Saint Thomas of Villanueva-Recoletos Formation House in San Carlos City. The USJ-R launch was on 10 September 2019 at the Main Campus

Lobby under the auspices of Prior Leopoldo V. Estioko and University President Fr. Cristopher C. Maspara.

Prior Julius M. Marcos, College President Nemesio D. Tolentin and Vice President Antonio S. Limchaypo led the book launch on 20 January 2020 at San Sebastian Basilica, attended by the academic community, Augustinian

Recollect Sisters and SARF members of Manila and Tondo. Prior Bernard C. Amparado and Dean Anthony P. Irineo

organized the book launch-cum-lecture at Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary in Baguio City on 13 February 2020. The book launch in Cavite City scheduled for April 2020 was stopped by CoViD-19.

After these protracted quarantines and lockdowns wrought by the coronavirus pandemic, we must muster anew our energies



Book author gives the Saint Ezekiel Moreno book to USJ-R President Fr. Cristopher C. Maspara OAR



Book Coauthors with Fr. Don H. Besana OAR, UNO-R President, and Bishop Emeritus Vicente Navarra of Bacolod.

and organize more book launch activities with lectures and book sales right in our backyard, in our parishes, in schools in Negros and in seminaries in Antipolo City and Mira-Nila, Quezon City in our ceaseless promotion of Saint Ezekiel, of the Order, especially on the triple celebrations (1621-2021) of the Fourth

Centennial of the Augustinian Recollection as Congregation, Fourth Centennial of the Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino and Fourth Centennial of the Augustinian Recollect Presence in Cebu.

We must never cease promoting our Saint Ezekiel, most especially among the new generation of Catholics, among the millennials, not only Recollect Augustinian Youth and SARF, in our parishes, or missions, in educational institutions of both Recollect friars and Recollect sisters, but especially in the social media accessible now to millions of youth.



A Saint Ezekiel Moreno devotee himself, Fr. Jerry Orbos SVD delivered his homily during his 19 August 2020 TV Mass, watched by 17,900 viewers.

Jerry M. Orbos SVD: Saint Ezekiel, *the Unknown Saint*

Otherwise, as the great promoter of Saint Ezekiel Moreno—Father Jerry M. Orbos SVD—lamented in his homily on the spiritual battle against CoViD-19 during the Mass on 23 August 2020, SAINT EZEKIEL MORENO will remain an “UNKNOWN SAINT in the Philippines.” Fr. Orbos further declared to thousands of followers during his online Mass: “Saint Ezekiel was in the Philippines for fifteen years. He worked in the Philippines [...]

This Saint was described very simply: ‘He loved and served the Filipinos, especially the poor and the sick.’ He died of cancer. He is the patron of cancer patients. I personally experienced his healing. *Kaya, tawag po tayo kay San Ezekiel*. Mama Mary, Saint Ezekiel, help us!”

Indeed, let us incessantly ask Saint Ezekiel to help us spread God’s love and compassion, to ask the Almighty to put an end to the pandemic that has abruptly cut down the lives of almost a million people now all over this pandemic-hit world, like what Saint Ezekiel Moreno courageously was doing in Bacoor and Imus in the time of the cholera of 1882, risking his fragile health, his very own life, by consoling terminally-ill Caviteños at their deathbed and giving the last Sacraments of the Holy Mother Church to the people he loved and served.

Errors and Omissions in the History of the Augustinian Recollects in the Philippines

*“Omnium hominum est errare
sed stulti in errore perseverare.”*

- Seneca (4 BC - 65 AD)

*“Cuiusvis hominis est errare,
nullius nisi insipientis in errore perseverare.”*

- Cicero (106 - 43 BC)

*“Anyone can commit mistakes.
But only fools persist in their error.”*

Introduction

The history of the Augustinian Recollects in the Philippines is unfortunately awash with factual errors, seemingly innocent blunders and unintentional omissions. The historical blunders may stem from unconscious copying of repeated inaccuracies or passing of inaccurate information to succeeding generations with no apparent effort to double-check the sources, or maybe stemming from presumed authoritative sources. For utter lack of serious archival investigation, a writer may get hold of a factual error or even misinformation from an apparently authoritative source and

therefore hand the same mistakes over to the next generations of readers, students or, yes, even historians or historiographers. Countless cases of unforeseeable omissions—whether unintended, blatantly intentional on account of the dearth of accurate information researched in or retrieved from reliable sources—are touted as gospel truths. Alas, the social media and the Wikipedia are overflowing with such omissions and they must be modified, when possible, corrected in comment walls.

Such inaccurate or baseless conclusions and generalizations especially those coming from historians, influencers, institutions or government entities in charge putting up historical landmarks in public places, like plazas, heritage sites, façades of churches, bell towers, forts and tourist spots which eventually and oftentimes—unfortunately—turn into authoritative super-spreaders of misinformation, false information, half-truths, not unlike fake news. With some frequency, these institutions have been apparently helpless in rectifying the errors which stemmed from dearth of profound research, available archival sources, undiscovered sources and simply an utter dependence upon stock or public knowledge bereft of serious archival research. Unless they are modified or corrected appropriately at once, they shall continue to spread the errors. The blunders shall regrettably be handed down to the social media of this internet-loving generation and to the coming generations. These should be rectified by those concerned people or institutions that must accept the corrections, otherwise as the Roman philosophers say: “To err is human, but only fools persist in their error.”



Such historical landmarks, like the [above left] *Simbahan at Kumbento ng Recoletos* marker in Intramuros, Manila and *Simbahan at Kumbento ng San Juan de Bagumbayan* cost the government coffers each over ₱40,000 in 2006. [above right] The *San Ezekiel Moreno* marker in Puerto Princesa City in 2014 cost more than ₱60,000. They were fruits of the serious research and close collaboration of the National Historical Commission and the Province of Saint Ezekiel Moreno, then under Fr. Lauro V. Larlar, prior provincial, and Fr. Regino Z. Bangcaya, chair of the Executive Committee of the Recoletos 400 Celebration (1606-2006). For the *Saint Ezekiel Moreno* landmark in Palawan, Fr. Rene F. Paglinawan, head of the Commission of History, Culture and Heritage – Recoletos (2012-2015) followed up the initiative of NHCP Commissioner Dr. Rene Escalante. This writer was the history consultant in those three commemorative marker projects.

Most of the time, these recommended rectifications were transmitted to them verbally, in conversation, hence no action was taken. No record of the suggested corrections was taken down. Apparently, there is no such office or department at the National Historical Commission that receives such well-researched

recommendations to rectify their landmarks. The non-existence record of the verbal report eventually resulted to inaction, non-rectification. As the Latin saying goes: *Volant verba, manent scripta*.¹

Six categories of blunders and omissions, three special cases and an appendix

This paper deals with such seemingly harmless blunders, factual inaccuracies and omissions, pertinent to the history of the Augustinian Recollects in the Philippines. We attach to our enumerations evidentiary photographs, images, scanned pages or memes to illustrate graphically our contentions. In this paper, we enumerate them under six categories:

I) Historical landmarks or commemorative metal markers installed on pedestals at the heritage site or on church façades by the National Historical Commission of the Philippines or its predecessors, like the National Historical Institute, Philippines Historical Committee and Historical Research and Markers Committee;

II) Omissions of the Recollect presence in Vigan City, the name of Bishop Juan García Ruiz de San Agustín in the list of archbishops/bishops in the Vigan Archdiocese website and the Recollect ministry unmentioned in the Antipolo cathedral marker.

III) Inaccuracies anent the Black Nazarene or *Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno* at the Basilica in Quiapo, Manila;

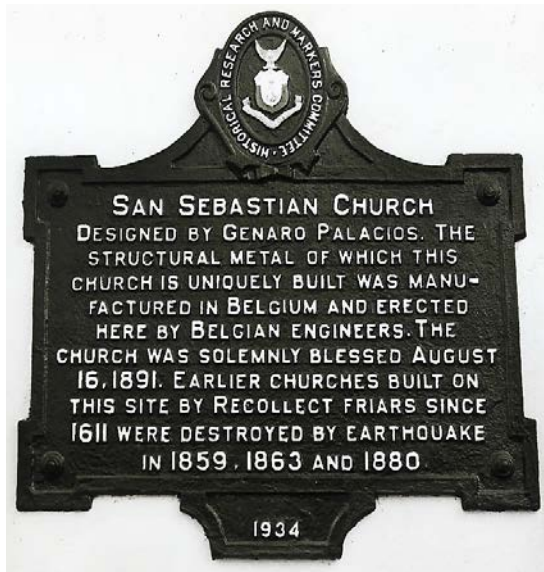
IV) The presence of Spanish friars in Bohol during the Dagohoy Revolt;

V) Books or publications fraught with inaccuracies;

VI) Websites spreading factual errors.

¹Literally, the Latin phrase means “spoken words fly away, written words remain.” Explained in another way, spoken words are easily forgotten, but written documents can always be evidentiary proofs which are conclusive in public matters.

I. Historical landmarks installed by NRMCM/PHC/NHI/NHCP



A. San Sebastian Church historical marker at Plaza del Carmen, Quiapo, Manila

Here are some additional valuable information and factual blunders on the iconic prefabricated all-steel San Sebastian Basilica, unfortunately perpetuated by the historical marker installed on its left façade by the Historical Research and Markers Committee in 1934:

1. Indeed, Spanish Architect **Don Genaro Palacios** designed it. Blueprints of San Sebastian Church safely kept at Archivo Recoletos “Fray Juan de la Concepción” at Bulwagang Recoletos in Mira-Nila Homes, Quezon City. Definitely, it was not Gustave Eiffel of the famed international landmark in Paris, France, as allegedly conjectured and propagated by *Philippine Daily Inquirer* columnist and former National Historical Institute Chair Ambeth Ocampo and GMA reporters.

2. The English Supervising Engineer **Frederick H. Sawyer** was assisted by Belgian Engineers Peter Brakel and Desiderius Carpentier.

3. The blessing was on **15 August 1891**, not on 16 August 1891.

4. It was not in 1611 but in **1621** when Don Bernardino del Castillo Maldonado donated the land to the Recollects and built for them the convent and the **first church**. Foundation: **16 February 1621**. The Virgen del Carmen icon was brought by Fray Rodrigo de San Miguel in 1618 to Manila and enthroned on **5 May 1621** at San Sebastian Church.

5. The lowly first church was set afire during the 1639 Sangley Revolt. Damaged and “rebuilt as new,” this was **the 2nd church**.

6. The earthquake of 30 November 1645 ruined the 2nd church. The **3rd church** was built; it survived two hundred years.

7. **No earthquake occurred in 1859.**

8. The two-century-old church was rebuilt with three naves in 1861. Millions of pesos were spent for its reconstruction. This was deemed as the **4th church**.

9. This 4th church was damaged beyond repair in the June 1863 quake, that is, only two years after its reconstruction.

10. The **5th church** was built in 1867, but it was ruined in the July 1880 quake and had to be demolished.

11. The all-steel Basilica [**6th church**] was assembled in 1888-1891 at Binche, Belgium and its steel parts were shipped to Manila in steamers.

12. The Basilica of San Sebastian—the quadricentenary Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel—is **130 years old on 15 August 2021**.

