PART TWO

VINCENTIANS
DURING THE 20TH CENTURY
Chapter Eleven

Under the American Flag
(1900-1925)

A New Era for the Church in the Philippines: "QUÆ MARI SINICO"

A new century had dawned. No longer was the Spanish flag waving over the islands. Instead, the Star-Spangled Banner was raised in the Philippines in spite of the Filipinos’ fight for independence. A new regime was inaugurated and the policy of separation between Church and State began. Almost simultaneously, a religious revolution started with a cry of rebellion against the supreme authority of the Church.

On October 15, 1901, the famous Filipino leader Isabelo de los Reyes arrived in Manila from Spain where he had been imprisoned in the castle of Montjuich for his revolutionary activities. Two Vincentians came with him on the same ship: Fr. Aurelio Fernández, and Fr. Joaquin Lizarribar. They were the first missionaries sent in the new century, under the new American regime. On the ship, Fr. Fernández became a good friend of de los Reyes, who was returning to the Philippines after having been exposed to the philosophy of rationalism while in Europe. He was soon to become the father and founder, as well as the theologian of the Philippine Independent Church. With the rabid anti-friar Xerez Burgos, de los Reyes was to continue enkindling the fire of animosity and rebellion amidst the Filipino clergy, specially in Northern Luzon.

In a grand meeting of the schismatic clergy of Ilocos and other northern provinces, the first sham bishop was chosen by election and the one elected was the parish priest of Laoag, Fr. Pedro Brillantes. Fr. Gregorio Aglipay was a nationalist priest who had been appointed by Emilio Aguinaldo as Military Vicar General of the Revolutionary Government and later was excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church by Archbishop Bernardino Nozaleda as a “usurper” and as a “schismatic.” He was invited to head the new church, and after
struggling with his conscience, he finally acceded. The Philippines saw the first scandal of a heresy born in its own land and among its own people. On August 2, 1902, on Azcárraga street of the city of Manila, Fr. Gregorio Aglipay, before a crowd of curious folk, celebrated a Mass, and was constituted Supreme Bishop ("Obispo Máximo") of the Philippine Independent Church. The content of the official doctrine of this sect was openly anti-trinitarian, and rationalist, amounting to some kind of pantheistic materialism. To attract the simple people, they preserved the externals of Catholic worship, adding to it features of simplistic nationalism. 2

Evidently, the Church in the Philippines, was passing through a critical stage and facing urgent problems heretofore unknown. One primary problem was the scarcity of the clergy. The exodus of the religious Friars from the country in the space of just five years was as follows: 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Order</th>
<th>1898</th>
<th>Dec. 1, 1902</th>
<th>Dec. 1, 1903</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dominicans</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recollects</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Augustinians</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franciscans</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>46</td>
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That is, out of 1,013 Friars in 1898, only 246 remained in 1903, a total of 767 having returned to Spain.

The Jesuits were not among the persecuted religious friars, and yet, even among them, between 1898 and 1903, there was a decrease of 60 members from the total of 167. Among Vincentians 17 only returned to Spain.

The above statistics give an indication of the great number of parishes and works that had been abandoned, leaving the faithful people "harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd" (Mt. 9,36). The Filipino secular priest numbered only 640, and there had to assume the work of 767 religious who had left the field, on top of their regular pastoral duties. The new policy of separation of Church and State created new difficulties "The freedom of worship, freedom of instruction and of thought, civil marriage, the secularization of cemeteries and other customs newly introduced, altogether contrary to the laws of the Church, were likewise obstacles that created serious problems occurring daily in these matters." 4 Sometimes, these new policies were misinterpreted by certain municipal governments and resulted in persecution of the Church or contempt for its authorities.

Finally, the public school system established all over the country, without any provision for the religious instruction of the children,
presented a fertile ground for the Protestant missionaries from America who disseminated propaganda leaflets and tracts with vile attacks against the Catholic Church and the Catholic clergy. The majority of American teachers in those public schools were non-Catholics. The Protestant missionaries established “dormitories” or homes for students of public schools, recreation halls for young men and women, industrial schools and free medical dispensaries where they were able to proselytize.

For the first ten years, outside a few cities, youths, all over the country did not receive Catholic religious instruction.

“The result of all this has been that whilst the rising generation knew nothing about their own faith, they became familiar with all the sophisms and trite objections which the Protestants naturally raised against the Church. Religious indifferentism and practical infidelity were spreading with appalling rapidity and were sapping the life of the Church.”

“In confirmation of this, Archbishop (of Manila) Harty said that all of the pastors in his diocese were in accord in writing to him that almost all of the young people in their parishes were becoming estranged from the Church, and were absenting themselves from Sunday Mass and neglecting the Sacraments. In the city of Manila, a city of churches, the attendance of Mass on Sundays (by actual count made by order of the Archbishop) barely exceeded ten per cent of the population. . . .”

The Church in the Philippines was in great need of wise directives and a new organizational chart to guide her in the stormy seas at the dawn of the 20th century. The Pilot at Rome was on the watch steering the Church’s course in the new era that offered so many challenges. The Holy See sent to the Philippines Archbishop Placide Luis La Chapelle of New Orleans as the first Apostolic Delegate in January 1900. At the end of 1902, a new Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Giovanni Bautista Guidi, arrived in Manila bringing along with him the Papal Constitution Quae Mari Sinico of Leo XIII, dated September 17, 1902. This document was intended to give fresh direction to the Church in the Philippines during those critical times.

Among the most important guidelines from the Vicar of Christ, special attention was given to clerical formation in the Diocesan Seminaries, the almost exclusive apostolate of the Vincentians in those days:
From the decrees of the Council of Trent, whence the Seminaries trace their origin, anyone may clearly notice with how great esteem the Church holds these institutions for the education of young men aspiring to the clerical state. Thus it is right that the Bishops strive with all care and effort to have, each one in his Diocese, a house where the young aspirants to the sacred militia may be received from their early age to be instructed in the lower and higher branches of learning. And it will be better if the youth who study humanities live in one house; and those who have finished that course, and devote themselves to philosophy and theology, live in another. Let the students stay in both houses continuously, till they are raised to the priesthood if they are worthy of it; and they should not be allowed, except for some serious reason, to return to their homes.

Let the Bishop entrust the administration of the Seminary to a most worthy person, either of the secular or regular clergy, someone who surpasses others in prudence and qualities of government, and above all, in sanctity of life.

Moreover, all what We and Our Predecessors have repeatedly ordained regarding the studies in the sacred Seminaries, indicate fully how these should be organized.

Whenever there is no Seminary, let the Bishop see to it that his students be educated in the Seminaries of the neighboring diocese.

For no reason whatever shall Bishops permit the admission in the Seminaries of young men other than those who offer some hope of consecrating themselves to God in Holy Orders.

For those who intend to follow civil careers, there should be erected, if possible, other different establishments, which are called "episcopal colleges or boarding schools."

Finally, it is necessary to warn with the greatest earnestness, according to the Apostle's command, that Bishops be not hasty in laying hands upon anyone but they should only promote and appoint to the sacred ministries, those who after diligent probation and formation, in science and virtue, may become an ornament and advantage for the diocese.

Even those who have already finished their Seminary course, should not be entirely left alone to themselves; but rather, in order to help them avoid laziness and neglect of studies in sacred sciences, it is of utmost importance that, during five years at least after their priestly ordination, they
should have to submit themselves to an examination in Dogma and Moral Theology before learned and competent men.

And since a house will be opened here in Rome for the youth of the Philippines who might wish to pursue the higher studies, we will be pleased to see that the Bishops send here selected young men who, after having acquired the science of religion in the very center of truth, may profitably communicate it to their countrymen. The Holy See will strive, on its part, by the best means to raise the secular clergy up to the highest level of culture and to the best ecclesiastical formation, so that, in due time, they may be fit to replace the regular clergy in the fulfillment of the pastoral duties.6

These norms and directives were gradually followed and implemented, notwithstanding the substantial changes and consequent sacrifices entailed. However, the times were difficult the obstacles formidable at times. Hence, the progress was rather slow.

The most difficult provision of Quaæ Mari Sinico concerning Seminary organization was the one forbidding mixed clerical training. The reference was to the education and formation of seminarians with lay students in what for quite a long time in the past were called College Seminaries. The Bishops as well as the Vincentians knew that College Seminaries were not an ideal solution. However, given the particular circumstances of the country, such seemed to be the only practical solution, at least, in the provinces, where they provided economic support for the Seminary at the same time that they made possible Catholic education for the youth in general. This explains why the above provision of Quaæ Mari Sinico (reaffirmed by St. Pius X, and later demanded by Pius XI, as the authentic mind of the Church) could not at once be put into effect, waiting for a quarter of a century to be realized.

An added obstacle was, as in the beginning, the lack of available personnel to attend properly to the demands of the Vincentian mission and apostolate.

The problem of the native clergy and priestly vocations, in the beginning of the 20th century.

The mission of the Vincentians at the turn of the century centered mainly, and almost exclusively, on the formation of a Filipino native clergy and the fostering of priestly vocations in the Diocesan Seminaries. This was the most crucial problem the Church in the Philippines had to face during those days when immense multitudes of the
faithful had been left deprived of their pastors and besieged by an insidious sectarian propaganda against the Catholic faith.

In spite of lamentable misunderstanding and antagonism between the persecuted Spanish Friars and the Filipino secular clergy, the latter, remained generally praiseworthy in their behavior, and were dedicated to their pastoral ministry. The American Bishop Thomas Hendrick, appointed in November 1903 to succeed Bishop Alcocer, O.F.M., of Cebu, spoke in glowing terms of the Filipino native clergy in a letter of 1904:

I have found the native priests almost without exception to be good men, beloved by their people, and doing very good work, considering the great number of persons in each parish, I have found them everywhere friendly disposed towards the Friars, and I have not up to the present heard from any of the priests a single unfriendly expression toward the Friars, nor have I heard that they have spoken of the Friars disparagingly to the people. On the contrary, I know of several acts of friendship from the native priests to the Friars in cases where the latter have been sent to parishes near them.7

However, when the first Apostolic Delegate, Bishop Chapelle, and the last Spanish Bishops, in 1900, made a move to exclude Filipino priests from higher ecclesiastical offices, understandably enough, a large part of the Filipino clergy strongly opposed the participation of Spanish Friars in the parochial ministry.

Above the din of dissension, the voice of the Vicar of Christ, Leo XIII, was raised in 1902 in the Magna Charta Quae Mari Sinico:

Since it is proved by experience that a native clergy is everywhere most useful the Bishops must make it their care to increase the number of native priests, in such a manner however, as to form them thoroughly in piety and character, and to make sure that they are worthy of being entrusted with ecclesiastical dignities.

Let them gradually appoint to the more responsible positions those whom practical experience may prove to be more efficient. Above all things the clergy should hold to the rule that they are not to allow themselves to be mixed up in party strifes. Although it is a maxim of common law that he who fights for God should not be involved in worldly pursuits, we deem it necessary to insist that men in Holy Orders in the present condition of affairs in the Philippine Islands, should
avoid this in a special manner. Moreover, since there is great power in harmony of sentiment to accomplish any great and useful work for the sake of religion, let all the priests, whether secular or religious, cultivate it most zealously. It is certainly proper that they who are one Body of the one Head, Christ, should not envy one another, but be of one will, loving one another with brotherly charity. To foster this charity and maintain a vigorous discipline the Bishops are reminded how very useful it is to convene a Synod occasionally as time and place may require. In this way unity in thought and action will easily be attained.