B. Blatant error at the Most Holy Trinity Church façade in Loay, Bohol:



After his priestly ordination in Cebu City on 22 December 1885, Fray Leon Inchausti de la Virgen del Rosario from Ajanguiz, Vizcaya, Spain served the Most Holy Trinity Parish of Loay in Bohol until 27 March 1886 when he was named parish priest of Dimiao, also in Bohol. He was slain by Marxist revolutionaries at Motril, Granada, Spain on 25 July 1936 at the onset of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and was **beatified by Pope John Paul II at Saint Peter's Basilica on 7 March 1999 together with seven other Martyrs of Motril (including Blessed José Rada de la Virgen de los Dolores, a native of Tarazona, Zaragoza, Spain and curate in several parishes of Bohol). He was not canonized as Saint, canonization being the next and last step to sainthood.** It was a beatification process in 1999 that the Recollect priest underwent to be called thereafter Blessed León Inchausti, indeed, a glory of the Church of Bohol and the Order of Augustinian Recollects.

C. Factual blunders and their corrections at Saint Joseph Cathedral façade in Tagbilaran City. Here are the errors and ambiguities and our corresponding rectifications and improvements for the historical landmark installed at the façade of Saint Joseph Cathedral of Tagbilaran City by the Philippines Historical Committee in 1953:



1. Tagbilaran was one of the **nine parishes**, not six, in Bohol founded by the Jesuits before they were expelled from Bohol. The nine parishes are: **Baclayon (1596); Loboc (1596); Dauis (1596); Jagna (1631); Inabanga (1726), Tagbilaran (1742); Dimiao ((1750); Loon (1753) and Maribojoc (1767).**

2. The year was 1596, not 1595. The first Jesuits Gabriel Sanchez and Juan de Torres arrived in Baclayon on **17 November 1596.**

3. To erase the misimpression that no convent ever existed before 1872, we must add that **both convent and church were gutted by fire at 8:00 pm, 23 December 1798.**

4. Fr. **Valero de San Sebastián** was parish priest in 1839-1855; **not Fr. Valero de San Pascual.**

5. Fr. Valero de San Pascual never existed; no Recollect priest existed with that name. However, there was **Fr. Manuel de San Pascual, parish priest in 1835-1839** before Fr. Valero de San Sebastián.

6. The *Libro de cosas notables de Tagbilaran*, authored by Augustinian Recollect parish priests of Tagbilaran, declares that **the present church was the work of the first Recollect fathers.**” In the list of parish priests, there were five diocesan parish priests in the 1798-1855 period who might have helped in the church construction.

7. Likewise, **no record of the identity of the builder of the kumbento exists.** The same *Cosas notables* affirms : “The convent was the work of the first Recollects.”

8. The accurate surname of the parish priest of Tagbilaran in 1870-1875 is Fr. Lucas **Coromina**, not Corominas.

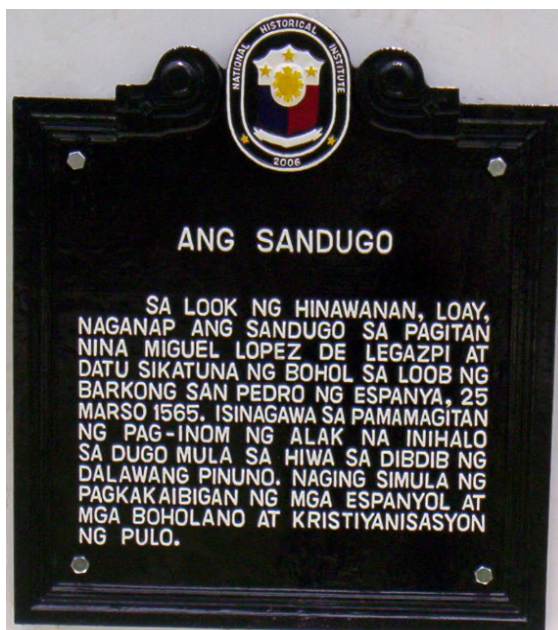
9. Fr. **Lucas Coromina did not build the convent**; he merely enlarged it notably in 1872 and roofed it with galvanized iron.

10. **Fr. José Sánchez**, not Fr. José Sancho, began the construction of the bell tower in early **1886**, not in 1884. In 1888, Fr. Sánchez left Bohol because he was elected superior of their San Nicolas priory in Intramuros, Manila, and was succeeded by Fr. Escolástico Enciso.

11. During Fr. Escolastico Enciso’s term, the bell tower was finished and blest in April 1891 by the parish priest of Baclayon.

12. Fr. Enciso made the church embellishments in 1888-1894, not 1884-1894.

D. Blood Compact Marker at Loay, Bohol



The Blood Compact marker installed at Loay in 2006 by the National Historical Institute declares: **“Naging simula ng pagkakaibigan ng mga Espanyol at mga Boholano at Kristiyanisasyon ng pulo.”** Friendship, yes, existed thereafter, but that Christianization never took place. Here is what I wrote on page 39 of my unpublished book *History of Bohol: Essays, Notes and Sources (1521-1937)*:

After the blood compact ceremony the Spaniards erected a small hut for the administration of the sacraments. Pastoral attention was focused on the spiritual needs of some four hundred members of the expedition.² On 27 March 1565, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass—doubtless the first ever to be celebrated on Bohol soil—was attended by Legazpi and his men. As it was the season of Lent, the Augustinians spent most of their time exhorting the soldiers and sailors to timely penitential practices and strengthening them for the great task that lay ahead. Augustinian chroniclers reported that

²Zaide fixes the number as 380 men who were mostly Mexican.

the first Philippine missionaries took pains in learning the Visayan language for their future apostolic activity.

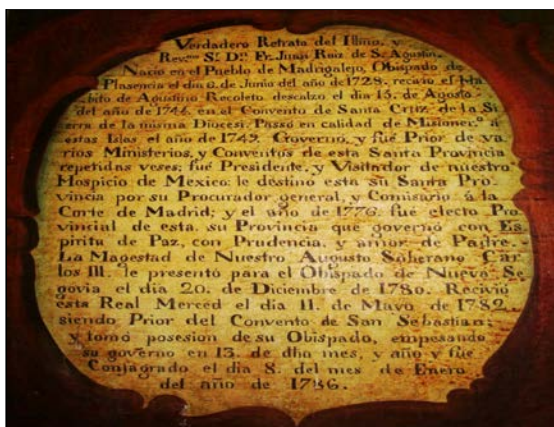
Because of the initial language stumbling block, the attempt to “bring the brilliant light of faith” to the people of Bohol was probably on a very limited scale, if ever there were any at all. At that time the captain general and his counselors had not yet firmed up their decision to set up a permanent colony in the Philippines. **Nor have they decided to establish a permanent base of operations with ample supplies for the huge expedition.** They awaited vital information from the reconnaissance trips of his explorers. **The food shortage in Bohol apparently discouraged the idea of a permanent settlement there.** Therefore, any serious attempt to evangelize the inhabitants could not have been made, if the missionaries were not even sure of staying there permanently. There was no one to maintain the growth and development of Christianity in the island. The Augustinian friars feared for the natives’ possible apostasy, *i.e.*, their repudiation of Christianity and subsequent return to the old pagan traditions during their prolonged absence.

E. The Augustinian Recollect Bishop Juan García Ruiz de San Agustín of the Diocese of Nueva Segovia in Vigan City:



1. The historical landmark at the façade of the Metropolitan Cathedral of the Conversion of Saint Paul, Archdiocese of Nueva Segovia failed to mention Bishop Juan García Ruiz de San Agustín, Recollect builder of the cathedral.

2. Bishop Juan García Ruiz is not mentioned in the website: <http://www.gcatholic.org/dioceses/diocese/nseg0.htm>.



Biographical Sketch of Bishop Juan García Ruiz de San Agustín, OAR, DD, in his portrait at the Palacio del Arzobispado, Vigan City

“True portrait of his most Illustrious and most Reverend Fray Juan Ruiz de San Agustín. He was born in the town of Madrigalejo, Diocese of Plasencia, on 6 June 1728. He received the Augustinian Recollect Discalced habit on 15 August 1744 at the Convent of Santa Cruz de la Sierra of the same diocese. He travelled to these Islands as a missionary in 1749. As prior, he governed various ministries

The website of the Archdiocese of Nueva Segovia mentions now [11 July 2021] the Augustinian Recollect Bishop in the list of Archbishops and Bishops of Nueva Segovia: **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid..** org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Archdiocese_of_Nueva_Segovia. But many blunders still remain:

3. The website [//www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bgarciarur.html](http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bgarciarur.html) says Bishop Juan García Ruiz belonged to **O.A.D., Order of Discalced Augustinians [Ordo Augustinianorum Discalceatorum]**, instead of **O.A.R., Order of Augustinian Recollects [Ordo Augustinianorum Recollectorum]**, according to This website is the source of errors found in other related websites, like wikiwand.com/en/Roman_Catholic_Archdiocese_of_Nueva_Segovia and

wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Archdiocese_of_Nueva_Segovia

4. Our Recollect biographer Francisco Sádaba³ says the Holy See named him Bishop of Nueva Segovia on **20 December 1780 [like what the contemporaneous portrait at Vigan confirms]**, and, after being relieved of his post as prior of San Sebastian Convent on 12 May 1782, he started his administration of the episcopal see on **13 May 1782** even before his episcopal consecration on **8 January 1786** in Intramuros. The website [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juan_Garc%C3%ADa_Ruiz] wrongly informs us that he was ordained as bishop or consecrated on **12 March 1786**.

5. In that website, his birthplace is **Madridejos, Cebu**, instead of the correct town of **Madrigalejo**, Extremadura, Spain. In www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bgarciar.html, **Madridejo, Spain** is mistakenly indicated as birthplace.



The marker installed by the Philippines Historical Committee in 1949 at the Vigan cathedral façade omits its **builder—Bishop Juan García Ruiz de San Agustín**.

³Francisco SÁDABA, *Catálogo de los religiosos agustinos recoletos de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino de Filipinas desde el año 1606, en que llegó la primera misión a Manila, hasta nuestros días* (Madrid 1906) 267-269.

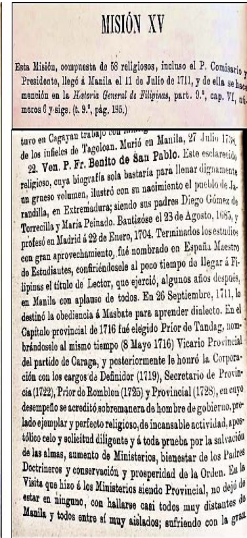
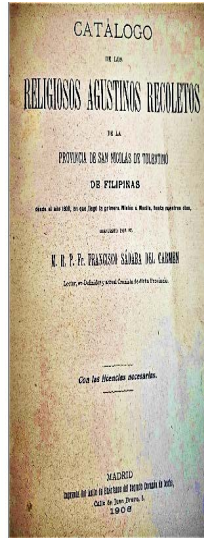
II. Omission of the Augustinian Recollect pastoral ministry in a historical landmark at the façade of the Marian Cathedral and National Shrine of Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage in Antipolo City.

The historical marker prominently installed by the Historical Research and Markers Committee in 1937 at the façade of the Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage in Antipolo City omits the pastoral ministry of the Augustinian Recollects in Antipolo from 1863 to 1898. In the wake of the expulsion of the Recollects from Mindanao that started



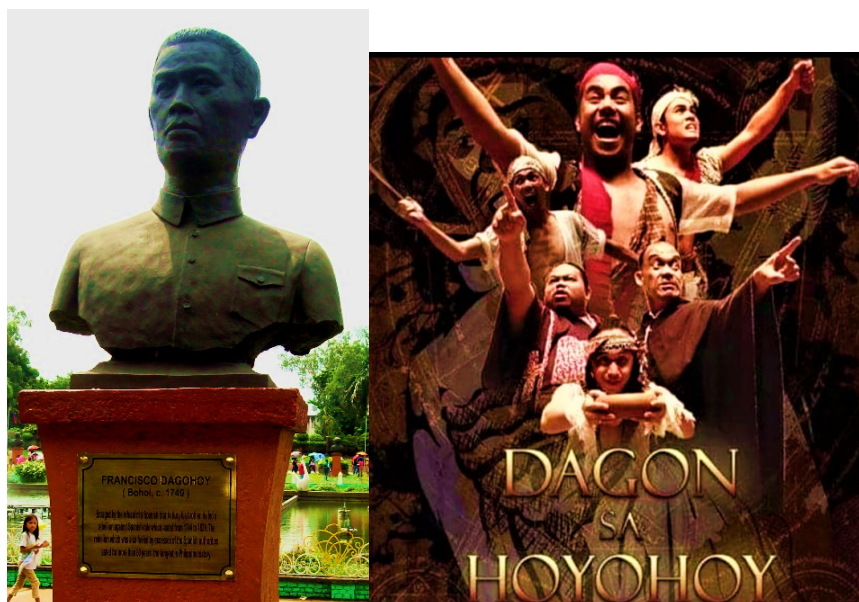
in 1859 with the arrival of the Jesuits and the 10 September 1861 royal decree of Queen Isabel II indemnified the Recollects with vacant parishes in the Archdiocese of Manila. For the vacant curacy of Antipolo, on 26 January 1863, Governor General Rafael de Echagüe approved the appointment of Fray Francisco Villas from the list of three parish priest presented by the Prior Provincial Juan Félix. Villas took possession on 12 February 1863 with his appointment signed by Archbishop Melitón Martínez “under protest.” Nine Recollect parish priests, including future provincials Pablo Bienzobas and Santos Paredes, historian Patricio Marcellán, renowned musician Celestino Yoldi, were subsequently assigned to Antipolo until the last Augustinian Recollect parish priest Cipriano Benedicto who held its spiritual administration from October 1897 up to mid-1898.

III. Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno, Black Nazarene of Quiapo, Manila.



The GMA News and Public Affairs meme says on 31 May 1606 a group of Augustinian Recollects headed by Fray Benito de San Pablo brought to Manila the image of the Black Nazarene from Mexico. The source of its flawed information: 2017 *CBCP News Monitor*. But the GMA News and Public Affairs meme and the *CBCP News Monitor* do not indicate the historical accounts. **Facts: No definite date of arrival of the Black Nazarene image. Fray Benito de San Pablo OAR was born in 1685 in Jarandilla, Spain, and died in Manila in 1768. He arrived in 1711, not in 1606. Cf. SÁDABA, 170-173.**

IV. Spanish Friars in Bohol: Fact: The friars, i.e., Augustinian Recollects, arrived in 1768 to replace the expelled Jesuit missionaries (1596-1768).



A. The Francisco Dagohoy bust at the Luneta installed in 1998 together with our local heroes with a gold plaque that declares: “Enraged by the refusal of a Spanish friar to bury his brother, he led a rebellion against Spanish rule which lasted from 1744-1829. The rebellion which was also fueled by excesses of the Spanish authorities lasted for more than 80 years, the longest in Philippine history. **No friars in Bohol in 1744, but Jesuits.** The Spanish friars, i.e., the Augustinian Recollects, arrived in 1768.

B. In the musical play *Dagon sa Hoyohoy* [Amulet in the Gentle Breeze] written by Marianito Luspo and composed by Lutgardo Labad, **the priest and nemesis of the Boholano patriot Francisco Dagohoy is the Spanish friar named Padre Gaspar Morales who was a Jesuit.** But like what Jesuit Historian José Arcilla declared at the National Conference of Recoletos Culture, Heritage and History at Diego Cera

Auditorium, San Sebastian College Manila, in December 2004, before over five hundred people: **“Thank God, no. We Jesuits are not friars!”**

V. Books Authored by Augustinian Recollects themselves

A. Death of Mauricio Ferrero OAR, builder and founder of Bacolod. In the 1938 *Catalogue* by Miguel Avellaneda, the death of Mauricio Ferrero was on **29 January 1916**, which in fact was the date when the information was received in Rome.⁴ This wrong date is perpetuated in the historical marker at Mauricio Ferrero Street, a stone’s throw away from SM City Bacolod. The correct date of his demise is **8 December 2015**, verified by Ángel Martínez Cuesta and it is found in the *Cosas notables de Bacolod*. The Avellaneda book has more circulation than the 1916 *Boletín de la Provincia de San Nicolás* where the correct date of death was written, and solely one archival library keeps a single copy of this now-rare bulletin intended for Recollect houses only. [Cf. Emmanuel Luis A. ROMANILLOS, *Events in Bacolod, Negros Occidental in the Parish Chronicle (1871-1909) of Fr. Mauricio Ferrero, OAR and other Essays* (Quezon City 2016) 32, 51.]

B. Jesuit arrival in Bohol. The arrival of the first Jesuit missionaries at Bohol was vague and speculative among Recollect sources: Aquilino Bon 1595. Other sources such as the *Cosas notables* of towns: 1992, 1993 or 1594. But my reliable Jesuit sources definitely declare it was **17 November 1596**. I had come upon the Jesuit letter, i.e., *Residencia de Bohol*, at the Jesuit general archive in Rome and at the Church History Faculty Library of the Pontifical Gregorian University.⁵

⁴Miguel AVELLANEDA, *Continuación del Padre Sádaba o Segunda Parte del Catálogo de los religiosos de la Orden de Agustinos Recoletos (1906-1936)*, Rome 1938. 389.

⁵*Residencia de Bohol*, ARCHIVUM ROMANUM SOCIETATIS IESU, *Historiae* 9, 3v; FRANCISCO COLÍN-Pablo PASTELLS, *Labor evangélica, ministerios apostólicos de los obreros de la Compañía de Jesús, fundación y progresos de su provincia en las Islas Filipinas*, Barcelona 1900, II, 152-153.

The books of Pedro Chirino (Rome 1604, Manila 1969) and Horacio de la Costa (Cambridge 1961) are easily accessible in Philippine libraries.⁶

C. Augustinian Recollect arrival in Cuyo. The arrival of the first Augustinian Recollect missionaries in Cuyo, Palawan is the oft-repeated **1622**: See Licinio Ruiz (1925), Patricio Marcellán (1879), Fidel de Blas (1910), Calvo (1959), Pornilos (1989), Romanillos (2001). They contend that Bishop Pedro de Arce of Cebu who handed over the spiritual administration of Cuyo and the Calamianes to the Recollects arrived at Cuyo Island on **27 August 1622**.

José María Echeverría in his dissertation for his Doctorate in Missiology⁷ informs us that the episcopal decree of 27 August 1622 that ceded the spiritual administration vacated by the diocesan priest Juan de Santa Cruz to the Augustinian Recollects of the Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino required the prior approval and permission from the royal viceroy and governor general in Manila who granted such permission on **23 January 1623**. Hence, bearing such royal decree of approval the first group of **missionaries arrived at Cuyo in the last week of January of that same year**. Fr. Echeverría further transcribed in his doctoral dissertation both Bishop Pedro de Arce's episcopal

⁶Pedro CHIRINO, *Relación de las Islas Filipinas i de lo que en ellas an trabajado los Padres de la Compañía de Jesús* (Rome 1604, Manila 1969) 325-326; Horacio DE LA COSTA, *The Jesuits in the Philippines, 1581-1768* (Cambridge 1961) 163-165.

⁷José María Echeverría affirms thus: "Some historians point to the previous year, that is, 1622 [as the arrival of the first Augustinian Recollects in Cuyo], however, we believe this year 1623 to be more probable because the permission of the Royal Patronage was not granted until 23 January 1623 and that aforementioned governor general's permission was the prerequisite or condition provided for by the most Excellent Bishop in order to finalize the granting of the possession or spiritual administration: **In order for them to gain entry into this District and avail themselves of the jurisdiction they have first to ask the approval of the Governor General and Captain General of these Islands by virtue of the Royal Patronage of his Royal Majesty.**" Cf. *Orígenes de las misiones de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino de Agustinos Recoletos en el Extremo Oriente* (Madrid 1952) 118, footnote 257.

decree as well Royal Viceroy and Governor General Alonso Fajardo y Tenza's decree of approval and license issued to the Augustinian Recollects.

Ángel Martínez Cuesta in *Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos* I (1995) affirms on page 388 the same 1622 episcopal decree and the arrival of the first missionaries headed by Juan de Santo Tomás on the **last week of January in the year 1623** and thereafter they spread to Agutaya, Dumarán, Linapacan and northern Palawan and evangelized those scattered islands of the Cuyo archipelago.

D. Arrival of the Virgen del Carmen image in Manila.

Ángel Martínez Cuesta in the first volume of his *Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos* (1995), page 327, has the photograph of the Virgen del Carmen icon which an erroneous caption says it **had been venerated since 1616** when the fact is that **the image arrived in Manila in 1618** with the mission headed by Fray Rodrigo de San Miguel.

Msgr. Sabino Vengco likewise committed the blunder in his book on Marian devotions: **Arrival of Virgen del Carmen icon in 1617**. This writer confronted him at a conference in Bulwagang Rizal and he said he could no longer pinpoint where he obtained his data but he accepted the date from Recollect sources. Cf. Emmanuel Luis A. ROMANILLOS, *The Spires of San Sebastian* (Manila 1991) 5.

E. Arrival of the Virgen de la Salud icon in Manila.

On page 362 of his first volume of *Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos* (1995), Ángel Martínez Cuesta inadvertently affirms that the Virgen de la Salud came to the Philippines with the first religious mission of **1606** and since then the icon has been venerated in Bagumbayan, Manila. The fact is the age-old and existed Marian image was brought to Manila in **1634** by Pedro de la Resurrección who headed the expedition of thirteen Recollects. In 1991, I already researched on the Virgen de la Salud. This date of arrival was deduced from the 1647 historical account of Fray Andrés del Espíritu Santo. Cf. Emmanuel Luis

A. ROMANILLOS, *The Spires of San Sebastian* (Manila 1991)
 9. Twenty-five years, this was repeated in Rommel RUBIA (compiler/researcher), *La Salud. The Black Virgin of Health* (Quezon City 2016) 6.

VI. Inaccuracies in Official Websites

A. Danao City

The Danao City official website declares that Danao was founded by the Augustinian Recollects **in 1609** (Cf. Emmanuel Luis A. ROMANILLOS, *The Augustinian Recollects in Cebu since 1621: Studies and Sources*, Cebu City 2021, footnote 6, page 152). The first Augustinian Recollect missionaries from Spain stepped ashore at Cebu City on 12 May 1606 and proceeded two weeks after to Manila. They returned to Cebu in order to take possession on **9 June 1621** of the Immaculate Conception Shrine which was earlier donated by the Augustinian Bishop Pedro de Arce to them on 4 March 1621 and officially approved by the Royal Viceroy and Governor General Alonso Fajardo de Tenza on 29 April. Thereafter, the Recollects established their future convent and church. Therefore, there were no Recollect missionaries to found the parish and town of Danao in Cebu in 1609. Cf. [//en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Danao,_Cebu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Danao,_Cebu). Another website avers that the town was founded in 1844.