Soon after Quae Mari Sinico, four American Bishops were appointed to replace the Spanish hierarchy. In 1903, Bishop Dennis J. Dougherty, of Nueva Segovia; Bishop Frederick Zadok Rooker of Jaro; Bishop Thomas Augustine Hendrick, of Cebu, and Archbishop Jeremias J. Harty, of the Archdiocese of Manila, succeeded respectively, Bishops Jose Hevia Campomanes, O.P., Andres Ferrero de San Jose, O.R.S.A., Martin Garcia Alcocer, O.F.M., and Archbishop Bernardino Nozaleda y de Villa, O.P.

Promise of eventual promotion of the Filipino clergy to the episcopate was made. As a matter of fact, the native Filipino, Fr. Jorge Barlin, had already been appointed Apostolic Administrator of the diocese of Nueva Cáceres, to succeed Bishop Arsenio Campo, O.S.A. on December 14, 1905 he was nominated Bishop of Naga, the first full-blooded Filipino Bishop, and alumnus of a Vincentian seminary.

Five Filipino priests trained by the Vincentians came to occupy their place in the Philippine Hierarchy during the first quarter of the century. They were Bishops Jorge Barlin, of Naga (1905), Juan B. Gorordo, of Cebu (1909-1910), Pablo Singzon, of Calbayog (1910), Santiago Sancho, of Tuguegarao (1917), and Francisco Reyes, of Naga (1925).

The First Provincial Council of Manila, in 1907

The apostolate of the Vincentians in the Philippines was mainly and almost exclusively devoted to serve the local church in the formation of a worthy native secular clergy in the diocesan Seminaries. In this light, the First Provincial Council of Manila, which paid particular attention to the problem of clerical training of the candidates to the priesthood, deserves special mention.

The Council opened on December 8, 1907, feast of the Immaculate Conception, Patroness of the Philippines. With the Archbishop of
Manila and the Apostolic Delegate of the Holy See, there were three Bishops present, one of them, Most Rev. Jorge Barlin, of Nueva Cáceres. The Provincial Council held four Sessions, the third of which, on December 22, 1907, dwelt on Seminaries and the Clergy. The last Session was held on December 29, 1907. The decrees of the Council were promulgated on June 29, 1910.

The Council Acts and Decrees were published in Rome, in 1910, by the Polygot Press of the Vatican, in a large volume of 592 pages, with another larger supplementary volume of documentary sources and references.

The 2nd decree of the Council was a formal recognition of the Constitution *Quae Mari Sinico* of 1902, as the new basic law or charter of the Church in the Philippines. The 3rd decree adopted also the enactments of the Plenary Council of Latin America held in Rome in 1899, “due to similar conditions obtaining in our country,” choosing, however, only those that were applicable to the Philippines.

The decrees of the 3rd Session concerning Seminaries and the formation of the clergy were of utmost significance because they remained with the force of law in the country until the First Plenary Council of the Philippines held on January 7-25, 1953. The pertinent decrees are embodied in Title VIII.

In Art. 726, the wise provision for the separation of the Major from the Minor Seminary was earnestly recommended. But acknowledging the difficult economic conditions of most Philippine dioceses, specially in the newly erected ones, the Council admitted that such an ideal division was for the time being, practically impossible. In the past, with God’s blessing, each Diocese had been able to support, as the Council of Trent demanded, at least one Seminary. However, not only lack of professors, but also lack of funds was making it more and more difficult to support Major and Minor Seminaries as independent units.

To obviate this critical situation, the Council ordered in Art. 727, that, following some agreement among the Bishops of the Philippine hierarchy, a “Provincial Seminary” might be established where seminarians of different dioceses, excelling in piety and knowledge, may go to pursue higher studies and may be properly trained for the Priestly Ordination. The Bishops should send to this Provincial Seminary their students of Philosophy and Theology.

With respect to Seminary discipline, the Council reiterated the injunction of *Quae Mari Sinico* about keeping the ecclesiastical students in the Seminary, without allowing them to go home, except for some grievous reason. (Art. 729).

The Council earnestly recommended that the Bishops should
provide the students with a country house to spend their vacation together in a wholesome and happy atmosphere conducive to restoring their strength, and giving them the necessary youthful leisure and physical exercise. During the long summer vacation they must avoid all idleness and laziness. Thus, students on vacation observed assigned periods for study and acts of piety. Those who for some serious cause would have to spend their vacations at home should be entrusted to the care and vigilance of the respective parish priests. At the end of vacation the parish priests should report to the Bishop on the habits and way of life of seminarians under their charge — the frequency with which they received the Sacraments and attended Church services, and their use of the clerical garb during the vacation period. (Art. 730).

The Council continued with the following injunctions:

To govern the Seminary the Bishops should appoint some priests from the secular or the regular clergy who may be distinguished by his prudence and experience as well as by his holiness of life. (Art. 731).

If any Bishop should prefer, for the good of his Seminary, to entrust it to some religious Order or Congregation, then, while the rights of patronage, protection and jurisdiction over the Seminary should be reserved inviolably to the Ordinary, as provided by the Council of Trent (Sess. 23, cap. 18. De ref.), still the right to choose, assign or approve the Seminary Rector should belong to the Religious Prelate (Major Superior), unless otherwise specified in a legitimate contract between the Bishop and the Prelate of the Congregation (Benedict XIV, De Synodo Dioecesano, lib. 5, cap. 2, n. 9) (Art. 732).

The Seminary discipline should be such as to avoid an excessive rigor, as well as a pernicious laxity. The superiors' vigilance for the observance of the discipline should be so discreetly tempered as not to go down to the least details, nor to restrain the youthful dispositions with burdensome restrictions that may hamper the spontaneous exercise of their initiative (Art. 734).

The Seminary superiors should see to it that clerical students learn the rules of urbanity and may be well trained in ecclesiastical modesty (Art. 735).

No student from a foreign diocese shall be admitted without the recommendation of his Ordinary. Recalling the
degree of the Sacred Congregation of Council, "Vetuit Sancta Tridentina Synodus" of December 22, 1905, the Bishop should not admit to the Seminary any student who has been dismissed from another Seminary or from a religious Institute (Art. 759).

It has been wisely ordered that, by no reason at all, should be admitted in the Seminary anyone whose character and inclinations do not show signs of ecclesiastical vocation (Art. 761).

With respect to the course of studies to be followed, the Council enjoins that,

The first place is to be given to the science of religion, which should be imparted most diligently to all the students, in a way adapted to the age and capacity of each one (Art. 737).

Then, great care should be taken to make them learn the Latin language, consecrated by its perpetual use in the Church, as the best interpreter of Catholic tradition, and as a necessary prerequisite for ecclesiastical sciences (Art. 738).

As far as possible, the study of Greek should also be offered in the course of Humanities, since it may be of great profit for the understanding of the Sacred Scriptures in particular (Art. 739).

Furthermore, it is the desire of the Council that all seminarians may learn well, not only the Spanish, but also the English language; and they should be well instructed also in the vernacular dialects of the respective regions, so as to be prepared for the suitable exercise of the pastoral ministry (Art. 740).

And they should be diligently trained in the art of Rhetoric with practical exercises whereby they may learn to speak in a style, clear and simple, though not vulgar; lofty and dignified, though not pompous and bombastic (Art. 741).

Besides the study of ancient and modern languages, the seminarians should learn also sacred and profane history, world geography, and arithmetic as well as other natural sciences, as demanded by the general culture and their clerical state (Art. 742).

In the teaching of higher studies, the scholastic method should be followed, and professors should carefully observe the fundamental principles, specially of the Angelic Doctor . . . And, what matters most here, the scholastic philosophy that we
Under The American Flag

prescribe to be followed, should be understood as that, mainly, that was taught by St. Thomas Aquinas (Art. 743).

Having thus established firmly this philosophical foundation, let the theological course be pursued most diligently: the courses, namely, of Dogmatic and Moral Theology, as well as those of Sacred Hermeneutics and Biblical Exegesis, Church History, Institutions of Canon Law, Sacred Oratory, Liturgy and Gregorian Chant (Art. 744).

In Biblical Exegesis, the decrees and statutes of His Holiness Pius X in his Apostolic Letter, "De ratione studiorum Sacrae Scripture in Clericorum Seminariis observanda", dated March 27, 1906 must be observed faithfully (Art. 747).

In Canon Law attention should be given principally to what belongs to the present discipline of the Church, taking into consideration also the decrees of this Provincial Council (Art. 749).

Let the study, theoretical and practical, of liturgical Chant be fostered with utmost care and diligence, and let the students learn also to make computations of the liturgical year. The Bishops should not easily admit to Holy Orders anyone who may be found to have neglected the sacred chant; and no one should be promoted to sacred Ordination who has not been properly tested and found well acquainted with the sacred rites and ceremonies of the Catholic Liturgy (Concil. Baltimor., tit. 5, c. 2) (Art. 751).

Following the mind of the Apostolic See we order that Scholastic Philosophy, Dogmatic and Moral Theology, and Canon Law classes be given in Latin and any work or book written or published on these subjects in the vernacular, should be absolutely excluded from the Seminary (Art. 752).

About secular studies (once more the words of His Holiness Pius X are quoted here) it may be enough to recall what our Predecessor said most wisely: "Let us work strenuously at the study of natural sciences; whatever in these matters has been wonderfully invented and usefully discovered, is rightfully admired by our present generation, and will always be praised and celebrated by the ages to come." But let not interest in these sciences redound to the detriment of sacred studies, as our Predecessor also warned with these most serious words: "If we were to inquire most attentively on the cause of modern errors, we would find that most of them were mainly caused by the fact that in our own times, the other higher and more abstruse studies have decayed; so that some
have been almost entirely forgotten, and others have been taken up too lightly and remissly, or what is worse, have lost the splendor of their pristine dignity, and have been corrupted by wicked theories and absurd opinions.” We command therefore that having this in mind, the studies of natural sciences in the sacred Seminaries be accordingly taught” (Pius X, Encycl. PASCENDI DOMINICI GREGIS) (Art. 753).

For each course, textbooks should be prudently selected, commendable for their sound and solid doctrine, giving a compendium of the whole course, to be further explained and covered in greater detail by the professors in the classroom. And these textbooks must be approved by the Bishop for his diocesan Seminary; or by the Bishops concerned for a Provincial Seminary (Art. 754).

All books, magazines, reviews, or commentaries written by “modernist” authors (those tainted with the errors of the recently condemned “modernism”), are absolutely forbidden to the students of our Seminaries: “because these are no less harmful to good morals” than are lascivious writings and publications. Nay, they are even more damaging since they attack the very roots of Christian life (Art. 755).

Every year, at least once or twice, each and everyone of the seminarians should be seriously examined on the subjects taken in the classroom . . . Those who among the students might have already shown negative signs of vocation, and although seriously warned, do not offer any hope of amendment, should be dismissed as soon as possible. However, if anyone is otherwise presenting signs of good character, diligence in work, and praiseworthy piety, but with little ability for intellectual work, so that there may be prudent doubts about his future success in studies, let such a case be left to the final judgment of the Bishop (Art. 756).

Let the Bishops remember that it is their duty to inquire carefully about who are the Seminary professors, and what are the doctrines they teach. “Anyone who in any way is tainted with Modernism (said Pius X to the sacred Pastors of the Church), should — irrespective of persons — not be admitted to any office in the administration or among the faculty staff of the Seminary; and if they are found there already, should be removed from it” (Art. 757).