B. Two websites of Jasaan, Misamis: parish and town.

A website identifies **the Augustinian Recollect Fr. Nemesio Llorente as the first Spanish Jesuit of Jasaan** [Jan 26, 1887 - June 25, 1887]! We do not know where the Jasaan researcher obtained such erroneous information. We conjecture that his source could be a parish canonical book, but it is evident that the researcher did not consult such classic Recollect sources as Sádaba, Fidel de Blas or Avellaneda. See *Immaculate Conception Parish Church of Jasaan*, in [//en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immaculate_Conception_Parish_Church_\(Jasaan\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immaculate_Conception_Parish_Church_(Jasaan)). The website of the local government of Jasaan which contained the same blunder on September

2017 fortunately has been taken down: [//jasaan.gov.ph/public/index.php?submenu= 5&home =Tourist%20Spots](http://jasaan.gov.ph/public/index.php?submenu=5&home=Tourist%20Spots). This error, discovered in both parish and town websites, was retrieved on 26 September 2017. Only the parish website has it, as of 11 July 2021.

C. Isabela City (Basilan Province): Brazen Mistake in Wikipedia

The Wikipedia article of Isabela, Basilan, in [//en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isabela,_ Basilan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isabela,_Basilan) provides this erroneous information on the Recollect takeover of Isabela in the wake of the expulsion of the Jesuits: **“The Recoletos de San Jose (Recollects) took over territories previously assigned to the Jesuits.”** This phrase **Recoletos de San Jose** evidently refers to the **Augustinian Recollects of the famed University of San Jose-Recoletos** in Cebu, founded in 1947. Furthermore, the bracketed link, i.e., **Recollects**, provides one more blunder—additionally confounding the issue—with the following entry: “The **Recollects** (French: **Récollets**) were a French reform branch of the Friars Minor, a Franciscan order. Denoted by their gray habits and pointed hoods, the Recollects took vows of poverty and devoted their lives to prayer, penance, and spiritual reflection. Today, they are best known for their presence as missionaries in various parts of the world, most notably in early *Canada*.” Doubtless, the Augustinian Recollects of the Philippines originated from the Spanish reform movement of the Order of the Hermits of Saint Augustine, which commenced in the Augustinian provincial chapter of 1588 in Toledo, Spain. Definitely not a reform branch of the Franciscan Order, the members donned the “gray habits with pointed hoods” with missionary presence “most notably in early Canada.”

VII. Blunders in books authored by historians:

A. Isagani MEDINA, *Cavite Before the Revolution* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press 2002). My complete review of Medina’s magnum opus is published as “Cavite Before the Revolution,” of *The Augustinian Recollects in the Philippines. History and Hagiography* (2001) pp. 369-382. It was published earlier in *Recollectio* vol 17 (1994) 349-356.

Among the blatant untruths and errors in this book are the ff:

1. **“Seventeen friars ran there for cover during the siege,”** writes Medina on page 135. This refers to the thrilling events of the Philippine Revolution in Cavite Province: the siege by the revolutionists of the Imus *casa-hacienda* (estate-house) that commenced on 31 August 1896. Licinio Ruiz on pp. 347-348 quoted the eyewitness account of Recollect Brother Ángel Morrás, the religious friar who was at San Nicolas casa-hacienda in Bacoor and fortunately escaped to Manila. He mentioned **only seven**, namely, **José María Learte, Juan Herrero, Bernardo Angós, Jorge Zueco, Román Caballero, Dámaso Goñi, Victoriano López**. Moreover, they did not run for safety to the Imus estate house, as Medina and living Katipunero Román Abad repeated the error, simply because **the Recollects lived and worked there at the estate-house**.

2. According to Medina, **Román Caballero was a lay administrator** of the hacienda de Imus. In fact, **Fray Román was a religious or non-cleric brother** who professed the religious vows of the Augustinian Recollect Congregation. He built the Prinza Dam in San Nicolas Bacoor City still in use today and the Imus cemetery.

3. Fray **Nicolás Becerra**, builder of the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Pillar of Imus, died of **poisoning**, a conjecture based on a woman's testimony. The *Libro de Difuntos* in the historical provincial archives and Historian General Manuel Carceller both declare that **Fray Nicolás died from a massive heart attack**. We do not know Medina's motive to disregard the official source which was quoted by Sádaba and favor a hearsay.

4. The casa-hacienda set ablaze during the siege flushed out the Recollect friars, as conjectured Medina in his book page 137, quoting Teodoro Agoncillos' *The Revolt of the Masses* (1956) page 176 : **“The unfortunate refugees, unable to stand the smoke of the raging fire, dashed out of the warehouse and so to captivity.”** However, both Medina himself and the Recollect sources did not mention any conflagration nor

subsequent captivity of the resident friars. The massacre of the Recollects of the casa-hacienda took place elsewhere: five friars were slaughtered in Bacoor [Learte, Herrero, Zueco, López, Angós] and their corpses were dumped into the river. Two friars remained in Imus: Goñi was discovered ensconced in a sewer and was butchered instantly. The sexagenarian Caballero rushed forth to meet the incoming patriots who at first did not bother him but he was slain later on.

B. John N. SCHUMACHER. *Father Jose Burgos. A Documentary History (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1999).*

The Jesuit historian erroneously claims that the Recollect Bishop Andrés Ferrero (1846-1909) stayed only for a **few nine months** as parish priest of Pontevedra in Negros Island before he was appointed bishop of Jaro, Iloilo. In fact, he was parish priest of Pontevedra in 1875-1882; 1888-1894 for **a total of thirteen years**. (Cf. SÁDABA, 574-578) There he built the church, *kumbento* and cemetery during his first term. He was vicar provincial of Negros and, concurrently, vicar forane of southern Negros in 1885. Ordained as priest in 1869 in Spain, he was an educator and formator: philosophy in Monteagudo, Navarra and theology in Marcilla. A month after arrival in Manila, he was named *prior presidente* of San Sebastian Convent in Manila in July 1873 and in October 1874 as *compañero* [companion] of Panglao Bohol parish priest for his pastoral experience and in order to learn the Bisayan language. Thus for fourteen years he exercised his pastoral ministry in the Visayas as well as occupied various administrative positions (prior provincial, prior of San Nicolas Convent, provincial councilor of the Province of Saint Nicholas), making him very qualified for episcopal see in 1897.

C. Milagros C. GUERRERO, John N. SCHUMACHER, *Kasaysayan. The Story of the Filipino People*, vol. 5: *Reform and Revolution* (Manila 1998) 12.

The royal decree that dispossessed the Congregation of Augustinian Recollects of all its parishes and *misiones vivas* in Mindanao was enacted on **30 July 1859, eve of the feast of the Jesuit founder Ignatius of Loyola**, from both the old *doctrinas* founded by the Jesuits [six parishes and two mission stations with 10,000 Christians] and those created after their expulsion thus: “...not only the new missions [founded by Recollects after 1768; nineteen parishes with over 88,000 Christians in all] would be under their [Jesuits’] supervision, but also the older towns along the coast held by the Recoletos, which would serve as bases from which the missions into the interior of the island would work.” Here lies the Jesuit John Schumacher’s flawed assertion when he affirms that the royal **decree expelling the Recollects from Mindanao was issued in 1861**. In fact, this was the year when the pro-Recollect royal decree was issued in Spain (**10 September 1861**) indemnifying the Recollects with vacant parishes in Manila to compensate their loss of curacies in Mindanao stemming from the pro-Jesuit 1859 decree.



We now bring to light special cases in detail: two are textbooks used in history and religious education subjects. The college textbooks are awash with errors, omissions and ambiguity. The third case is the NHI historical landmark at the San Francisco de Asis Parish Church facade in Siquijor in need of thorough rectifications based on very reliable Augustinian Recollect historians and published archival sources.

Special Case # 1

The Antipolo-Isabela (Basilan) Controversy in O. D. CORPUZ'S *The Roots of the Filipino Nation*, vol. I (Quezon City 1995), Chapter 11: Fighting for the Parishes, the Filipino Clergy

National Scientist Onofre D. Corpuz in his two volumes of *The Roots of the Filipino Nation* has omissions, conjectures or one-sided assertions that must be rebutted with facts either hitherto untranslated or unknown to historians who did not bother to consult works of Recollect authors (Licinio Ruiz, Manuel Carceller) and sources (*Sinopsis histórica de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino de las Islas Filipinas* II; *Historia general de la Orden de Agustinos Recoletos*; *Quærens. Journal of Theology and Pastoral Life*) but favored Jesuit historians (John N. Schumacher, Nicholas Cushner) and the scholarly journal as sources (*Philippine Studies*) and a Spanish source *Historia general de Filipinas desde el descubrimiento de dichas Islas hasta nuestros días* III (Madrid 1895) of José Montero y Vidal.

ERRONEOUS: “Ten Jesuits arrived in 1859. [...] The next year a royal decree assigned the curacies in the newly created province of Mindanao to the Jesuits, to be taken over by them as each curacy was vacated by the Recollects; it was the latter to whom these curacies had been assigned since 1768.” [O.D. CORPUZ, *The Roots of the Filipino Nation*, vol. I, page 591].

RECTIFICATIONS:

1. The Augustinian Recollects had arrived in Mindanao in 1622 and later were given the eastern half of the huge island [see map next page]. They **evangelized Caraga District comprising Linao, Surigao, Agusan, Siargao, Cagayan, Bacuag and Higaquit**. In 1768, the Recollects had eight religious who ministered to 14,000 Christians in eight parishes: Camiguin, Cagayan, Butuan, Surigao, Tandag, Bislig, Catarman and Lanao. The Jesuits had six ministers in Zamboanga, Dapitan, Iligan and Misamis with their two mission stations with a total

population of 10,000 Christians. Six Jesuit ministries were handed over to the Recollects in 1768. Following Corpuz's logic, only those six parishes should be returned to them. Yet, when the Jesuits returned to Mindanao, the Recollects were mandated to cede to the restored Society of Jesus the parishes they themselves evangelized since 1622 as well as those by the Jesuits, in accordance with the **30 July 1959** royal decree of Queen Isabel II, **not 1860 as Corpuz wrongly implies**. Thus **nineteen parishes** were gradually handed over to the Jesuits whose number was insufficient to manage them. Hence, transfer was delayed for decades until the Recollects requested to keep some parishes as token of their evangelization of the big island where scores of their confreres suffered deprivations, harsh living conditions, risky travels and death. Nineteen Recollect ministries were ceded from 1862 through 1883.



Map of Mindanao shows the imaginary line traversing the Island from Punta Sulawan in the north to Cabo San Agustín in the south. The Jesuits evangelized the western Mindanao, while the Augustinian Recollects its eastern part. Source: FIDEL DE BLAS, *Labor evangélica de los padres agustinos recoletos en las Islas Filipinas* (Zaragoza 1910).