About the Spiritual Formation of clerical students, the Council has this to say:
Let the Seminary administrators, spiritual directors, and professors strive by all means to let the seminarians understand thoroughly the lofty state of life and sublime dignity which they are aspiring to attain, so that they may realize truly that the excellence and loftiness of their vocation demands a sort of life, rather angelic than human. Because there is no other more efficacious incitement to encourage men to become worthy of the dignity they aspire to, and to answer with holiness of life the challenge for holiness of their vocation, than an assiduous consideration of the supereminent dignity of that same vocation.

Let them strive also in all ways to infuse into the seminarians those virtues which seem to be missed mostly in our age, specially humility, obedience, and due reverence to Superiors. Let the youth beware of an immoderate love for their own freedom, a vice more opposed than anything else to the priestly spirit. Those who thus stick to their own will, despise law and order, and frequently criticize even the wisest commands of their ecclesiastical superiors (Art. 733).

The 50th Anniversary of the Coming of the Vincentians to the Philippines

The Vincentians decided to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of their arrival in the Philippines with a lasting monument in honor of their holy Founder. They built a temple dedicated to St. Vincent de Paul in their own grounds in San Marcelino, Manila. The clergy of the Archdiocese of Manila, on their own initiative, proposed also to build an altar to the Apostle of Charity, St. Vincent, as a token of their appreciation for the work of his missionaries in the country. In a letter from a Vincentian dated March 19, 1912, it was reported:

Even if the proper date of our coming to the Islands is July 22, 1862, the solemnities will not be held till December, because of delay in the work on the new Church. The inauguration of the Church will be held with a solemn Triduum in which some Bishops will take part, not only at the altar but also in the pulpit. It is almost sure that it will be consecrated; at least, that is the desire of everybody. Nor will there be lack of public literary, musical programs, cash-alms, and extraordinary meals for the poor of Manila, solemn requiem services for our deceased Confreres and Sisters, etc. I repeat, nothing in concrete has been agreed upon as of now; yet, I don't think
any item would be missing in the program of festivities which — if I may be allowed to say — will constitute an epoch-making event in the history of the Province. All our alumni join with our legitimate rejoicing. I already mentioned that the clergy have taken it upon themselves to erect the main altar in honor of St. Vincent, having collected from among their ranks, even from other Provinces, more than P2,000. Not much is lacking, although the subscription which must go up to P3,000 is not yet complete. Moreover the Children of Mary Immaculate from our Sisters’ Colleges — former and actual members — propose also to erect, at their own expenses, an altar in honor of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal; to date, they have collected more then P2,000, with many still on the way to complete the voluntary quota. Once the subscription is filled up, if the same enthusiasm evident up to the present would continue, it is easy to foresee that it will not be less than P4,000 in cash. Blessed be God!10

The Superior General Circulars of New Year — in 1913 and 1914 — featured the celebrations of the 50th Anniversary of the Vincentians’ arrival in the Philippines. The news on January 1, 1914, went as follows:

Our confreres in the Philippines have just celebrated with splendor their half-century presence and work in that country. They wished to put up a public monument for remembrance by constructing in Manila itself a magnificent church under the patronage of St. Vincent. Here is what Fr. Guilloux, the Provincial Visitor of China, invited to this grand feast, has written us:

What impressed and edified us at once was the deep attachment of our Confreres and Sisters in the Philippines to the spirit of our double family of St. Vincent. In all their houses and chapels we could see the images of our saints. Their works and labors are prospering, and it seems that we can count on more abundant blessings for the future.

Upon the work of the Seminaries, placed in the hands of our Confreres in the principal dioceses, depend in great part, the future of Catholicism in the country; because what is most needed in the Philippines is a clergy, numerous enough and truly zealous to snatch the people from their religious ignorance. Thank God, it seems to me that our confreres are, generally speaking, equal to their job, and they enjoy the trust of the Bishops, of the clergy, and of the people.11
The church of St. Vincent de Paul on San Marcelino street, in Ermita was built by the Spanish architect Francisco Pérez Muñoz. It took the place of the little church or modest public oratory established in 1883 near the Casa de Campo or Vincentian Country House of San Marcelino.

*The First Provincial of the century: Fr. Rafael de la Iglesia, C.M.*

The new Provincial Visitor appointed at the beginning of 1903 was Rev. Fr. Rafael de la Iglesia, born in the town of Villaescusa, province of Burgos, in the year 1854. He joined the Congregation of the Mission at the age of 16, in 1870, and seven years later, he was ordained Priest. His first assignment was at the College Seminary of Siguenza, where for five years he taught some High School subjects. He came to the Philippines with the 13th Mission, arriving in Manila on October 13, 1883. In June 1884, he was assigned to Jaro. When His Excellency, Bishop Cuartero died, the priest appointed to give the funeral sermon was, for some reason, unable to do it. So, on the eve of the funeral, Fr. De la Iglesia was asked to substitute. His preparation continued long into the night, but the next day his eloquence won the admiration of the people.

In 1885, he was called to Manila to take the place of the famous Fr. Miguel Pérez who had been assigned Rector of the Seminary of Naga. Fr. de la Iglesia remained in the San Carlos Seminary of Manila for 14 years teaching Dogma and Moral Theology. Here he gained the esteem and high appreciation of many priests who had pursued their studies under him. In 1894, he was appointed Rector of the Seminary.

As soon as he began his rectorship he strove to expand the curriculum of studies. In spite of many difficulties, he was able to add Canon Law to the subjects studied, and to increase by two years the time spent in preparation for the priesthood. Unfortunately, these reforms came too late. His rectorate lasted for five years only. By disposition of Archbishop Nozaleda, Fr. De la Iglesia and the Vincentian Fathers had to leave the San Carlos Seminary of Manila on September 4, 1899.

Fr. Rafael de la Iglesia was then appointed Provincial Procurator and Assistant to the Provincial, Fr. Orriols, in the Central House of San Marcelino. In 1902, he was elected representative of the Philippine Province at the General Assembly of the Congregation. He went to Paris together with Fr. Pedro Julia, Rector of the San Carlos Seminary of Cebu, and the Very Rev. Manuel Orriols. Before reaching their destination, Fr. Orriols had an accident (he suffered two falls) which left him great pain. Shortly afterward, Fr. Orriols tendered his resignation.
because of ill health. He had been Provincial Visitor for the Vincentian missionaries in the Philippines for 27 years.

Due to the resignation of Fr. Orriols, Fr. General on January 16, 1903, appointed Fr. Rafael de la Iglesia, Provincial Visitor of the Vincentians in the Philippines. For 6 years, he governed the Province with wisdom and prudence, during a transition period under a new political regime.

**General view of the growth of the Philippine Province in the first quarter of the century**

The first quarter of the 20th century may well be considered a period of recovery. It was also a time when efforts at development, temporarily halted during the years of revolutionary turmoil, were renewed. For some time during the year 1904, the Spanish Vincentians in the Philippines entertained serious thoughts about establishing a Novitiate in the Central House of San Marcelino for the training of Filipino boys who might like to join the Congregation. The idea came from the Philippine Hierarchy, particularly from the Ordinaries of Manila, Jaro, Cebu, and Vigan. In a joint letter to Fr. Fiat, the Superior General, they suggested the establishment of Novitiates both for the Vincentians and the Daughters of Charity, with a view of training Filipino candidates for both congregations, so that their apostolic work might be kept up by native priests and sisters. Unfortunately, all these plans and dreams were shattered by the opposition of the Provincial of Spain, Fr. Eladio Arnaiz, who could not see as yet the need or opportunity for undertaking this project. This was truly regrettable shortsightedness. It held back for 30 years a plan that now is of so much benefit to the Philippine Vincentian Province.

In 1905, a new-foundation was offered to the Vincentians on the island of Samar. They were invited to open a High School in Calbayog City, Fr. Gregorio Tabár was sent as Rector there, with Fr. Fernando Saiz, arriving in Calbayog on August 1, 1905. Two more Fathers were added to that community in the school year that followed, Fr. Pedro Martinez and Fr. Amador Crespo.

When Samar and Leyte became a Diocese independent from Cebu in 1910, the first Bishop, Bishop Pablo Singzon de la Anunciación, devoted the Diocesan High School to the training of seminarians also for the service of the new Diocese. The new College-Seminary was entrusted to the Vincentian Fathers who had run the High School from which it evolved.

The year 1906 was marked by a disaster that struck the Seminary of Jaro. A fire, caused by carelessness of the sacristan, gutted the
Seminary building. The Rector, Fr. Mariano Napal, barely saved himself by jumping out of the window. The misfortune was quickly obviated by the energetic efforts at recovery by the Bishop of the Diocese, Bishop Frederik Rooker, and the Vincentian community. Only eleven months after the accident, a new Seminary building was blessed by His Excellency, the Bishop. Because Bishop Frederik Rooker died two days after the ceremony, the new Seminary was completed under the administration of his successor, Bishop Dennis D. Dougherty (later, Cardinal Dougherty).

The year 1911 saw the first Vincentian foundation on the island of Bohol. The Vincentians were sent to establish a Primary school with the character of a preparatory Seminary. The idea was to prepare young Boholanos who might feel themselves called to the priesthood before they move on to Cebu. Fr. Jacinto Villalain, Rector of the Cebú Seminary, and Fr. Salustiano Zaro began the school year with a group of 130 pupils.

In 1912, the 50th anniversary of the coming of the Vincentians to the Philippines was marked by the construction of the Church of St. Vincent de Paul, the first in the Philippines to be built entirely of reinforced concrete.

The year 1913 marked also the return of the Vincentians to the San Carlos Seminary of Manila, which was entrusted to them once again by the Archbishop of Manila, Jeremiah J. Harty. The new San Carlos Seminary was transferred outside the city to a seven hectare property bought from the Augustinian Fathers, in the parish of San Felipe Neri, Mandaluyong, province of Rizal. The Seminary of Manila took a new character. During the Spanish regime, it was simply a Major Seminary for Theology students preparing for the priesthood. In this second period, it took on the character of a College-Seminary with lay students and minor seminarians studying together. Its original enrollment numbered 50 seminarians, Majors for the most part; and 40 intern students and the same number of externs.

Another foundation with the same character was offered to the Vincentians the following year. In the town of San Pablo, diocese of Lipa, a new College-Seminary was set up but after only six months it was transferred by Bishop Petrelli, to Bauan, Batangas. Three years later, in 1917, the College-Seminary was brought back to San Pablo by the new Bishop of Lipa, Bishop Verzosa. At this time the College-Seminary had a few seminarians, and around 600 students, 200 of whom were interns.

The College-Seminary set-up offered some remarkable advantages. From the several Vincentian institutions of that type have come countless professionals and celebrated politicians, businessmen, lawyers,
doctors and other professionals to be found all over the country. But Bishop Michael J. O'Doherty, promoted to the Archdiocese of Manila in 1916, was the first Prelate in the Philippines to realize clearly the disadvantages of a system of education mixing seminarians with lay students not aspiring to the priestly vocation. The system was obviously responsible for the alarming decrease in vocations to the priesthood. Accordingly, Archbishop O'Doherty, in 1919 decided forthwith to separate the Seminary from the College. The College was transferred to the Vincentian Central House of San Marcelino, and its old name of Colegio de Santa Mesa, was later changed to Colegio de San Vicente de Paul in 1920. This College offered complete courses for Intermediate, High School, and College till it closed down in 1927, to give way to the Major Seminary of San Carlos that had been transferred to San Marcelino.

In San Pablo, Laguna, the Seminary of Lipa was separated from the College in 1923. In Cebú and in Calbayog, the Seminary was also separated from the College, according to the insistent desire of the Holy See, in 1924. In Naga and in Jaro, the separation of the Seminary from the College took place in 1925.

Thus, at the end of the first quarter of the century, the discredited system of educating seminarians alongside lay students in the College-Seminaries was finally abolished in all Dioceses in the Philippines. This momentous reform, much longed-for by the Church since the turn of the century, marked the dawn of a promising new era for the Diocesan Seminaries in the country. The years following 1925 constitute a different period worthy of separate study.

Facing new horizons at the first period (1900-1925)

With the American occupation and the consequent imposition of a new form of government and system of education, the Vincentians were to seek a new orientation and a fresh direction for themselves and their apostolate in the Philippines.

Pressure to cooperate with the newly established American regime and the need to learn the English language compelled the Spanish Vincentians to spend more years of studies to accommodate themselves to the new conditions. The Superior General was particularly pleased with the progress of friendly relations between the Vincentians and the new American Bishops upon whose policies and goodwill their work depended. Thus, on January 1, 1913, he recorded with satisfaction:

Our confreres in the Philippines know how to gain the beneficial sympathy of the new American Bishops. They have just
added the work of the missions to the task of the Seminaries and the care of the Daughters of Charity.\textsuperscript{13}

It seems that at the beginning, nobody expected much from the popular missions in barrios and villages among poor and abandoned rural folk. At this time in the Philippines, sectarian Protestant propaganda was alienating great masses of young people from the Church, and even parish priests themselves doubted the effectiveness of a mission. Such was the spirit of religious indifference and skepticism prevailing among the people. The kind of questions thrown at priests — more calculated to test the missionaries than to know the truth — induced a sense of discouragement and frustration.

However, when the missions were started, results exceeded all expectation. The Archbishop himself was very happy over the results. He encouraged the Vincentian Fathers to give more popular missions. An account from Fr. Bruno Saiz, C.M., of the missions in Cavite in 1909 tells us that

\ldots the Archbishop, almost weeping with emotion when the parish priest gave him the news; and when the Provincial and I presented ourselves to him after the mission, he said, “St. Vincent was raised in the Church for the Mission, and God has given grace to his sons so that they, more than other congregations, may undertake this work. Let us establish missions in my Archdiocese, because the parish priests desire them, and favor you. The missions have been my golden dream; and with such good results they have increased my love towards a work so satisfying in itself.” I should note that our mission sermons carried a conciliatory tone, a consideration of the nature of the people among whom incredulity and apathy have prevailed. \ldots

The parish priest who is an Americanized Spaniard, took up the idea from the people, and accepted it with joy. It consisted in allowing whoever wanted to consult regarding difficulties he had against or about Religion, to write his query and place it in a small box provided for the purpose in the church. Some asked in good faith, and the greater number just to tempt the missionary Father; but the fact is that more than a hundred questions were asked. Among them were queries that required a lot of information and data. But the Lord blessed us in this matter as in everything else. Some were read publicly from the pulpit, and with this strategy many became curious. Before the sermon, people arrived eagerly to hear the problems and their solution; on some days, the
church was full, and as the sermon was subtly introduced, many stayed up to the end. Blessed be the Lord for all. “To Thee, O Lord, belongs honor and glory, but to us, confusion of face!” (Dan. 9,7)

At the same time, there was given also a small Mission to the prisoners of the provincial jail in the city of Cebú. The Fathers were helped by Major Seminarians and some Filipino Sisters who translated for the women who did not know the language of the country. Even if this mission was held only for a short time, the reward was above average, and we hope it will be much greater in the next Lenten season. At the end of the mission, some small gifts were distributed to the poor prisoners, all of whom were greatly consoled and grateful.14

In line with the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul, and as parallel work to the Mission apostolate since the Vincentians took over the direction of Seminaries, the giving of spiritual exercises to the clergy became a regular feature of various Houses of Vincentians in the Philippines. During the years spanning the American occupation, this peculiar Vincentian apostolate flourished with great spiritual blessings in the Philippine Province. A missionary reported on December 28, 1909:

As soon as we finish the school year, some of us go to retreats. In Nueva Caceres, our priests have given various groups of retreats . . . ; also, in Manila there are plans of giving Spiritual Exercises to the clergy, because many priests desire it.15

Another article written in 1929 about the Seminary of Nueva Cáceres gives a similar account:

Every year there has been a round of Spiritual Exercises for the students in the College, without counting what is given before each Ordination. One is given to the Priests of the neighboring towns. Recently, eager to follow the desires of the Prelate, when vacation time comes two or four Priests of the Seminary travel along the Vicariates of Lagonoy, Catanduanes, Sorsogon, Masbate and Daet; two others stay in the House to direct those priests who come from Iraya, Tabaco, Rinconada, and General; thus, our rest from scholastic activities, more than a real rest, became only a change in occupation. But this is accomplished with pleasure, because in it the Fathers see the fulfillment of the Lord’s designs, for the benefit of souls.16
From the first decade of the century, a constant concern of the Vincentians was retreats for the clergy and popular missions for the poor of the towns and the villages. This concern may be noticed in many Council Meetings of the Philippine Province dedicated to these topics. On July 24, 1907, the Provincial Council Meeting decided to put aside a certain amount for the Spiritual Exercises of the clergy as well as for popular missions, both of which, in accordance with the spirit of the holy Founder, were to be free of charge.

The new system of education established in the Islands could not ignore the contribution of the College-Seminaries to the growth of the Filipino people. A well-deserved tribute by the American Government was the recognition of the courses offered by the Vincentian College-Seminaries, authorizing them to issue the degree of Bachelor of Arts. The San Carlos Seminary of Cebu, credited with having produced many famous alumni in the past, was recognized on February 19, 1912; the first among the College-Seminaries to receive American Government recognition. The Secretary of Public Instruction, Newton W. Gilbert declared:

By virtue of the authority in me vested by Act 1459 known as The Corporation Law, I do hereby empower the San Carlos College of Cebu, Cebu, P.I., an institution of learning duly incorporated in accordance with said Act: a) to issue to students who have completed the 4th grade primary as at present prescribed by said College, a certificate stating that they have finished the primary course prescribed by the Government of the Philippine Islands; b) to issue to students who have completed the 7th grade as at present prescribed by said College, a certificate stating that they have finished the intermediate course of study prescribed by the Government of the Philippine Islands; c) to issue to students who have completed the 4th Year of the secondary course as at present prescribed, a Diploma stating that they have finished the secondary course of instruction prescribed by the Government of the Philippine Islands; d) and to issue to those students who have completed the entire College course as at present prescribed, the degree of Bachelor of Arts.17

The other College-Seminaries under the Vincentians also received recognition. Thus, the Prospectus of the Seminary of Jaro for the academic year 1924-1925 proudly advertised its Government recognition:
The program of studies comprises Primary, Intermediate, Secondary, and Collegiate courses, which are officially recognized by the Government, and highly praised by the Superintendent of Private Schools.  

Meanwhile, the Vincentian Fathers had to face up to problems related to the administration of these institutions and the demands of the times, specially the urgent need to learn English. During the first decade of the 20th century, the Philippine province had as a principal concern getting enough personnel with a good command of English. Several approaches were tried out. One of them was to send some Fathers to America, to Shanghai, or Hongkong. In Manila itself there were already many schools for learning English. The Fathers reacted in various ways, but most of them were willing enough to go abroad and learn English.

Another approach was to invite American and Irish confreres to come to the Philippines and help out specially in ministries where English would be particularly needed, as in school work. Several Provincial Councils (as those of August 18, 1900 and February 22, 1905) were dedicated to exploring the possibility of having American confreres take over, at least partially, some of the ministries. They contacted the Apostolic Delegate, consulted the Father General and the Provincial of Madrid to find out what they thought. But for one reason or another, it seems that the plan did not materialize. Among the Fathers singled out for learning English were Fathers Zaro and Tabar — both well known for their talent.

During the first decade of the century the Vincentians accepted in Samar (1905) one new foundation, that of St. Vincent’s College. However there were other offers from various Bishops of the Philippines. The Apostolic Delegate was interested in handing over to them a new foundation in Central Luzon as early as August 18, 1900. Bishop Barlin wanted them in Albay (September, 1903). A new residence was offered them in Cebú (May 9, 1905). Other offers were a residence in Tacloban, Leyte (July 28, 1905) and a Mission house (“Casa de Misión”) in Argao (November 23, 1909). All these offers bear witness to the high esteem and appreciation in which the Vincentians were held by ecclesiastical authorities as well as by the people. If some of these offers had to be turned down, it was because available personnel in the Province could hardly meet the urgent needs of the College-Seminaries, which were then their priority task.

The pressing problems for the reorganization of the Province to meet the rising demands of the new times became too heavy a burden for the Visitor, Fr. Rafael de la Iglesia. The Provincial Assembly was
convened in 1908, and the Visitor presented his resignation, which was accepted only after his insistent and repeated requests. To take his place at the head of the Philippine Vincentian Province, Fr. Angel Martínez was elected as Provincial Visitor, in 1908, a post he handled successfully for 14 years until 1922.

It must be noted that the Vincentian Province did not only accept the new foundations related to their main apostolate in the Seminaries, but also took an active role in securing funds for the promotion and development of these foundations. Thus we read in the March 20, 1918, Provincial Council Minutes: “It was agreed to give in to the petition of the Bishop of Lipa, lending him the amount of ₱30,000 for the construction of the College-Seminary of Lipa at 6% interest.” Some weeks later, on April 14, 1918, it was noted: “The decision of the Archbishop (of Manila) to suppress the College in Mandaluyong having been communicated, the manner of supporting it in San Marcelino was studied, and for this purpose it was resolved to do some building in our residence for the start of the school year, if only in a provisional way.”

The House founded in Tetuán, Zamboanga (Mindanao) (without canonical erection) was shortlived (from 1920 - to 1922). Various proposal for putting up a foundation in Pampanga did not prosper because at that time, the province was not considered populous enough.

New foundations during the American regime

Philippine society was changing under the new government that had taken over, and in trying to cope with change, the demands of the Church apostolate began to multiply. The Hierarchy called upon the Vincentian Fathers to undertake new works and set up new institutions for evangelization among multitudes needing spiritual guidance. Some of the new institutions were not only different in comparison with previous ones but were also of a completely new character, as for instance, the College in Calbayog, Samar (1905-1911), and the school in Jagna, Bohol (1911-1922).

The St. Vincent de Paul College of Calbayog

Under the American regime, a public school system of education without religious instruction was established all over the Philippines. A group of staunch Catholic lay people prepared a manifesto to be presented to the Philippine Commission arguing that the Philippines being a predominantly Catholic country, the Catholic religion should be taught in the public schools as was done before during the Spanish
regime. Unfortunately, the arguments was not heeded by the Government. The most that was granted was permission for priests or ministers to teach religion for half an hour three times a week to children whose parents or guardians desired it. However, this provision was practically nullified by the influence of Protestantism and Masonry on teachers or superintendents in the public schools. Thus the greater part of the Filipino youth grew up in an atmosphere of religious ignorance and indifferentism, estranged from the Church and neglecting the Sunday observance and the Sacraments.

Obviously, the need of the hour was for Catholic schools, specially in the provinces and remote regions of the country. The Vincentians were earnestly called upon to go to Calbayog, Samar, to establish a Catholic College.

The beginnings of this College could not be more propitious. The Committee created to support the College consisted of Buenaventura Rosales, as President; Pablo Camilong, Honorio Rosales (who was to become a Delegate to the First Philippine Assembly), Dr. Tomas Gomez, Hugo Rosales, Juan Trani, and Victorio Lentejas, as Members. The Committee obtained authorization from the Governor of Samar and at once began campaigning for funds for the project among the people of Calbayog, and neighboring towns.