Towns ceded to Jesuits by Recollects with Cession Years & Population

Town	Year of Cession	Population
1. Tetuan	1862	2,715
2. Isabela	1862	378
3. Zamboanga	1865	11,477
4. Polloc	1865	282
5. Davao	1868	1,064
6. Dapitan	1870	5,860
7. Lubungan	1870	2,040
8. Surigao	1871	5,480
9. Gigaquit	1872	4,643
10. Bislig	1873	7,606
11. Mainit	1875	3,341
12. Butuan	1875	5,569
13. Bunawan	1875	1,807
14. Balingasag	1877	8,762
15. Dinagat	1878	3,618
16. Cantilan	1879	9,676
17. Salvador	1879	4,989
18. Jasaan	1882	5,849
19. Numancia	1883	3,365
TOTAL		88,163

1. Vague assertion: “Although they [the Recollects] had merely succeeded to the Jesuit curacies when these were expelled, they filed a vigorous protest against the decree, claiming that they were being dispossessed.” Cf. **CORPUZ, *The Roots*, 591.**

The crystal-clear facts: That the Recollects “merely succeeded to the Jesuit curacies,” yes, to solely six Jesuit curacies, is vague. The Recollects possessed eight curacies in Mindanao and their *visitas* before 1768. Again these curacies were not Jesuit—had

never been Jesuit—since the beginning. The Jesuits had nothing to do with them. And rightly so, the Recollects filed a protest against the decree because they were unjustly dispossessed of their own curacies—not unlike a lightning bolt from nowhere that struck them—including those fourteen curacies they themselves had set up since the Jesuit expulsion in 1768 and handed over to them on account of the 30 July 1859 decree. The Recollects claimed they were despoiled without due process. They were not consulted beforehand about their expulsion from Mindanao where they had shed blood, sweat and tears and lost some lives since 1622, especially during the Caraga Revolt and unexpected Moro incursions. According to the provisions of the Laws of the Indies, such action required prior consultation with the contending parties, yes, with the involved parties in the dispossession. Furthermore, Bishop Romualdo Jimeno, the Dominican bishop of the Most Holy Name of Jesus of Cebu that included the Visayas, Mindanao, Palawan, and the Marianas, asked only for the former Jesuit curacies to be returned to them. To his surprise, the whole Mindanao was to be ceded to Jesuits. To their dismay, the superiors retorted that their 27 friars were to be expelled from the land they evangelized since 1622. Without due process, it was a breach of the Laws of the Indies, completely against the traditional legal practice in Spanish colonies.

2. Blatant untruth and, at most, ambiguous assertion: After all, they had held the curacies **for almost a century** by now. Cf. CORPUZ, *The Roots*, 591.

The full crystal-clear facts: True enough, it was ninety-one years since the **Recollects received Zamboanga, Dapitan, Iligan and Misamis with their two mission stations**. But the **Recollects had eight parishes** evangelized by more than 250 missionaries since 1622, eight parishes which the Jesuits who had no part at all in their evangelization, namely, **Camiguin, Cagayan, Butuan, Surigao, Tandag, Bislig, Catarman and Lanao**.⁸ And what about the fourteen parishes [**Sagay, Davao, Balingasag, Higaquit,**

⁸Emmanuel Luis A. ROMANILLOS, *Fr. Pedro Peláez's Unpublished Letters on the Secularization Controversy*, in *Quærens. Journal of Theology and Pastoral Life*, vol. 11, no. 2 (December 2016) 23.

Iponan, Mambajao, Jimenez, Mainit, Dinagat, Talacogon, Linao, Polloc and Isabela] established by the Recollects after 1768, obviously after the Jesuit expulsion? All these fourteen non-Jesuit parishes were ceded to them, and the **total population of all nineteen parishes was 88,163**. It was **78,000** more Christians than the **10,000** the Recollects had received in 1768. The phrase “almost a century” refers to 1768, as it was the Recollects to whom the curacies had been assigned since 1768. But Corpuz adds: “The Jesuits and the Recollects had been rivals in Mindanao **since the 17th century**.” Corpuz implies that the Recollects had indeed evangelized Mindanao since the 17th century [exactly since 1622], not only “almost a century,” but for 237 long years!

3. Conjecture: The Jesuits and the Recollects had been **rivals in Mindanao** since the seventeenth century. **Cf. CORPUZ, *The Roots*, 591.**

Clarificatory Remarks: If they were considered rivals in the evangelization of Mindanao by O.D. Corpuz, why would a Jesuit beg for the “rival” Recollect’s help and why would a Recollect rush to succor the “rival” Jesuit? It was 1662 when famed **Padre Capitán, Fray Agustín de San Pedro**, rushed to Lake Lanao and liberate the embattled Jesuit **Fr. Gregorio Belín** and his Christian flock. In March 1662, the Jesuit wrote him a letter begging for his help. Sultan Kudarat’s 4,000 Moro warriors and other local chiefs had seized three boatloads of Christians and food supplies the night before and slaughtered numerous Spanish troops and Boholano warriors. Then they proceeded to lay siege against Fort Santo Tomas where the Jesuit and his group had sought refuge. The beleaguered flock stored rice stocks that could last a month, even if they consumed one meal a day. A courier slipped through the Moro siege with a letter to Padre Capitán. Belin besought him not to delay his forces as his flock was in imminent danger of decimation if he would arrive too late. The Jesuit’s heart-rending letter goes thus:

It is impossible that the heart of your Reverence would allow us who are here in the lake area to perish. For the love of God, for whom you had suffered so much to resettle and subjugate

them, please come to our aid with greatest force. [...] I beg your Reverence for the sake of God and His Mother to succor us in everything. If you have two boats with you, then that would be a good thing. At the shore of Bayug there is a fort and Balooy [present-day Balo-i] is fortified. Do what your Reverence [Fray Agustín] may decide and believe me you will have here a most affectionate friend and son and that your holy prayers may not fail us.⁹

Padre Capitán killed scores of the Moro warriors and drove away the survivors down south. Belín and his Christian flock were liberated. The Jesuit historian Francisco Combés in his 1667 *Historia de las Islas de Mindanao, Joló, y sus adyacentes* had only praises for Padre Capitán: “Without owing to anything to what a religious is, he fitted what a soldier is in many occasions with so much gallantry, so that his valor had won him fame and thus he is known in the Philippines as *El Padre Capitán*.”

Indeed, up to these days the two religious orders both worship the same Triune God, propagate the same Faith, disseminate the same Gospel, are sons of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Above all, their common goal was, and still is the salvation of souls for the greater glory of God, especially from the clutches of their common enemy, from the invading Moros and oppressive Spanish officials. The **Jesuits and Recollects indeed helped each other, especially in times of dire need**, thus discarding what Corpuz conjectures as “rivalry” in Mindanao.

4. Conjecture stemming from ignorance of the facts. “It is no wonder that the archbishop of Manila called Antipolo the pearl of the curacies, being one of the most lucrative parishes in the entire archipelago. [...] It was in this context that the Antipolo case [vacant Antipolo parish] was resolved. The archdiocesan authority nominated Francisco Campinas, a native priest, for the curacy. **Recollects predictably contested the vacancy** under the new decree. The prize was one they could ill afford to lose by default:

⁹Licinio RUIZ. *Sinopsis histórica* I (Manila 1925), quoted in Emmanuel Luis A. ROMANILLOS, *Amor Diffusivus. Augustinian Recollect Icons and Biographies* I (Quezon City 2021) 363.

the pearl of the curacies in return for the small, poor, god-forsaken doctrina of Isabela on the island of Basilan off Mindanao that they now had to turn over to the Jesuits.” Cf. CORPUZ, *The Roots*, 590, 592.

Hitherto unknown facts: Corpuz ignored the Recollect source as Licinio Ruiz’ *Sinopsis histórica I* containing a letter written by Provincial Juan Félix in Manila to Vicar Provincial Guillermo Agudo in Madrid on 12 February 1862:

I have ceaselessly given example of submissive obedience to the royal decree [of 30 July 1859]. A parish in Mindanao (Mainit) has just been declared vacant and naturally I have prevented myself so that the Jesuit fathers may avail themselves of the right and privilege stemming from said royal order. There are many vacant *doctrinas* in all the dioceses and in the archdiocese of Manila, but up to now I have not made any move, nor do I plan a move at all.¹⁰

Definitely, the Recollect provincial made no move to immediately “grab” the rich Antipolo parish from the secular clergy, as Corpuz would make us believe. On the contrary, the exchange of letters between the Vicar Capitular Pedro Peláez and Juan Félix revealed an open line of communication between the friar superior and the archdiocesan administrator who was previously the secretary of the deceased archbishop Fray José Aranguren, a Recollect friar. Peláez wrote to Félix:

From now on, I shall disallow that rumors [of “parish-grabbing”] be spread about you. If upon answering the recent official letter of the Government, I say something in favor of the clergy, it shall not be without mentioning you or any Order in the least. In return, I wish you would not avail yourself of said royal order [10 September 1861] in this period of *sede vacante* [of Manila Archdiocese], nor would sanction any changes in order to give time for animosities to subside. I am confident that you are of the same opinion, and it is only for this reason I write this letter and I ask that favor from you.¹¹

¹⁰*Carta del P. Prior Provincial Juan Félix de la Encarnación al P. Guillermo Agudo, comisario y vicario provincial de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino en España*, 12 febrero 1862, quoted in Licinio RUIZ, *Sinopsis histórica I*, 279 -280.

¹¹Manuel CARCELLER, *Historia general de la Orden de Agustinos Recoletos XI* (1837-1866) (Madrid 1967) 571-572.

The vicar capitular wanted to know more from the provincial himself about the Recollect plans and moves to thresh out common problems and find immediate solutions that would please all sectors. He said he would pay the provincial a visit one afternoon at his office in the Recoletos priory in Intramuros, Manila. This clearly showed some tact and diplomacy, close relationship, mutual respect and common effort to solve the raging controversy between the two high officials and representatives of the colonial Church. Juan Félix, fully aware of the fragile situation, wrote the Cebu Bishop on 18 May 1863:

These towns of Cavite, especially Antipolo, have to be fatal and its grave outcome shall have repercussions of immeasurable transcendence. Antipolo is the start of a series of animosities; there is a link that your Excellency knows very well shall precipitate the events that by themselves take place, driven once more by revolutionary spirit.¹²

Definitely, Corpuz had not consulted Recollect sources at all, as evidenced by their absence in the detailed endnotes and bibliography of his two-volume book now widely used as textbook in Philippine History courses in universities and colleges. The Peláez-Félix interaction could have most probably modified his view that the Recollects superiors “predictably” contested the vacancy, when the fact revealed the opposite.

This controversy involving the 30 July 1859 and 10 September 1961 decrees exposed the conflict between Filipino priests and Spanish friars which, according to Manila Archbishop Melitón Martínez’s letter to Regent Francisco Serrano in Madrid “would develop an anti-Spanish character because the former [Filipino clergy] saw the government as an ally of the friars.” The archbishop then deemed the controversy as a “little fire” that “should an accident happen, could turn into a great conflagration in which the very same people who occupy themselves with spreading baseless fears would be the first to be consumed.” Eventually, that

¹²*Carta del P. Juan Félix de la Encarnación al Ilustrísimo Sr. Dn. Romualdo Jimeno, Obispo de Cebú, 18 mayo 1863, quoted in Licinio RUIZ, Sinopsis histórica I, 278.*

little fire was the Gom-Bur-Za execution that inspired Jose Rizal's novels which was followed by the author's public execution and the Philippine Revolution of 1896 that wrought havoc on the last bastion of the Spanish Empire in the Far East. Corpuz gives us the impression that the Recollects "grabbed" Manila parishes but he ignores the root cause of the polemic: their expulsion from twenty-seven in Mindanao on account of the 1859 royal decree as well as the 1861 royal decree compensating them with those in Manila. All told, the Recollects were not the protagonists; they were victims of the intense dispute which was definitely not of their own making. We now conclude this episode of Philippine history and Augustinian Recollect history in the Philippines with what Licinio Ruiz in 1925 has to say:

Doubtless it was one of the greatest miscalculations of the Spanish government, and it was one that had the most disastrous consequences. We should only make it evident and leave it very clear that the Recollect Order, with the prior provincial at the helm, even if it was the most concerned, was the one that intervened the least in the turmoil and that had observed the highest degree of prudence in all those polemics. The Recollects were calmly working in their curacies and missions in Mindanao when the scruples of Msgr. Jimeno made him ask her Majesty for the replacement of the Recollects with missionaries of the Society. In this cause are rooted all those tumultuous events.¹³



¹³Licinio RUIZ, *Sinopsis histórica* I, 278-279.