The Parish Priest of Calbayog, Fr. Jose Diaznes, along with lay leaders of the town eager to see this great work accomplished for the Christian education of the youth in that provincial capital, formally requested the Bishop of Cebu to allow them to establish the Catholic College in the newly-built convent adjacent to the church of Calbayog. They also asked that either the Vincentian Fathers or the Jesuits be appointed Directors of the College. The Bishop of Cebu, Thomas A. Hendrick, gladly acceded, but he wanted to entrust the College to the Franciscan Fathers who were the first to evangelize those islands. However, the people of Samar insisted on their request for the Vincentians; and consequently, these were called to take over the administration and direction of the new College.

The first Vincentians who came to found the new "Colegio de San Vicente de Paul" were Fr. Gregorio Tabar and Fr. Fernando Sainz. They arrived in Calbayog on August 1, 1905, and were received enthusiastically by all the people. They were accompanied by the Rt. Rev. Chancellor and Vicar General of Cebu, Msgr. Pablo Singzon (who was to become later the first Bishop of Calbayog), and the Rector of Cebú Seminary, Fr. Pedro Juliá. The St. Vincent de Paul College remained simply a College for five years, until the constitution of a new diocese comprising the islands of Samar and Leyte separate from the diocese of Cebú, demanded its transformation into a College-Seminary.
Fr. Pedro Julia, C.M., (1849-1909). He enlarged the old Cebu Seminary building and grounds undertaking a big reclamation of 20,000 sq.m. from the sea repaired and renewed the roof, flooring and walls of old Seminary church, established the Asilo de San Vicente de Paul for poor girls, which operated a printing press where he published the periodical ANG CAMATUORAN to defend the Catholic faith against sectarian propaganda of other local papers during eleven years (1901-1912).

Fr. Jacinto Villalain, C.M. Rector of the San Carlos Seminary of Cebu, and later of San Carlos Seminary of Manila. He opened the San Vicente de Paul School in Jagna, Bohol. A bright scientist and theologian, loved and admired for his original ideas and good common sense.

Most Rev. Thomas Austin Hendrick, Bishop of Cebu (1904-1909); he granted permission to open the College of San Vicente de Paul in Calbayog in 1905 under the Vincentian Fathers; and obtained from Rome the appointment of Most Rev. Juan Bautista Gorordo as his Auxiliary Bishop in Cebu.
Most Rev. Juan Bautista Gorordo, D.D., born in Cebu of April 18, 1862. Educated with the Vincentians in the San Carlos Seminary of Cebu, was consecrated Bishop of Cebu in 1909.

Most Rev. Pablo Singzon de la Anunciacion, D.D., Born in Samar on January 25, 1885, educated with the Vincentians in San Carlos Seminary of Cebu, was consecrated Bishop on June 12, 1910.
Inner Court (Patio) of the Colegio Seminario de Cebu
RECTOR AND PROFESSORS OF SAN CARLOS SEMINARY, CEBU (1917)
MAJOR SEMINARIANS OF CEBU SAN CARLOS COLLEGE-SEMINARY (1917)
CHILDREN OF THE PRE-SEMINARY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL OF JAGNA, BOHOL

COLEGIO-SEMINARIO DE SAN VICENTE DE PAUL in Calbayog, Samar (1912)
COLEGIO-SEMINARIO DE SAN VICENTE DE PAUL OF CALBAYOG with its School-Batallion for military training (1912)
Professors and Seminarians of the San Vicente de Paul Seminary of Calbayog. (1925)

Seminario de San Francisco de Sales, in San Pablo, Laguna
Don Manuel Ravago (1870-1937), illustrious and close friend of the Vincentians, as an Alumnus of the “Escuela del Hermano” Antonio del Río, C.M. and of the College-Seminary of San Carlos, Cebu. He Studied Philosophy under Fr. Narciso Vila and Fr. Rafael del Río; took the clerical habit in the Cebu Seminary in 1887, but later, in the seminary of the University of Santo Tomas, realizing he was not called to the priesthood, he pursued the career of Law which he finished in 1896. An exquisite writer in Spanish he collaborated for long years in the Catholic periodicals Liberitas, Vida Filipina, Cultura Social, Estrella de Antipolo, La Defensa, El Mercantil, etc. He published interesting accounts of his travels in a book, and was called as an eloquent orator to address great audiences, as in his speech in the cathedral of Manila, “De abismo en abismo” during the First National Eucharistic Congress of the Philippines on December 11-15 1929.
The College-Seminary of St. Vincent de Paul, in Calbayog

When Pope Pius X constituted the new Diocese of Calbayog on April 10, 1910, its first Bishop was Most Reverend Pablo Singzon de la Anunciacion, a native of Calbiga, Samar, and for many years, the right hand of the Bishop of Cebu, as Chancellor and Vicar General of that Diocese.

Msgr. Singzon was consecrated Bishop on June 12, 1910, in the church of the Franciscans in Manila, and took possession of his diocese on July 14 of that year. On the very day of his inauguration, he decided to erect his diocesan Seminary in the College of St. Vincent de Paul under the Vincentians. At once, he began his pastoral visitation of the 84 parishes of the new diocese, and convoked a Diocesan Synod which was celebrated on March 2-4, 1911. In the first synod, he confirmed officially the Vincentian Fathers as Directors of his Seminary:

As it is very difficult and almost impossible for us to attend personally to the administration and government of our Seminary, we confirm, with the approval of the Synod, our decision already taken in our Circular of June 29, 1910, in virtue of which we entrust to the Vincentian Fathers the direction and administration of the College-Seminary of Calbayog.

And although the Council of Trent (Sess. XXIII, De reform) demands that for the government and direction of the Seminary there should be two commissions presided by the Bishop and formed up by two Canons and two Secular Priests, a disposition that has been reiterated by the Letters of the Sacred congregation of Council to the Bishops of South America (March 15, 1897), we command and decree, with the approval of the Synod, that since the direction and administration of our College-Seminary has been entrusted to the Congregation of Mission which has been exempted from the above prescription of the Council of Trent by the Apostolic Letters of Pope Pius IX (Brief Expositum Nobis, 28 Febr. 1873), therefore the said Congregation of the Mission should enjoy the free direction and administration of our College-Seminary, both in the spiritual as in the temporal matters, following only the proper Directory of its Seminaries which has been observed with great praise and profit in all the Seminaries of Italy, France, Spain, America and the Philippines. However, it must be understood that the said Congregation of the Mission will depend in its
administration and government of the Seminary from the Ordinary of the place, to whom alone he will render every year a balance sheet of all incomes and expenses of the same institution.20

The College-Seminary was established in the newly-built convent of Calbayog, remodelled to meet the demands of an educational institution at the cost of not less that ₱10,000. Standing 50 meters away from the sea, it occupied an area of 1,830 square meters, and was equipped with a rich library and up-to-date Physics and Biology laboratories. Its program of studies and curriculum were approved and recognized by the Secretary of Instruction on April 7, 1911, and the College was incorporated with the University of Santo Tomas. The Seminary followed as closely as possible the programs established by the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and approved by Pope Pius X for the Seminaries of Italy.

At the start, the number of students was expectedly not large; in 1911, there were only 200, of whom 176 were interns, 12 half-boarders, and 12 seminarians. The following year, it increased to more than 225 students under a staff of seven Vincentian Fathers, a cleric in charge of the Elementary Instruction, and two lay professors for extracurricular subjects.21

The establishment continued as a College-Seminary from June 29, 1910, until the school year of 1924-1925 when, following the mind of the Holy See, the Seminary was separated from the College to remain strictly a Conciliar Seminary open only for those aspiring to the clerical or priestly vocation. During its existence from 1905 to 1925, the number of lay students enrolled in the College of St. Vincent de Paul, of Calbayog, reached 3,917, who later turned out to be successful lawyers, doctors, engineers, pharmacists, businessmen, professors and military officers.

The Pre-Seminary Elementary School of St. Vincent de Paul in Jagna, Bohol

The first American Bishop of Cebú, Thomas A. Hendrick, died on November 29, 1909; to succeed him the Holy See appointed Rt. Rev. Juan B. Gorordo Apostolic Administrator of the diocese on December 15 of that year, and on March 3, 1910, residential Bishop of Cebú. In accordance with the dispositions of the Provincial Council of Manila (1907), Gorordo convoked at once a Diocesan Synod that was celebrated on April 24-29, 1911. One of the resolutions of the Synod was to find a Catholic School outside the city, both to counteract the Protes-
tant influence of the Siliman Institute of Dumaguete, Negros Oriental, as well as to foster ecclesiastical vocations among the Filipino youth.

For this purpose, the town of Jagna, in Bohol, was chosen as the site for the school. Jagna faces the island of Camiguin with its towns of Mambajao, Sagay and Cataraman; as well as the northern coast of Mindanao. From Jagna could be seen the mountains of Misamis; and it was not far away from the provinces of Agusan, Butuan and Surigao. Around Jagna were many towns of Bohol; to the east, Duero, Guindulman, Anda, Candijay and Mabini; to the west, Garcia H. Valencia, Dimiao, Lila, Loay, Alburquerque and Tagbilaran; and to the north, Urbay, Batuanan, Sierra Bullones or Candagas, Carmen, Batuan, Pilar, Sevilla and Loboc. Jagna was indeed the center of the region, and the biggest among neighboring towns, with a population of 15,000 inhabitants, and in frequent communication with all its neighbors.

Bishop Gorordo appealed to the Provincial of the Philippine Vincentians for three priests. The Provincial was able to send only two Fathers. The Rector of the College-Seminary of Cebú, Fr. Jacinto Villalbaín, C.M. volunteered for the work, and together with Fr. Salustiano Zaro was sent to start the Pre-Seminary School of Jagna. The two left Cebú on June 5, 1911, and on June 24, anniversary day of Bishop Gorordo’s episcopal ordination, as well as his name day, the “Escuela Catolica de S. Vicente de Paul” of Jagna, Bohol, was inaugurated as a Pre-Seminary Elementary School (Primary and Intermediary Grades preparatory to the Secondary or High School level). Its curriculum was made of the three customary courses:

**Elementary Class**
1. Alphabet and syllabication in Spanish and Bisaya - daily
2. Reading and Calligraphy
3. Elements of Spanish Grammar
4. Elements of Arithmetic
5. Catechism (Minor) of St. Pius X

**Middle Class**
1. Calligraphy - daily
2. Reading in Spanish and Bisaya
3. Spanish Grammar
4. Addition, subtraction, multiplication, division in Arithmetic
5. Christian doctrine
6. Politeness and Good manners
7. Elements of Geography

**Superior Class**
1. Reading in prose and poetry and handwriting
2. Writing upon dictation
3. Arithmetical operations with fractions and decimals; Geometrical figures.
4. Geography and Natural History
5. Christian doctrine
6. Religion and Morals

Besides daily classes with the children, the Vincentians undertook the work of giving Spiritual Retreats to the clergy of Bohol; and during Lent, they often helped the Parish priests in the heavy work of hearing Confessions of so great a number of penitents who flocked to the churches at that time.

This Pre-Seminary Elementary School of Jagna functioned under the Vincentians from 1911 to 1922.

The new Diocese of Lipa with around one million souls was erected in 1910; it was culled from five provinces, bounded by the Archdiocese of Manila in the North and the Diocese of Nueva Cáceres in the South. The first Bishop of Lipa, Most Rev. José Petrelli, an Italian erstwhile Secretary of the Apostolic Delegation in the Philippines, (later, in 1917 appointed Apostolic Delegate) wanted to establish a Seminary for the Diocese. He turned to the Vincentians for help. Accordingly, in June 1914, the Vincentian Fathers Bruno Sáiz and Felix Pérez arrived at the Parish “convent” (so called because of the Franciscan religious who administered, the parish during the Spanish regime) in San Pablo, Laguna. Later on, other Vincentians came to reinforce the personnel: Fr. Julio Ruiz, and then, for some time, Fr. Baltazar Comin and Fr. Cecilio Martínez.

The conditions, in the beginning, were far from ideal; the Vincentians had had to occupy only half of the “convent”, the other half being for the use of the parish priest, with whom their relations became, unfortunately, rather strained. Before the end of the year, the Bishop decided to transfer his Seminary to Bauan, Batangas. In January 1915, the Vincentian Fathers Eduardo Gancedo and Lorenzo Ibáñez were sent with the Vincentian ordinand José Aguirreche, to the town of Bauan, while the others remained in San Pablo, Laguna. The seminarians of San Pablo were transferred to Bauan. Soon afterwards, Fr. Antonio Pérez took over the place of Fr. Gancedo, who had been assigned to the Manila Seminary. Later on, Fr. Ramón Subirón, and then Fr. Honorio García, and lastly, upon the closing of the House of San Pablo in June 1916, Fr. Julio Ruiz, went to work in the Seminary of Bauan.
When Petrelli was appointed Apostolic Delegate in 1917, Most Rev. Alfredo Verzosa, a Filipino from Vigan, was appointed to succeed him in Lipa. The new Bishop realized at once that the best place for the Seminary was San Pablo — as originally planned. San Pablo was easily accessible from any one of the five Provinces of the diocese. Bishop Versoza decided to bring back the Seminary to San Pablo, and once again, it became a College-Seminary according to the terms of the Contract agreed upon with the Vincentian Provincial, Fr. Angel Martínez. The whole Parish “convent” was then placed at the disposal of the Fathers of the Seminary, and the parish rectory was transferred to another place.

Thus, the Vincentians left the House of Bauan, after two years, and Fr. Ramón Subirón with Fr. Irineo Rodríguez took over the Seminary in San Pablo on April 23, 1917. At the start of the school year, in June 1917, the Seminary Staff was composed of Fr. Godofredo Peces, as Superior, with Fr. Ramon Varona. The College-Seminary offered — as in other places — the Primary and Intermediate Courses, and, at least, the First Year of High School. Between 1917 to 1923, the College-Seminary enrolled approximately 217 boarding students, and 401 day scholars.

Fr. Godofredo Peces remained Rector of the institution until 1920, when he was replaced by Fr. Pedro Martínez. Two years later, Fr. Martínez was assigned Superior of the House of Manila, and Fr. Ramon Subirón succeeded him as Rector of San Pablo.

The progress of this institution was largely due to the zeal and interest shown by Bishop Verzosa for its advancement. His zeal prompted him to follow the example of the Manila Seminary which was separated from the College of Santa Mesa in 1920, in accordance with the directives of the Church. Notwithstanding the economic difficulties that such separation from the College would involve, Bishop Verzosa decided in March 1923 to close the College. Thus, the school-year 1923-24 began with only 40 seminarians — quite few indeed for a beginning. In time candidates for the priesthood increased notably, reaching over 100 in 1926 a frame maintained with slight fluctuations in the succeeding years.

As the seminarians increased, so did the personnel — the Professors were seven in 1926, and became nine in 1927, with a Vincentian Brother Coadjutor.

When Fr. Subirón left for Spain in 1925, Fr. Alfonso Saldaña was appointed Rector of the Seminary in San Pablo.

At that time, the new Apostolic Delegate to the Philippines, Guillermo Piani, following the instructions of the Holy See, wished to have the Major Seminaries separated from the Minor Department.
Bishop Verzosa did not delay in taking the necessary steps towards such an ideal arrangement. At the end of May 1931, he ordered Fr. Alfonso Saldaña to transfer the Major Seminary from San Pablo to Lipa.

**Former Vincentian Seminaries Reopened**

*The San Carlos Seminary of Manila (1901–1913)*

Temporarily closed on September 4, 1899, the San Carlos Seminary was re-opened in the years 1901-1902, for delayed vocations in a private house in Intramuros. It was under the direction of some secular priests, offering a brief course of studies pursued in the nearby University of Santo Tomas. In 1904, the first American Archbishop of Manila, Jeremiah J. Harty, entrusted the Seminary to a secular Spanish priest, Fr. Serra, and it became a little better organized.

However, the arrangement was not completely satisfactory, although it provided some ordinations to answer the pressing demand for priests in many places of the vast Archdiocese left vacant by the religious who had to leave, or by seculars who died or retired. To remedy the critical situation, the Apostolic Delegate John Baptist Guidi (successor of Placido Louis Chapelle) had wanted since 1903, to entrust the Manila Seminary and if possible those of other dioceses also to the Jesuits. He invited them to change their Normal School (that had been operating before the revolution and some years after it in Padre Faura, Ermita, under the patronage of St. Francis Xavier) into a diocesan Seminary. Since the Normal School was in difficulties under the new regime the Jesuits accepted the invitation and, in June 1904, inaugurated the “Seminario Central de San Francisco Javier.” The Normal School continued to operate with it for two more years. In the beginning, the San Javier Seminary was only a minor seminary, aiming to expand gradually and include later both Major and Minor departments, eventually to become a Central Seminary for the whole Philippines, according to the plan of the First Provincial Council of Manila (in 1907). In 1905, the Seminary of Vigan was also handed over to the Jesuits.

Also in 1905, Archbishop Harty of Manila in deference to the mind of the Apostolic Delegate, asked the Jesuits to accept also the direction of the San Carlos Seminary in Intramuros, as an affiliate institution to their San Javier Seminary in Ermita. The students of San Carlos in Intramuros were given under the Jesuits a brief course on fundamentals of Dogma and Moral Theology during some three years, after which they were at once ordained and sent to fill vacant parishes.
Most Rev. JEREMIA J. HARTY, D.D. Archbishop of Manila, who entrusted the San Carlos Seminary to the Vincentian Fathers on April 15, 1913.
In the interval, from May 20, 1905 to August 17, 1911, while the San Carlos Seminary in Intramuros remained thus under the Jesuits, over 40 priests were ordained. Finally, the Archbishop of Manila decided in 1911 to fuse the San Carlos of Intramuros with the San Javier of Ermita, into one Archdiocesan Seminary of San Javier. Thus, in August 1911, the San Carlos Seminary of Manila temporarily disappeared as a separate institution.23

Unfortunately, financial difficulties in running the San Javier Seminary became rather thorny, both for the Manila Archbishop and the Jesuit Fathers. The Archbishop invited the Belgian Scheut Fathers of the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, recently arrived in the Philippines, to open a Seminary in Cavite, which they called Trinity College. That seminary lasted for only one year (1909-1910).

On April 15, 1913, a contract was signed between the Archbishop Jeremias J. Harty of Manila and the Very Rev. Fr. Angel Martinez, C.M., Provincial Visitor of the Philippine Vincentians. Noteworthy were terms No. 1, 3, 6, and 8 of the contract. By these terms, it was provided that the minimum of professors was to be five priests and two brothers, and this number could be increased at the discretion of the Prelate; that the Rector would be in charge of the Retreats for Ordinands and for the Archdiocesan clergy, as the Prelate might decide. The Seminary should be governed according to the Directories of the Congregation of the Mission, in conformity with the norms established by the Holy Father, Pius X. The academic formation should be as complete as possible, both in ecclesiastical studies as in secular subjects, as the times demanded, without neglecting the study of the languages most commonly used, as well as physical training and sports. Seminarians will be divided into Minor (Humanities) and Major (Philosophy and Theology). The tuition fee for Major seminarians should be P200 each year; the Minors were to pay P225 as day scholars. Major seminarians would wear the clerical cassock. The Minors might spend their vacations at home with their families, but the Majors could not do so unless absolutely necessary and with the permission of the Prelate. The honoraria of the faculty would be P30 for the Rector, P25 for the Professors, and P15 for the Brothers Coadjutor.

Since the financial difficulties with the Jesuits persisted Archbishop, Jeremias H. Harty, decided on May 19, 1913, allegedly "for economic reasons" to transfer the Manila Seminary back to its previous directors, the Vincentian Fathers. This took place after a lapse of 14 years, thus reviving the centuries-old Archdiocesan Manila Seminary of San Carlos, whose history had suffered a break of some two years. The transfer was made on June 15, 1913. The Manila seminarians
that were in San Javier Seminary went to occupy the new quarters of San Carlos in a renovated old building in the town of Mandaluyong (San Felipe Neri), a former Asylum for orphan girls under the Augustinians (the very same house where the secret of the Katipunan uprising was first disclosed by Patino to his sister in 1896).

The decision of Archbishop Harty for this transfer may be better understood in the light of the fact that he was a native of St. Louis, Missouri, an episcopal See, founded by the famous Vincentian Bishop Rosati in 1820, where the Diocesan Seminary was in the care of the Vincentian Fathers. Archbishop Harty's apostolic spirit had been consequently formed in the school of Vincentians to whom he professed sincere affection and esteem. Out of respect to the wishes of the Apostolic Delegate Guidi, he entrusted his Manila Seminary to the zealous Jesuit Fathers who wisely directed it for eight years (1905-1913). Certain influential persons attempted to prod the Vincentians to insist on their prior claim to the administration of the Seminary by virtue of their previous stewardship of 37 years. However, the Superiors of the Philippine Province, faithful to the tradition of their holy Founder, did not want to anticipate the will of Divine Providence, preferring to let events follow their natural course. "We took charge of the Seminary — they argued — by the spontaneous initiative of the Prelate; we left it likewise through the spontaneous will of the Diocesan Prelate; we should not look for it anew, unless the same ecclesiastical authority would offer it to us."25

The Vincentians back to the Seminaries of Naga, Cebu, and Jaro.

The Philippine Revolution forced the Vincentians to interrupt their work in the Seminaries. The Seminary of Cebu was closed in April, 1898; that of Jaro, in August, and that of Naga, in October of the same year. On October 15, 1899, by disposition of Archbishop Nozaleda, the Seminary of Manila was closed. All the Seminaries were, for all intents and purposes, closed from 1900 to 1903. But as soon as the storm clouds began to dissipate, they began gradually to resume their normal activities. By 1905, all of them were functioning again, although rather precariously due to the scarcity of vocations.

In the provincial Seminaries of Cebu, Naga and Jaro, the Vincentian directors, during the intervening years from 1898 to 1905, did not interrupt completely their labors for the training of seminarians. Although many of these were dispersed or returned to their homes, there remained a few who preferred to continue their studies and preparation for their priestly call. School activities, could not yet be normally held and academic courses officially opened, but private classes were offered
and ecclesiastical training imparted to those interested in following their vocation. The records, preserved at the archives of the Seminary of Naga and that of Cebu, show the following figures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>NAGA COLLEGE-SEMINARY</th>
<th>CEBU COLLEGE-SEMINARY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seminarians</td>
<td>“Colegiales”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895-1896</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896-1897</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897-1898</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898-1899</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899-1900</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1901</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901-1902</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902-1903</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903-1904</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904-1905</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905-1906</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>487</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No data can be found about the Jaro Seminary, because all its records disappeared in the fire of 1906. The Seminary was forced to close down from 1897 to 1903. But most probably the Fathers continued during those five years, helping some few seminarians or students to pursue more or less informally their academic and ecclesiastical formation. The Seminary was again opened in 1903.