Special Case # 2

The NHI Landmark in Siquijor in Siquijor Island

The landmark installed by the National Historical Institute at the San Francisco de Asis Parish Church façade in 1984 contains three factual errors, a typo and an ambiguous term. Our chief sources for their corrections are Angel MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos I* (Madrid 1995) and II (Madrid 2015); Francisco Sádaba, *Catálogo de los religiosos agustinos recoletos* (Madrid 1906); Licinio RUIZ, *Sinopsis histórica de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino de las Islas Filipinas de la Orden de Agustinos Recoletos I* (Manila 1925); Manuel CARCELLER, *Historia general de la Orden de los Recoletos de San Agustín X: 1808-1836* (Madrid 1962).



I. Factual Errors:

The NHI marker declares that San Francisco de Asis Parish in Siquijor was made a **parish on 1 February 1783**. However, Ángel Martínez Cuesta writes that it became an independent parish separated from Dumaguete **in 1781**. Cf. MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos II*, 718. At that time, there were only 650 families who lived scattered throughout the entire

island of Siquijor. Cf. MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos* I, 622.

The curacy of San Francisco de Asis in **Siquijor** was **entrusted to the Recollects on 12 April 1794, not in 1793**, in exchange for those of Mambusao and Batan in Panay Island. Cf. MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos* I, 621-622; II, 718.

The marker blunder: **Alonso de los Dolores** was **parish priest in 1795-1831**. His full name was **Fray Alonso Pérez de Gonzalo de los Dolores** (23 January 1768-5 July 1845), cf. Manuel CARCELLER, *Historia general de la Orden de los Recoletos de San Agustín* X (1808-1836) 647. SÁDABA's *Catalogo* lists Fray Alonso de los Dolores as a member of the 26th Recollect mission that left Puerto de Santa María, Cádiz, Spain for Mexico on 16 December 1792. There he spent two years before boarding at Acapulco the frigate *San Fernando* that reached Cavite on **15 June 1795**. After the statutory study of Visayan Cebuano and proficiency exam, the provincial council appointed Fray Alonso as **parish priest of Siquijor on 18 June 1796**. He served the curacy **for almost 36 uninterrupted years: 1796-1831**. Cf. Sádaba, *Catálogo de los religiosos agustinos recoletos*, 368-369; MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos* I, 621-622. Elected prior provincial by the provincial chapter in Manila on 23 April 1831 and informed about it, Fray Alonso continued working in his Siquijor parish till September 1831 and began his visits to ministries before arriving in Manila in April 1832 to continue his office as prior provincial at the Recoletos friary in Intramuros, see CARCELLER, *Historia general de la Orden de los Recoletos de San Agustín* X, 647-648.

II. Typographical errors:

The correct name of the parish priest of Dumaguete in 1754-1776 was **Fr. José Fernández de Septién**, not **Fr. Setten** as indicated by the marker. The peninsular Spanish diocesan priest began the stone church edifice of Siquijor, which Fray

Alonso finished. See MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos* II, 719. Even the Augustinian Recollect Historian Licinio Ruiz errs in calling him **Padre Setién**, cf. Licinio RUIZ, *Sinopsis histórica de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino de las Islas Filipinas de la Orden de Agustinos Recoletos* I (Manila 1925) 769. Of Fray Alonso, here is what Licinio Ruiz additionally says: “He likewise finished the kumbento made of solid *cota* just like a bulwark in order to resist attacks perpetrated by the Moros.”

III. Ambiguous phrase:

Martínez Cuesta affirms that **marauding Moro pirates** from the south were the traditional adversaries of missionaries and parishioners alike. Constant Moro incursions constrained the Recollect ministers to construct solid churches and kumbentos elsewhere in the country. Hence, the church and kumbento of the coastal parish of Siquijor were practically fortress-like structures. The NHI marker refers simply to the generic ***tulisang-dagat*** or sea pirates, apparently in order not to offend those Filipinos affected by the term **Moro pirates**. See MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos* I, 622; II, 719; Licinio RUIZ, *Sinopsis histórica I*, 769. In 1818, the Moro pirates captured twenty inhabitants of Siquijor during the Recollect administration of this Visayan curacy. Cf. MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos* II, 719.



Special Case # 3

Conjectures, Factual Errors and Corrections in REED 1 “REVELATION AND FAITH” (2011)

Prepared by SEAP-REED TEXTBOOK COMMITTEE

CHRONOLOGY OF ST. EZEKIEL MORENO’S LIFE (pp. 53-54)

1. **CONJECTURE**, baseless and improbable, hence it is to be deleted:

~~1863, at the age of 15 he entered the Augustinian Recollect convent in Monteagudo, Spain.~~

RATIONALE: Biographers Angel Martínez Cuesta and Toribio Minguella have no record whatsoever of Saint Ezekiel’s stay as a postulant in Monteagudo, Navarra, in 1863. But we know for a fact that he entered the Augustinian Recollect novitiate there at age 16 and took the habit on **21 September 1864**.

2. **ERRONEOUS:** 1865, September 22, he professed his final vows.

CORRECT: The **22nd of September 1865** was the date when he professed his simple [temporal] vows after the mandatory one-year of novitiate at Monteagudo. He made his profession of his solemn [final] vows on September 22, **1868 in Marcilla, Navarra**.

3. **ERRONEOUS:** 1865, October, he left Cadiz, Spain, along with 17 missionaries for Philippine mission.

CORRECT: He left Cadiz in **October 1869, after four years of theology at Marcilla** and arrived in Manila on 10 February 1870.

4. **ERRONEOUS:** 1871, June 3, Archbishop Meliton Martinez ordained him as a priest.

CORRECT: **2 June 1871** is the accurate date of his ordination to the priesthood by the Manila archbishop. See Angel MARTÍNEZ CUESTA’s *El Camino del deber* (1975). As evidentiary proof, there is a photocopy of the rare manuscript [in front of page 41, Emmanuel Luis A. ROMANILLOS, *Bishop Ezekiel Moreno, Augustinian*

Recollect Moreno, an Augustinian Recollect Saint Among Filipinos, Quezon City 1993] issued by the Archdiocese for his beatification process in Manila. The proof is from the Archdiocesan Archives of Manila in Intramuros. The date **3 June 1871** is taken from Toribio Minguella's biography of Bishop Ezekiel Moreno.

5. ERRONEOUS: 1873, **May 3**, he was **recalled** to Calapan, Mindoro;

CORRECT: His canonical appointment as parish priest of Calapan, Mindoro, was on **10 May 1873**. Father Ezekiel was **assigned, not recalled**, to Calapan. His first pastoral assignment was Calapan but he was parish vicar or curate of his elder brother Father Eustaquio Moreno, the parish priest.

6. ERRONEOUS: 1879, he **continued** his pastoral ministry in Sto. Tomas, Batangas.

CORRECT: In 1879, he **began** his pastoral ministry in Santo Tomas, Batangas.

7. ERRONEOUS: 1881, February, he became assistant parish priest of his brother Father Eustaquio in Sta. Cruz, Manila.

CORRECT: It was on **February 24, 1881**, when Father Ezekiel was appointed parish priest of Sta. Cruz; his brother was still in Calapan, Mindoro. When Father Eustaquio arrived at Sta Cruz, that was the time when he became his assistant parish priest. The period was **19 September 1881 -18 September 1882**.

8. ERRONEOUS: **1881**, June, he was appointed prior in Imus, Cavite.

CORRECT: Father Ezekiel was designated prior of the Recollect community of the Hacienda de Imus, Cavite on **19 September 1882**.

9. VAGUE: **1885**, April, he became a **superior** in Monteagudo, Spain.

CORRECT: To be precise, it was on **27 April 1885** when the provincial chapter elected him as **the** [not “a”] superior of the community in Monteagudo, Spain.

10. ERRONEOUS: 1906, February, he contracted a malignant cancer of the palate and throat.

CORRECT: On **14 February 1906**, Bishop Ezekiel Moreno had his first surgery of the nasopharynx in Madrid. He was diagnosed to have cancer of the nasopharynx on **5 October 1905** in Pasto, Colombia. The initial symptoms appeared in **August 1905** while still in his Colombian diocese. He arrived at Cadiz, Spain, on 8 February 1906 and took the train to Madrid for the surgery.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TEXTBOOK

The errors were reported to the Recollect Educational Apostolate of the Philippines in 2012. I had recommended the necessary rectifications of the textbook for the next edition if ever one was published. Any future textbook on Augustinian Recollect theme or lessons must undergo rigorous evaluation by a qualified team of evaluators or experts in the subject matter before sending it to the printing press. We cannot risk teaching either untruths or erroneous conjectures or baseless historical accounts or vague assertions or grave omissions to our teachers who would pass them on to our students.



Recommendations

1. Equipped with a sufficient knowledge of the History of the Augustinian Recollects in the Philippines, a SARF or RAY chapter, student organization, parishioner or any member of the **Augustinian Recollect Family should be encouraged and advised to report to the Commission on History, Culture**

and Heritage-Recoletos [CoHCH-R] or to inform directly the appropriate government agency such as the National Historical Commission of the Philippines, National Museum or National Commission for Culture and Arts or the concerned local government units on blunders or omissions in markers, in publications or in the internet. And it must be done in writing—for the record purposes—and it should be followed up. The agency concerned, indeed, recommends a written official letter addressed to it, especially with attachments, documents or proofs rectifying the error or errors and omission by their memorial markers.

2. The **Division on Conservation and Preservation of CoHCH-R** may have an added task: **to handle any concern with respect to omissions and blunders**—inadvertent or intentional—and to provide well-researched recommendations or suggestions to proper government agencies, textbook authors and committees or private entities in order to rectify and thus to set the record straight as well as to end such errors which unluckily may be handed down to the reading public or tourists of the present and future generations.

3. The **Augustinian Recollect community should be reminded of the task to visit, or to send someone to visit, on a regular basis the historical landmark, monument or site** pertinent to the Order of Augustinian Recollects in their vicinity, monitor its upkeep and make the necessary reports with regards to their condition. Thus it strengthens and sustains the efforts in the preservation of the Recollect legacy, as mandated by the CoHCH-R By-laws.

4. The **CoHCH-R** is enjoined to assign a committee of writers from various schools, seminaries and parishes to **publish a handy colored directory or manual of OAR historical sites, monuments and landmarks in the Philippines**—complete with their documentation, geographical locations, accessibility, bibliographical sources, photographs and texts of their history or historical background that led to their installation. After a book launch duly disseminated in the print and broadcast media or social media, this **Directory of OAR Heritage in the Philippines** should

be available in our colleges, libraries, seminaries, universities, parishes and quasi-parishes in order to foster love for Recollect heritage among our constituents as well as to promote knowledge and promotion of our rich cultural heritage among history enthusiasts, cultural stakeholders, tour guides and the general public.

5. Aimed to assiduously promote research and knowledge as well as to instill pride and esteem of the rich Augustinian Recollect culture, heritage and history among members of the Augustinian Family and the Roman Catholic laity and clergy in general, a day is to be determined for the institutional celebration of the Augustinian Recollect Cultural Legacy Day. The occasion shall be called known as **AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECT CULTURAL HERITAGE DAY, whose acronym is ARCH DAY on the Twelfth Day of May**, to commemorate the arrival of the first Augustinian Recollect missionaries in our country, or other appropriate dates as may be fixed by the Provincial Chapter or by the Prior Provincial and his Council upon the CoHCH-R's recommendation.