But all the promising situation came almost to an end when on October 7, 1906, a devastating fire reduced the flourishing school to ashes. The calamity nearly destroyed everything, including all records in the archives of the Seminary. However, this turned out to be a blessing in disguise because aid for its restoration came from everywhere. Even the Holy Father, St. Pius X, sent a most generous donation. In less than a year, the College-Seminary was housed in a magnificent P600,000 building. During the construction of the new building, the seminarians found temporary quarters in a house of Don Teodorof Benedicto. The transfer to the new building on September 17, 1907 was indeed an occasion of great rejoicing. Unfortunately, the strain of reconstruction work had taxed the strength of the zealous Bishop. A day after its inauguration, he died of a heart attack.

Bishop Rooker’s successor was Dennis Dougherty, who came from Vigan to Jaro in 1908. With his energetic support, the Rector of the Seminary, Fr. Mariano Napal, C.M., succeeded in 1912 in bringing to completion the building started by Bishop Rooker. The years from 1912 to 1925, before the College was separated from the Seminary, were prosperous ones with large enrollments, although growth in enrollment was achieved at the expense of the growth of priestly vocations.
To provide for better clerical training, the Archbishop decided on the transfer of the seminary from the noise and bustle of the city to more tranquil surroundings, in the outskirts of Manila, in the town of Mandaluyong (San Felipe Neri parish). The Archbishop bought the former estate of the Augustinian Fathers, with the building that had been used for the girls' orphanage directed by Augustinian Sisters. After repairing the building he assigned the whole property for the use of the San Carlos Seminary of Manila. It was an excellent site for the purpose. Located in an elevated and delightful place, some four kilometers from Manila, overlooking a large part of the city, the building was 50 meters in front 35 meters on the side with a central wing 30 meters long. It had an occupancy of 150.

The Archbishop's plan was to establish a large institution with Elementary and High School levels, to provide for the Catholic education of the Filipino youth, and at the same time support the Seminary financially. Hence, the building was to be enlarged to accommodate 200 interns. A public oratory was to be erected to provide for the spiritual needs of the teeming population of the town, and at the same time to give the seminarians pastoral practice in liturgical celebrations.

The time for announcing the opening of the new College-Seminary was indeed too short, scarcely two months. Yet, on the day assigned for its inauguration, Saturday, June 16, 1913, 50 Major Seminarians, 12 Minors, and some 40 day scholars had enrolled. On that occasion, many parish priests from the dioceses of Manila and Lipa, former alumni of the Vincentians, came to join the celebration of the return of their former mentors to the San Carlos Seminary. More would have come, if it were not for the novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus that was being celebrated in the parishes. The alumni hired a large band of 40 musicians to give a festive touch to the solemn day. The seminarians and the professors were treated to a tasty snack of sherbet, cake, and candy, and there was a noisy and merry display of fireworks. All of this was paid for by the secular clergy of Manila. The school year was formally inaugurated on June 22, when the House was blessed solemnly by the Archbishop of Manila.


There were difficulties in the beginning. In spite of repeated
requests made to the Manila Electric Railroad and Light Company (Meralco), electric service was not extended to Mandaluyong. Water supply from the Carriedo reservoir was quite scanty, specially during the summer months. With the help of the Manila Archbishop, after entreaties made by the Vincentians, the Seminary was able to acquire a 12-horsepower dynamo that from March 1914 on lit up the Seminary. A big tank mounted on a high steel tower stored enough water pumped into it by an electric motor, providing the water needed by the Seminary.

In 1916, Archbishop Harty was transferred by the Holy See to the Diocese of Omaha, U.S.A., and Most Reverend Michael J. O'Doherty was appointed to succeed him in the Archdiocese of Manila. At that time, the Seminary was composed of two departments: the Seminary proper, or the Philosophy and Theology Department for Major Seminarians; and adjacent to it, thought with strict segregation of students, the College which became known as “Colegio de Santa Mesa” or “Santa Mesa College.” The College-Seminary offered High School and the Intermediate and Primary Courses for lay students, from among whom prospective candidates were encouraged to follow the priestly vocation. Government recognition of the Primary, Intermediate and High School courses was granted by H.S. Martin, Secretary of Public Instruction on July 26, 1915. Two months afterwards, the Superintendent of Private Schools, Mr. P.L. O’Rally, sent this letter to the College.

This year, 1915, all recognized private schools are divided into two classes. “A” and “B”, representing respectively those that are giving all of their courses in English, and those that are not. I am pleased to be able to place your College in the Grade “A” list.26

On February 14, 1918, the Secretary of Public Instruction, Charles E. Yeater, empowered the Santa Mesa College of Mandaluyong “to issue to students who have completed the entire college course, as prescribed at that time, the degree of Bachelor of Arts.”

The San Carlos Seminary of Manila, by those years, was also admitting “minor seminarians”. These were the students who, upon beginning their secondary course, or during their High School years, had expressed - with their parents’ consent - the desire to follow the ecclesiastical career. They were to live together with the lay students, and observe the rules and norms of the College Prospectus for day scholars. However, in their course of studies they were bound to take four years of Latin, while the last two years of Latin were optional for
lay students. Thus, in this College-Seminary there was something of a Minor Seminary although not the reality of it.

During the years 1917-1920 there were improvements in the Programs of Studies. The requirements of the American educational system observed for the sake of Government recognition led innovations in the subjects. Class periods lasted for 40 minutes, instead of one hour. The changes facilitated the enrichment of the curriculum. The likelihood was that the program followed in the Manila Seminary was — with slight variations — adopted in the provincial Seminaries at this time.

When Most Rev. Jeremiah J. Harty attended on October 13, 1916, the Farewell Program offered to him by the seminarians and collegians before his departure for the Diocese of Omaha in the States, he was well pleased to see the College-Seminary he established three years earlier, enjoying recognition for its academic, literary and religious achievements.

Archbishop Harty’s successor, Most Rev. Michael O’Doherty, before taking possession of the Metropolitan See, wished to spend a day of delightful retreat in the Seminary of Mandaluyong, and decided that the solemn parade that was to bring him to the Archepiscopal palace of Manila should start from the same San Carlos Seminary which was indeed “the heart of the Archdiocese”.

On January 15, 1917, the College-Seminary of Mandaluyong offered to the new Archbishop of Manila a Welcome Program where, besides the Welcome Speech in Latin by the seminarian Emigdio Trinidad, and the entertaining comic number by the famous actor Toresky, who was widely acclaimed at that time in Manila, the students presented with great applause the drama “Bautismo de sangre” (Blood Baptism) of L. Ubeda and Antonio Trueba. The Program lasted for three hours and was favorably reported two days later in the Catholic daily “LIBERTAS” of the Dominican Fathers.

Archbishop O’Doherty’s nagging worry was the scarcity of the clergy. His vast Archdiocese encompassed that time almost all Central Luzon from Pangasinan down to the Batangas and Tayabas (Quezon). He put his hopes in the San Carlos Seminary of Mandaluyong. Gradually he began to realize that, notwithstanding the progress and apparent achievements of the Seminary, there was something preventing it from yielding the longed for results. The zealous Prelate came to understand the adverse effect of mixed clerical education. The continuous contact of seminarians aspiring to the lofty summits of the Catholic Priesthood with lay students living in the midst of the world, with very different ideals, had a detrimental effect on the development of ecclesiastical vocations. The College was actually draining the Seminary, although, economically, it was supporting the Seminary. In
fact, the number of Major seminarians was continually and alarmingly dropping.

Statistics from the Secretariat of the College-Seminary show eloquently the distressing numbers, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Major Seminarians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>29 (plus 6 from Jaro)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>23 (plus 5 from Jaro)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1919, Most Rev. Michael J. O'Doherty made up his mind to close the College or to transfer it somewhere else.

Instead of phasing it out, the College was transferred to the Vincentian Central House of San Marcelino. But since it was necessary to outfit that House for use as a College, the transfer was postponed until the following year. In 1920 the Vincentians opened the new “St. Vincent College” (Colegio de San Vicente de Paul). The College lasted only for seven years because it had to give way to the Major Seminary Department of San Carlos Seminary which moved in 1927 to the House of San Marcelino. The Mandaluyong building had become too small to house both Major and Minor seminarians whose numbers had been gradually increasing every year since the separation of the Seminary from the College. Thus also, the Archbishop of Manila was the first to follow the mind and directives of the Holy See regarding the separation of the Major and the Minor departments of a Seminary.

The Rectors of San Carlos Seminary, during this period, were Fr. Gregorio Tabar (1913-1917), and Fr. Aurelio Fernández (1917-1927); among the Professors were well known and competent Vincentians like Frs. Honorio García, Nicolás de la Iglesia, Jacinto Iglesias, Mariano Azmendi, Estanislao Arana, Eduardo Gancedo, José Fernández, José Tejada, Emilio Notario, and Federico Tobar.

Minor seminarians were mentioned in the Registers of enrollments only beginning 1919. In the six previous years, some 70 collegians studied the 4-year course of Latin, as aspirants to the Major Seminary; but of these, only four reached Ordination. The Archbishop of Manila established full and half scholarship grants for deserving seminarians as an encouragement to young people pursuing the ecclesiastical vocation. Initially, there were 20 scholarships (“becas”) offered liberally to
those who could not afford to pay their tuition. There was one year when 93 seminarians were granted scholarships; only three were paying their full tuition fee; and the rest were enjoying some partial grants (one-half, one-third, and one-fourth scholarships) according to their merits. There was a gradual increase in the number of Minor seminarians. 28 69 in 1920; 66 in 1921; 68 in 1922; 84 in 1923; 100 in 1924; 107 in 1925; and 118 in 1926.

The screening of prospective candidates was conscientiously made by the Fathers, following the sound doctrine of St. Pius X: “It is better to have few but good priests, than many but not good.” In 1927, when the Major Seminary was transferred to the Vincentian Central House of San Marcelino, the Minor seminarians enrolled in Mandaluyong showed a notable increase: they numbered 141 under the wise guidance of the new Rector of the Minor Seminary, Fr. José Tejada, who, five years later, was to be elected Provincial of the Vincentians in the Philippines.

When the Santa Mesa College was closed in Mandaluyong in 1920, the Minor Seminary continued offering a curriculum practically equivalent to the High School Program previously followed, although the Seminary studies were no longer enjoying Government recognition. Slight variations were introduced to attain a more perfect formation in the Humanities. The Seminary Directors now found greater freedom to plan the course of studies according to the needs of the prospective candidates to the clerical vocation.

In subsequent years, by the third decade of the century, the three-year Philosophy Course was shortened to two years, transferring the study of Geometry and Science (Biology, Physics, Chemistry, etc.) to the Minor Seminary, omitting the subject of Hebrew, and prescribing Logic, Ontology and Cosmology in the First Year of Philosophy, and Psychology, Theodicy and Ethics in the Second Year. Over the years, therefore, the Major Seminary Courses became a 6-year Course leading to Sacred Orders.

Course of Studies in Seminaries under the Vincentians

The new educational system imposed by the Department of Public Instruction necessitated reforms in the courses and curricula for Elementary and Secondary Education.

The Spanish educational system had two levels: First Instruction (Primera Enseñanza), and Second Instruction (Segunda Enseñanza). These were the equivalent of the Elementary and the Secondary (High School and two years of College) levels. The First Instruction in Spanish schools included three classes: the “infima” (elementary) class, the
"media" (middle) class, and the "superior" (higher) class, which were equivalent to the four Primary grades and the three Intermediate grades of the American system. Secondary Education took the student through four years of High School. Two more years led to the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

The Vincentian College-Seminaries adopted the new system which required the study of English Grammar, Composition, and Literature for the nine years leading to a College degree. At the start there were only a few Seminary Professors to handle the many classes. In Cebu, there were only three Fathers, but gradually the staff increased so that by 1917, it numbered 22 (12 Vincentian Fathers, one ordained cleric, and nine seminarians). The academic year, as was customary in the country, began on June 15 and ended by mid-March, leaving the warmest months of March, April and May for the summer vacations.

At first, the Course for the Bachelor of Arts degree was for five years only. In 1908, the Course was extended to six years. In the Spanish system, the Grades were "Sobresaliente" (Excellent); "Notable" (Remarkable); "Bueno" (Good enough); "Aprobado" (Approved for promotion); "Suspenso" (Failed). Beginning 1913, the marks were more specifically indicated by points: 95 to 100 equivalent to Excellent; 90 to 95, Remarkable; 85 to 90, Good enough; 75 to 85, Approved for promotion; below 75, Failed.

Following standards of instruction set by the Government, the Vincentian College-Seminaries decided—with the Bishops' approval—to offer in the Minor Seminary the complete course of studies leading to the degree of Bachelor of Arts. This was necessary to obtain Government recognition for the "Colegiales" or day scholars attending classes with the minor seminarians. Besides the subjects demanded by the Department of Public Instruction, the Seminary curriculum included subjects necessary for a thorough training in the Humanities and ecclesiastical courses. Courses were designed specifically for seminarians, and where the standard courses were offered, those meant for students aspiring for the priesthood were adopted to the requirements of the vocation. The Minor Seminary was then extended to six years, making it equivalent to the full course for a Bachelor of Arts degree.

When the College was separated from it in 1925, the Minor Seminary retained the first four years equivalent to the High School Course. The last two years corresponding to the College Course (with Philosophy and Science subjects) were handed over to the Philosophy Department of the Major Seminary. Thus, Minor seminarians graduating after their 4th Year Latin entered the Major Seminary (donning at this stage the clerical habit) to pursue their Philosophy Course of two
years, before starting the Theology Course which will take five or four years prior to Ordination.

The textbooks used for the subjects in the Minor Seminary were the best known in those times. For LATIN, the famous Grammar of Raymundo de Miguel, supplemented by the series for translation work edited by Espar, beginning with the Historia Sacra in the first year, followed by the Biographies of Cornelio Nepote, the familiar Letters of Cicero and Julius Caesar, the Civil Wars of Caesar and Catilina, the Punic War, the Speeches of Cicero, as well as Lives of St. Anthony the Hermit, the works of St. Cyprian, St. Leo the Great, and the poems of Ovid, Virgil and Horatius, and other classics. For SPANISH, the grades series fo F.T.D. textbooks and Rhetoric textbook of Monlau was used; in GEOGRAPHY, the textbook was the one by Paluzie; in ARITHMETIC and GEOMETRY, that of Chardin; in ADVANCED ALGEBRA, that of Cortazar; for LOGARITHMS, that of Queipo; for GREEK, the Grammar of Ortega; for WORLD HISTORY, the textbook of Casado; for NATURAL HISTORY, that of Pereda; for CHEMISTRY, that of Feliu; for PHYSICS, that of Rubio and Diaz. In PHILOSOPHY, for Logic, Psychology, Ontology, Cosmology, Theodicy and Ethics, the well known textbook of Cardinal Ceferino Gonzalez, O.P., former Professor of the University of Santo Tomas of Manila. In Christian Doctrine, the Catechism of Fr. Astete; and for PLAIN CHANT, the Graduale and Vesperale Romanum, or the LIBER USUALIS of Gregorian Chant.

The textbook used for Ethics was the work of Cardinal Ceferino Gonzales, O.P.; for Dogmatic Theology, the volumes of Tanquerey; for Moral Theology, those of Morino, C.M., for Hermeneutics, the work of Janssens; for Church History, that of Funk; for Patrology, the book of Martínez; for Pastoral Theology, that of Grimm; for Liturgy, that of Stella; for Canon Law, for some years, just lectures, and later the volumes of Cocchi, C.M.

The amount of work undertaken by the Vincentians during the first quarter of the century in the training of aspirants to the priestly vocation, along with the youth that flocked to the College-Seminaries to receive a solid Catholic education for leadership in secular professions, was not indeed a light task. But the monotonous, unheralded and silent apostolate among the Filipino youth was rewarded with distinguished alumni who later on contributed to the honor of the country.

In addition to prestigious lay leaders, the Vincentians trained and educated worthy ministers of the altar and zealous pastors of souls, for that was their specific apostolate. In the first decades of the century, the circumstances were more difficult and less propitious, than in previous times and the Vincentians gave special attention and invested
increased fervor in the task of forming a worthy and devoted secular clergy in response to the most urgent need of the Catholic Church in the Philippines.

Vincentian Contribution to the rise of Philippine nationalism

Before the Vincentians established themselves in the provinces, there was virtually no Secondary Instruction in the Philippines except in Manila. To pursue secondary education, young people from the provinces had to travel to Manila, a privilege only a few could afford.

The establishment of College-Seminaries by the Vincentians alleviated the problem. Based on documents extant in 1912 (many of them were destroyed later by the war), the number of students who went from 1870 to 1890 through the various Seminaries under Vincentians was close to 12,000. Such was indeed a considerable number for the provinces in the 19th century. It was from this group that an intellectual elite was formed. Eminent men who were later to emerge as leaders of their people in the struggle for independence were the contribution of the Vincentians to the rise of Philippine nationalism.

In the years 1891-1911 when the Seminaries were also accredited colleges of secondary instruction, the Vincentians trained about 12,000 students in their College-Seminaries, and from 1911 to 1918, some 4,000 more. Taken all together, 28,000 students educated by the Vincentians all over the Philippines represent a substantial contribution to the growth of the Filipino nation.

The College-Seminary of San Carlos in Cebu stands out among the Seminaries of its time for having turned out many illustrious citizens of the country. A proclamation signed by Msgr. Jose Maria Cuenco, Ismael Paras, Antonio Climaco, Martin Lorenzo, and Jose del Mar on October 8, 1916, praised the glorious record of this College-Seminary:

The beneficent influence which the Seminario-Colegio de San Carlos of Cebu has exercised and continues to wield among the Filipino people is imponderable. With the exception of the University of Santo Tomas of Manila, there are few institutions of learning in the Philippines that can present a history as enviable and as brilliant as the Seminario-Colegio of Cebu, wisely directed by the Vincentian Fathers.

Their educative labor and their morally beneficial mission have spread throughout Cebu, Leyte, Samar, Negros Occidental and Negros Oriental, Bohol, and Mindanao in such a way that the civilization of these islands is so intimately
bound up with the Seminario-Colegio de San Carlos that no one can speak of the one without mentioning the other.

The Seminario-Colegio de San Carlos of Cebu has given to our fatherland men as famous and illustrious as the Bishops Gorordo and Singzon. Speaker Osmeña and the Judges Logarta and Cui. From the limpid fountain of its teachings, all the priests of Cebú, Bohol, Leyte and Samar, several senators and almost all the representatives of Cebú and Samar drank pure waters of virtue and knowledge. There were also educated in this famous College, various Governors and other high officials of the Administration, many lawyers, scholars, newspapermen, doctors and other thousands who constitute the pride of our race.

When the First Philippine Assembly was inaugurated on October 16, 1907, out of the 80 elected representatives 23 were alumni of Vincentian colleges. The invocation was read by Msgr. Jorge Barlin, D.D., Bishop of Nueva Caceres, an alumnus from the Naga Seminary.

In later times, seven alumni of the College-Seminary of Cebu, and one from that of Naga, graced the Philippine Senate namely, Hon. Mariano Jesus Cuenco, Francisco Briones, Vicente Sotto, Filemon Sotto, Jose Clarin, Esteban Singson, Jose Veloso, and Hon. Edmundo Cea. From the College-Seminary of Cebú came leaders who had served as Provincial Governors: Miguel Cuenco of Cebú, Manuel Roa of Bohol, and Clodualdo Lucero of Samar. And from the College-SeMINaries of Naga, Jaro and Calbáyog came Governors A. Calleja, of Albay, Ruperto Montinola and Matias Hilado of Iloilo, Decoroso Rosales, Baltazar Avelino, Pedro Arteche and Felix Abrigo, of Samar, and Mamerto Ribo, of Leyte.


In the second Congressional district of Cebu, four out of the six Congressmen — Sergio Osmeña (1907-1922), Vicente Sotto (1922-1925), Sotero B. Cabahug (1928-1934), Pedro López (1941-1946) — owed their early education to the Vincentians.
Bishop Teotimo Pacis of Legazpi, himself a Vincentian, contributed the following list of distinguished churchmen carrying the stamp of Vincentian education (in 1965):

The first full-blooded Filipino Bishop, Jorge Barlin Imperial, was a Vincentian product from the Seminary of Naga. The first full-blooded Filipino Archbishop, Gabriel M. Reyes, was a Vincentian product from the Seminary of Jaro. The first full-blooded Filipino Cardinal, Rufino J. Santos, is also a Vincentian product from the Seminary of San Carlos, Manila.

Of the 49 members of the Philippine hierarchy, 32 are Filipinos of whom 25 are Vincentian-trained.

About 80% of the present Filipino clergy have been educated, wholly or partly, by the Vincentians. You find them scattered all over the archipelago, especially in the Central and Southern Luzon, in all the Bikol provinces and in the Visayan islands.29

Other Ministries during the first decades of the 20th century.

Aside from the formation and education of candidates to the priestly vocation, the Vincentian priests in the various Seminaries engaged in other services to service the ever-increasing needs of the Church during those difficult first decades of the country under the American regime.

Thus the Vincentian Fathers in the San Carlos Seminary of Mandaluyong placed themselves at the call of neighboring Parish priests. The Rector reported in 1937.

This house has no other ministry than that of teaching in the Seminary; but the desire to be useful to one’s neighbor, when our duties as professors allow it, induces us to help the Reverend Parish priests who ask for assistance. For more than 13 years we have been celebrating Holy Mass for the delinquent youngsters in the Correctional establishment (called “Welfareville” in Mandaluyong) without any retribution; the Community pays the expenses of the trip and for the things needed for this holy service. Another help which we gave to the neighboring parish of San Juan del Monte for more than a year is to celebrate the Holy Mass there every Sunday and on days of obligation, preaching the homilies, etc. — and this also during all summer vacation and many other days during
the regular school year. Again, in all these works the only recompense we receive is the joy of working for God. With some frequency, other Parish Priests come to ask for our help, and this is never refused as long as it is compatible with our Seminary duties. 30

We find an almost identical account of the extra-curricular apostolic ministries of the Vincentians in the San Francisco de Sales Seminary in San Pablo, Laguna: “The ministries of this Commnunity have been mainly the direction and education of the youth at the Seminary. However, sometimes the Fathers are also urged to go to the assistance of neighboring Parish priests who were in need of help. Whenever their work in the Seminary allowed it, the Fathers tried always to help.” 31

Devotion to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal

During the American regime devotion to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal grew remarkably in the Philippines. The Vincentian Fathers and the Daughters of Charity saw to it that this devotion was spread among their charges. They distributed medals by the thousands, celebrated solemnly the feasts of the Immaculate Virgin’s apparitions, and urged to even greater zeal those members responsible for bringing Mary’s image to visit Christian homes.

One of the side altars of the newly built church in San Marcelino, was erected in 1913 in honor of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, through the generous contributions of her devotees. These were very numerous since the various colleges under the Daughters of Charity were sources of members from which affiliation to the movements and associations for the propagation of this devotion spread throughout the country.