It is a working day for the faculty, academic and non-academic personnel but classes may be suspended so students can join the religious, academic and cultural activities of the day. The Augustinian Recollect Family, *i.e.*, AR Sisters, SARF, RAY, OAR universities, seminaries, schools, *cofradías*, are enjoined to participate in any activities. A committee may suggest such activities as Thanksgiving Mass, academic symposium on such legacy as Recollect icons, landmark, monument, contribution to any field of knowledge, historical research, parade, religious procession, cultural program highlighting Recollect heritage, sports, and contests propagating cultural studies.



Appendix: Saint Ezekiel Moreno

Errors on the Life and Ministry of Saint Ezekiel Moreno on Video Presentations, Live Streaming and Tarpaulin

I. PowerPoint Presentation of Saint Ezekiel's Life on 19 August 2018:

On the Solemn Feast of Saint Ezekiel at the Saint Nicholas de Tolentino Parish Church in Quezon City on 19 August 2018, a PowerPoint Presentation on the life and ministry of the first Recollect Saint was shown. Some captions are corrected below:

 Young Ezekiel with mother Josefa. He was born on April 9, 1848 in Alfaro, La Rioja, Spain. 	 Ezekiel as a young priest. He and his older brother Julian were Recollect priests. His brother, now a Blessed, was one of the martyrs of Motril. 
 From the Philippines he was transferred in 1894 to Colombia. 	 Bishop of Pasto 1894 -1906 

1. [upper left] Saint Ezekiel as young boy with his mother; the young boy in the photo was his elder brother Eustaquio who became a Recollect.

2. [upper right] Blessed Julian Moreno was not Saint Ezekiel's older brother; **Julian Moreno was his nephew, the son of his younger sister Valentina.**

3. [*lower left*] Saint Ezekiel transferred from the Philippines **not to Colombia but to Spain in 1885**. He transferred from Marcilla, Navarra, Spain where he had been elected by the provincial chapter as confessor after his triennium as prior of Monteagudo ended in 1888 and he travelled to Bogotá, Colombia as prior provincial of Candelaria Province.

4. [*lower left*] Saint Ezekiel did not transfer from the Philippines **in 1894 to Colombia. He left Spain for Colombia in November 1888**.

5. [*lower right*] Saint Ezekiel was **Bishop of Pasto in 1896-1906**.

II. A Video Presentation, 14 August 2021 [FB Province of Saint Ezekiel Moreno]:

Topic: Saint Ezekiel's Marian devotion: **"After he had his cancer and treatment he returned to Spain and spent his last days in Monteagudo."** THE FACTS:: In a letter, in August 1905 Bishop Moreno revealed his cancer symptoms and was diagnosed to have cancer on 5 October 1905. On 8 February 1906, he arrived at Cádiz, Spain to undergo two surgeries in February and March 1906 in Madrid. In May, resigned to his fate, he withdrew to the Convent of the *Virgen del Camino* in Monteagudo, Navarra.

III. FB REAP Novena Mass Live Streaming:

"Saint Ezekiel spent the whole day praying." THE FACT: He devoted almost seven hours to prayer in Colombia from his daily schedule of 4:00 AM to 10:15 PM. according to his biographer Bishop Toribio Minguela. He spent many hours of prayer and the rest of the day fulfilling his pastoral tasks in the Philippines.

IV. FB RAY DE FILIPINAS Novena Live Streaming:

Saint Ezekiel became bishop of Pasto in 1899. THE FACT: **1896-1906.** That was the identical error spread and shared by five FB accounts.

A. The Augustinians. Province of St. Thomas of Villanova (augustinians.org/ saints-1/august-19)): August 19 – Saint Ezekiel Moreno: “ Today’s feast honors the memory of an **Augustinian friar** who labored for many years in the Philippines and in Colombia, South America as a religious, a priest and later as bishop. [...] He was a leader in the restoration of the Recollect Province of La Candelaria in Colombia, Vicar Apostolic of Casanare and in 1899 became the bishop of Pasto.”

B. The SVD [Societas Verbi Divini] Mission Philippines, Inc. (13K members), shared the post of Myrna Villarosa with the ff. lines from the Augustinian website: [...] He was a leader in the restoration of the Recollect Province of La Candelaria; in 1899 he became the bishop of Pasto.” Posted on 19 August, it quotes verbatim **The Augustinians. Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova.**

C. AMRSP [Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines]: “Happy Feast Day! We are celebrating the Feast of Saint Ezekiel Moreno, Titular of the OAR Philippine Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno. [...] in 1899 became the bishop of Pasto.” Posted on 19 August. It quotes **The Augustinians. Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova.**

D. OSA Province of Santo Niño de Cebu. This post of 19 August 2021 quotes verbatim **The Augustinians. Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova.**

E. DEVOTEES of ST. EZEKIEL MORENO and CATHOLICISM. This FB account shared **the AMRSP post.**



[[above] Tarpaulin at the Saint Ezekiel Moreno Spirituality and Development Center [SEMSDEC, Brgy. San Jose, Puerto Princesa City. As of March 2019.

V. Blunder in a TIMELINE TARPAULIN at Saint Ezekiel Moreno Spirituality and Development Center at Brgy. San Jose, Puerto Princesa City at the lobby:

Saint Ezekiel Moreno “**volunteered in the Order of the Augustinian Recollect [sic]**”; he expressed “**his intention as a young friar to work in the missions entrusted to the Order.**” THE FACT: All young friars of Monteagudo and Marcilla joined the Order in order to work in the missions—there were no other missions— in the wake of Prime Minister Mendizábal’s despoliation decrees in 1835 and thereafter.

ST. EZEKIEL MORENO IN THE PHILIPPINES

Did you know that St. Ezekiel Moreno stayed in the Philippines throughout a span of 15 years?

MANILA (1870)

- On 10 February 1870, he arrived in Manila & lived in the now-extinct convent and formation house of San Nicolás in Intramuros (Recoletos) where he finished his theological formation.

PALAWAN (1872)

- In February 1872, he was appointed chief missionary, penal colony and military chaplain of a missionary expedition whose objective was to set up a military stronghold and penal colony at Puerto Princesa in Palawan.

MINDORO (1873)

- The Augustinian Recollect prior provincial then sent him to his first parochial assignment in Calapan, Mindoro.

ILO-ILO (MID-1870s)

- He sailed to Jaro in the mid 1870s to receive tonsure and minor orders from the Dominican Bishop.

LAS PIÑAS (1876)

- In 1876, he was assigned in Las Piñas and assisted the people during the drought season.

BATANGAS (1879)

- Saint Ezekiel, it goes without saying, obeyed the superiors' wishes and travelled to his new ministry at Santo Tomás in Batangas.

NEGROS

- St. Ezekiel travelled to Talisay to undergo treatment of his anemia under Fr. Fernando Cuenca.

CAVITE (1882–1885)

- In 1882-1885, Saint Ezekiel administered the Recollect haciendas of Bacoor and Imus in Cavite. During the horrifying cholera plague, he took charge of the barrios of Mambog and Salinas in Bacoor where 5,200 perished in the bacterial epidemic.



HugotSeminarista



f t i w @HugotSem

VI. HUGOTSEMINARISTA (237K FB followers):

Q Ilo-ilo (Mid-1870s)

- “He sailed to Jaro in the mid 1870s [sic] to receive tonsure and minor orders from the Dominican Bishop.” Loved by 929; liked by 814 (as of 29 August 2021).

Facts: Fray Ezekiel received the tonsure and minor orders in **June 1870** in Jaro, Iloilo, from Bishop Mariano Cuartero OP. I commented there : “He spent a few days in Jaro in June 1870 for

his minor orders and at once he returned to Intramuros, Manila to finish his theological formation.” This *HugotSeminarista* post had introductory lines which declared, among others, that he served Iloilo, a blunder rebutted by facts. In the mid-1870s, he was parish priest of Calapan (since June 1873), later as vicar forane and vicar provincial of Mindoro until his transfer to Las Piñas in June 1876.



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Glossary of Terms

alcalde mayor — chief executive of a political province, provincial governor.

arancel — stole fee, church fee

Augustinian Recollects — a group of Augustinians who, “moved by a special collective charism, expressed their desire to live with renewed fervor,” were granted houses of primitive lifestyle as decreed in the Fifth Definition of the Provincial Chapter of Castile on 5 December 1588, deemed as the Birth Anniversary or Foundation Day of the Augustinian Recollection.

beatas — pious women, terciarias

brother — non-clerical member of a religious order.

cabecera — the population center of a town or pueblo where a municipal building, parish church and kumbento; town with several barrios; capital town of the province.

Calced Augustinians — Agustinos Calzados or Hermits of Saint Augustine, or simply Augustinians, professed members of the Order of Saint Augustine. The Agustinos Descalzos, Discalced of Saint Augustine or Augustinian Recollects often refer to their confreres as such.

canonical collation — official appointment given by the bishop ordinarily to a religious as parish priest. He could be removed as parish priest by the prior provincial unless a provincial chapter assigned him to a position in the province or order, as prior provincial, local prior or any office in the province.

casa tribunal — edifice housing the offices of the gobernadorcillo and officials of the pueblo, and sometimes the jail. Also known as tribunal.

chapter — triennial assembly of superiors and delegates from the entire province to take up major decisions affecting the religious life, the province’s state, financial matters and others.

coadjutor — assistant parish priest, parochial vicar.

comisario provincial — customarily, he was vicar provincial, superior of the religious communities in Spain, in charge of recruiting missionaries from the convents of the Recollect Congregation for the missions in the Philippines.

convento — kumbento, parish house, rectory, the residence of the parish priest and assistant priest where the parochial office is customarily found.

cosas notables — a book in a parish or convent where the remarkable events of the parish or convent were recorded in a chronological manner.

cota — stone fort for defense against rebels or Moro raiders.

Crónicas — Chronicles. It refers to the *Historia general de la Orden de Agustinos Recoletos*, the Order's general history, now in thirteen volumes.

curacy — the ecclesiastical territory under the supervision of a pastor or parish priest.

curate — the priest who manages a curacy; also refers to the assistant priest.

diocese — ecclesiastical territory of several parishes under the jurisdiction of a local ordinary, the bishop.

diocesan clergy — priests working in a diocese and whose local ordinary is the bishop.

doctrina — curacy served by a regular or religious priest with canonical collation; a town of natives recently converted when it is not yet set up as a parish nor has it acquired the status as parish.

doctrinero — teacher of catechism; missionary in charge of a doctrina. the minister, usually a religious or missionary, who dispenses the Sacraments and administers customarily the doctrina by himself.

donado — a person who works in a monastery without professing the vows

encomendero — person granted an encomienda, a royal grant of jurisdiction to a Spanish official who administers a portion of the conquered or reduced population and collects tribute.

friar — member of any religious order, especially of the four mendicant orders: Augustinians, Augustinian Recollects, Dominicans and Franciscans.

hacendero — owner of a land parcel or tracts of land planted with sugar canes.

kumbento — convento, rectory, residence of the parish priest whose ground floor serves oftentimes as the parish office.

kutá — also kota, fort, rampart, citadel, fortification.

legajo — dossier, file, box or bundle of manuscripts or folders of manuscripts usually of a certain year, topic or subject, kept in the archives

legua — league, linear measurement equivalent to 5.572 kilometers; legua marina is 5,555 meters; in *Balaanong Bahandi*, its equivalent is 4.8 kilometers.

mampostería — rubblework, masonry, also called cal y canto.

misiones vivas — mission stations.

Modo de administrar — Manual of Administration, parish manual used by

Augustinian Recollect priests in the administration of a parish during the Spanish rule.

obra pía — pious establishment for the worship of God or for the exercise of charity for the neighbor.

oidor — judge

parish — in Spanish colonial period, it is basic Christian territory composed of visitas or chapels, entrusted to a canonically collated pastor (parish priest), assisted by his vicars or *compañeros*.

párroco — parish priest, curate.

población — population center.

presidente municipal — chief executive or mayor of a town during the early years of the American regime.

prior — superior of a community of religious brothers and priests. He sees to it that everyone fulfills his duties. Also local prior, prior presidente.

prior general — the highest authority of a religious congregation or order.

prior presidente — superior of a Recollect community, local prior.

prior provincial — religious superior of a province who governs the province with ordinary power either by himself or with his Council.

prior vocal — chiefly honorary position of a prior of a parish with right of representation at a provincial chapter.

procurador general — In the early decades of Recollect history, the procurator's task in Madrid was to gather confreres for Manila from the convents of the Order, to accompany the volunteer missionaries to Seville and to board them on ships for their journey to Manila. Also known as commissary general.

province — in ecclesiastical parlance, a group of religious convents occupying a definite territory, headed by the superior provincial.

pueblo — town whose chief executive was the *gobernadorcillo*.

reducción — gathering or "grouping" the neo-converts together in a settlement to promote social life, facilitate the administration of the sacraments and attendance at parish and town activities.

sede vacante — vacant episcopal see due to the demise or resignation of its local ordinary.

terciaria — member of the Third Order of Augustinian Recollects, now Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity.

terna — list of three priests made by a religious superior presented as candidates for the post of parish priests to authorities who select one of the three.

tribunal — public edifice used for offices of town officials, sometimes with the public jail.

triennium — the term of office that consists of three years.

vicar provincial — superior of a provincial vicariate.

vicariate — group or cluster of canonical erected houses or parishes, component part of a religious province under a vicar provincial.

visita — a cluster of families of a settlement, gathered by the parish priest or missionary to facilitate evangelization or continued catechetical instruction, usually endowed with a chapel and visited by a minister for the dispensation of sacraments.

visitation — a visit made by a bishop to parishes of his diocese or by a superior to his religious subordinates and houses in order to confirm their priestly and religious life, to check violations thereof and inspect the canonical books.

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Prof. Romanillos regularly reads his research papers at local, national and international conferences on Chabacano language and literature, Augustinian Recollect heritage and history as well as on Bohol history and cultural heritage. Since 2005, he is a lifetime academician of the *Academia Filipina de la Lengua Española, Inc.*, of which he was the President in 2016-2019.

The Contributors

Manuel Carceller is worthy of admiration and gratitude for having written the monumental volumes of the *Historia general de la Orden de Agustinos Recoletos*. The three volumes, all published in Madrid, covered the 19th century: vol. 10 [1808-1836], published in 1962 with 808 pages and ten pages of photographs; vol. 11 [1837-1866], in 1967 with 894 pages and ten pages of photographs; and vol. 12 [1867-1891] in 1974 with 913 pages and thirteen pages of photographs. His general histories contained a vast bibliography and hitherto unpublished sources related to vital issues in Philippine history. Carceller was born on 3 July 1899 in Forcall, Castellón, Spain. A worthy member of the Recollect Order since 1916, he served as seminary professor or superior in Spanish houses in the early years of his priestly ministry. He was later elected prior provincial of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino Province and general chronicler. He regularly contributed research works, chronicles and biographical notes to Recollect periodicals. At age 84, he passed away on 4 July 1983 in Madrid.

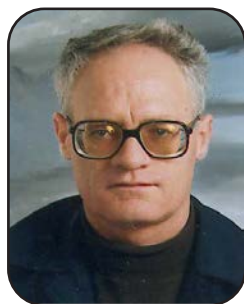


Bishop Gregorio Espiga DD On 20 September 1912, Gregorio Espiga was born in Santo Domingo de la Calzada, La Rioja, Spain. He professed the monastic vows in September 1929 in Monteagudo Navarra. He studied theology in Athison, USA, and in London, England. After he was ordained as priest in May 1935 in Plymouth, England, his superiors sent him to San Sebastian Convent in Manila. In 1937, Espiga served as assistant parish priest of San Carlos in Negros Occidental, and in 1939 he was transferred to the parish of Brooke's Point in Palawan. In 1941, he joined the school administration of Colegio de Santo Tomas-Recoletos in San Carlos where he lived during the World War II. For his undaunted war apostolate he was



declared by the municipal council as Adopted Son of San Carlos on 9 February 1952. In 1946, he was named rector of San Sebastian College in Manila and, a year after, rector of Colegio de Santo Tomas-Recoletos. In May 1952, the provincial chapter elected him provincial secretary of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino Province. In 1953, Espiga he was named apostolic prefect of Palawan and was later appointed local ordinary of the Apostolic Vicariate of Palawan on 10 September 1955 by Pope Pius XII. He constructed churches and chapels in Palawan, but most of all the neo-Gothic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in 1961. Bishop Espiga resigned on 18 December 1987 and resided at San Sebastian Convent. On 15 April 1997, at age 84, he passed away and his mortal remains were flown to Puerto Princesa City for burial at the cathedral.

Ángel Martínez Cuesta's iconic expertise encompasses Church history, Philippine history and OAR history and culture. He was born in Brullés, Burgos, Spain in 1939. He professed the vows as Augustinian Recollect in 1957 in Monteagudo and received the priesthood in 1961. After Manila (1961-1962), he was sent to Rome to study at the Pontifical Gregorian University that conferred on him a Licentiate and later a Doctorate in Church History *summa cum laude*. The English translation of his dissertation *Historia de la Isla de Negros, Filipinas, 1565-1898*, was published in Manila in 1980. He is the author of *Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos* (1995) and its second volume published in 2015 which contains almost a thousand pages and maps on the Recollects in the Philippines in the 19th century. Its third volume came out in November 2021. He wrote *El Camino del deber* (1975), the definitive biography of Saint Ezekiel Moreno and several biographical booklets of Servants of God. In 2006, he published and edited four voluminous collections of Saint Ezekiel's correspondence. He was general archivist of the Order and head of its Institute of Spirituality and History. He is the founder and editor of the *Recollectio* since 1978, an annual journal replete with studies on spirituality and history and with



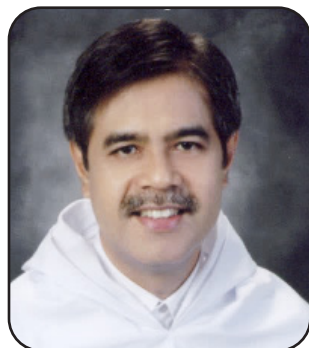
book reviews. Based in Rome for six decades now, he used to give lectures in international conferences in America, Asia and Europe. He penned articles on Church history and spirituality in encyclopedias, journals and provincial bulletins.

Santiago José Martínez Lázaro was born in Tudela, Navarra, Spain on 25 September 1966. He professed his simple vows in Monteagudo, Navarra in 1984 and his solemn vows in Marcilla in 1991. He received his presbyteral ordination in Zaragoza in 1992. He was a theology student when he published in 1990 his work on Fray Fernando Cuenca in Mayéutica. He was assigned to various parishes in Spain like Chiclana de la Frontera in Cádiz and La Mojonera in Almería as well



as in Mexico like Chihuahua. He served the Brazilian missions of Lábrea and Tapauá in 2004-2009. He was Bursar General of the Order in 2013-2017 with residence at the general curia in Rome. Named vice postulator of the beatification cause of Mother Antonia de Jesús (1612-1695), foundress of the cloistered Augustinian Recollect Nuns of Andalusia, he finished the redaction of the *Positio*, commenced by Fr. Romualdo Rodrigo, for submission to the Roman Dicastery of the Causes of Saints. He was often invited to deliver conferences on the life and holiness of the Recollect Servant of God and the monasteries she founded. He presently works at the mission of Guaraciaba in Brazil since 2017.

Rene F. Paglinawan obtained his Licentiate in Church History *magna cum laude* from the Gregorian University in 1984. He received his presbyteral ordination in 1982 at Marcilla, Navarra, Spain. He was prior/dean of studies/Church History professor at the Recoletos School of Theology and at the Institute of Religious Education and Philosophy at San Sebastian College Manila. His



past offices also included: vicar provincial (QC); provincial councilor (Madrid), general councilor (Rome); provincial secretary of Saint Ezekiel Moreno Province and head of its Commission on Recoletos Heritage, History and Culture. He was a missionary in Sierra Leone in Africa. He composes songs, draws portraits and translates into English pamphlets on Augustinian saints, news features, conference papers, prior general's directives and other official documents, serving as translator during the prior generals' visits. At the Recoletos School Theology, he has been a thesis adviser or panelist of Church History majors. He was prior of the Recollect community of Nuestra Señora de la Paz y Buen Viaje Parish in Tondo, Manila. He is often invited to talk on the OAR history in the Philippines and Saint Ezekiel Moreno at international symposia.

Pablo Panedas was ordained as priest in Valladolid, Spain, on 26 September 1976. He obtained his Licentiate in Spiritual Theology *summa cum laude* from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy. He acquired his Doctorate in Spirituality from the Pontificia Facoltà Teologica Teresianum. He was general councilor of the Order in 2010-2016 and local prior of Collegio di Sant'Ildefonso e Santo Tommaso da Villanova in Rome.



He was Professor in 1979-1993 and 1994-2003 at the theology school at Marcilla, Navarra, affiliate of Universidad de Navarra in Pamplona, Spain. In 1993-1994, he was Professor of Recoletos School of Theology, Quezon City. His *Con María junto a la Cruz. Santa María Soledad y las Siervas de María: su espíritu* was published in 1984 by Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos in Madrid. In 2004, he researched on churches and rectories constructed by the Augustinian Recollects in our country which saw print in *Recollectio* in its 2008-2009 issue, complete with color photos of cathedrals, churches and forts. He was editor of *Canta y Camina* and *Mayéutica*. His two books on the Augustinian Recollect

Martyrs of Japan were published in 2018. He was the Order's general archivist and local prior of the general curia community in Rome until 2022. Fr. Pablo now resides at the provincial curia of Saint Nicholas Province of Tolentino in Madrid.

A native of Mirabeche, Burgos, Spain, Licinio Ruiz was born on 6 December 1872. Ordained as priest in Cebu City in 1895, he was then assigned as assistant priest of Jimenez in Misamis and later sent to Cagayan de Oro parish. The Revolution forced the exodus of many Recollects including Fr. Licinio. In 1906, he was sent to Negros where he subsequently served the curacies of Bacolod, Sibulan and Siaton.



He was designated by the archbishop of Manila as apostolic administrator of Jaro Diocese until 1908 when he was named parish priest of Zamboanguita in Negros Oriental and in 1916 curate of Lazi and Maria in Siquijor. As provincial chronicler in 1922, Fr. Licinio reorganized the historical archives in Spain. He was reappointed as chronicler in 1925 and 1931. In 1928-1930, he served Bacolod as parish priest and vicar forane. The 68-year-old Fr. Licinio died on 11 September 1940 in Cebu City. On account of his two volumes of *Sinopsis histórica de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino de las Islas Filipinas* [Historical Synopsis of the Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino of the Philippine Islands], published in Manila in 1925, his niche in Philippine historiography and Augustinian Recollect history is perpetually etched. Described as “an arsenal replete with very interesting historical antecedents and data” and transcriptions of manuscripts of foundations of convents and towns, his *Sinopsis histórica* used archival sources like *Cosas notables* of towns and convents in writing the Recollect histories of Zambales, Negros, Mindanao, Cebu, Bohol, Marianas Islands, Manila, Romblon, Mindoro and the Philippine Revolution as well as 19th-century convents in Spain and the missions in Latin America.

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