Chapter Twelve

Blooming of Springtime
(1925-1941)

College-Seminaries under the Vincentians in the Philippines in this period had been replaced by exclusively ecclesiastical Minor and Major Seminaries entirely dedicated to train only aspirants to the priestly vocation. This momentous change from the centuries old institution of mixed clerical training back to the original plan of an exclusive formation of candidates for the priesthood, marked the hour of new orientations for the Vincentian Philippine Province.

The new thrust was for a total commitment to solve the most acute problem of the Church under the new regime, namely, the scarcity of the secular clergy, and the urgent need of adequately preparing them to meet the challenges of the times. During this period, from 1925 to 1941, there was a promising resurgence of our Philippine Seminaries, both in the number of seminarians and in the excellence of the ecclesiastical education imparted. New initiatives were launched. The Internal Seminary of the Congregation of the Mission was opened, and our first Filipino candidates were joyously admitted. In the history of our country, bright horizons dawned with the establishment of the Philippine Commonwealth. This was indeed a period of new orientations, stimulating hopes, and sincere optimism.

It would be worthwhile to note in some detail the starting point of this period of our history, namely the transition from our College-Seminaries to exclusively ecclesiastical Minor and Major Seminaries.

Historical Antecedents of our College-Seminaries

The term College-Seminaries refers to Seminaries that were at the same time Colleges open to all students. In College-Seminaries the young aspirants to the priestly vocation were trained and educated together with those aiming at secular careers. Mixed clerical education
did not originate in the Philippines nor was it found exclusively here. By the end of the 19th Century, and at the beginnings of the 20th, it was found almost everywhere in the Catholic world. A summary sketch of its history and development, will show why it was so widely propagated as if, mixed clerical education were the rule and the norm for Seminary training.

In Church History, the first “seminary,” i.e., school to form the clergy, was, properly speaking, that created by St. Augustine around the year 396, known by the name of “Bishop’s House” or “House of the Church”. Soon, following the example of the great African Doctor, other episcopal cities erected the so called “episcopal schools” where future priests were formed in an atmosphere of recollection, silence, prayer, discipline of community life, study, work and segregation — not separation — from the world. These schools — forerunners of the Tridentine Seminaries — were sanctioned by Church legislation in the II and IV Councils of Toledo (Spain). They flourished with excellent results until the 9th century when a decadence began and “continued on account of those turbulent times. Specially in the 10th and following centuries, community life was lost, and with it the love for study and piety, causing thus a great harm to Church discipline.”

On the other hand, the public schools established in the time of Charlemagne for the promotion of liberal arts and sciences offered, with the study of Grammar and Dialectic, a basis for the study of Philosophy and Theology. With the decline of “episcopal schools”, many of the candidates for priesthood began to frequent the public schools with their academic programs of Trivium (High School course, including Grammar, Rhetoric, and Dialectic) and Quattuorvium (College course including Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy, and Music). In the course of time these gave birth to the celebrated Medieval Universities, that were gradually to replace the former episcopal schools as far as the training of the clergy was concerned. In this setup an undesirable habitual contact between candidates for the priesthood and lay students became inevitable.

The oldest Universities traced their origin back to the 12th century. Soon those Universities (or General Studies — as they were also called) became the training centers of clerical students, living in the midst of the world, and mingling freely with laymen, without receiving any formal priestly discipline. Thus the decadence of the clergy — due to lack of special adequate training — became more and more noticeable. It is true that near the Universities the so called Major Colleges (or Boarding Houses for ecclesiastical students) were founded. But clerics lived there with the barest minimum of ecclesiastical discipline. The intellectual formation was well provided for in the
University courses; although, even this, was not taken as seriously obligatory for all. But the new system discarded any sort of Minor Seminary formation such as was found in the former episcopal schools; and even the strictly clerical formation of a Major Seminary as an immediate preparation for the priestly ministry, was missing. Quite often, persons who had not attended classes in the University or who were utterly ignorant and vicious dared to present themselves for Ordination. Simoniac Ordinations became rampant, and a great number of bad priests rocked the Church with shame and ignominy.

Such was the deplorable situation of the medieval clergy in general, although certainly exceptions were found. Later, with the paganizing influence of the Renaissance, clerical scandals became more and more devastating. Some farsighted pioneers of the Tridentine reform realized that the root of the evil was in the mixed priestly training, which provided no educational centers reserved strictly to the priesthood. Among those who noted this we may recall John Standonck (1453-1504), St. John of Avila (1500-1569), St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), St. Cajetan (1480-1547), and specially Cardinal Reginald Pole (1500-1558) in the Council of London (1556).

But the evil undermining authentic priestly training was already deeply entrenched. The harm done by the scandals of the clergy ignited the 16th century explosion of the Protestant reform. The Church then instituted the Catholic reform elaborated by the Council of Trent, specially in its famous decree on Seminaries (Sess. XXIII, c. 18, July 14, 1563) approved "nemine fere discrepante" (almost unanimously):

Since youth is inclined to worldly pleasures, unless it is rightly guided; and inasmuch as it can hardly persevere in the perfect observance of ecclesiastical discipline, without an extraordinary and singular help of God, unless it be educated in piety and religion from its most tender years and before vicious habits come to dominate it completely, the Holy Council decrees that all metropolitan cathedrals and major churches should maintain, train in piety and instruct in ecclesiastical discipline... certain number of boys... in a college... or in another convenient place chosen by the Bishop. Those who are received in this college must be at least 12 years old... whose good behavior and dispositions may show that they will probably be able to commit themselves perpetually to the ministry of the Church... in this way this college shall be a perennial Seminary (seedbed) of ministers of God.
Unfortunately, in the final draft of this momentous Decree the Council Fathers did not include the clause of the first schema demanding *residence in the Seminary* as obligatory for all candidates to Holy Orders.

The Bishop shall see to it that, if possible, all the future priests *should* be trained and formed in it (sc. in the Seminary.)

Foreseeing probably the great difficulties which, as a matter of fact, arose right after the Council, — and were prolonged for some centuries — the Council did not consider opportune then and there to proscribe absolutely the *mixed* clerical training sanctioned by secular traditions and deep-rooted customs dating from the Middle Age. The Council chose to tolerate in some way the inveterate practice of allowing candidates to reach the priesthood through other avenues of training “outside the Seminary”. It was regrettable the omission of that clause in the Council’s Decree. That omission — as subsequent centuries attested — was one of the causes that rendered the Tridentine Decree less effective, put off its strict implementation for about two and a half centuries in the greater part of Christendom, and allowed the pest of *mixed priestly training*, sap the vitality of the Church Seminaries, until the beginning of the 20th century.

The history of Seminaries in the post-Tridentine era, aside from exceptional cases and situations, shows that the ideal proposed by the Church was different from the hard realization of that ideal hindered by insurmountable obstacles. In Spain, during the 16th and 17th centuries the few Seminaries established were hardly worthy of that name. In France Seminaries were not found until the days of St. Vincent de Paul and Venerable Olier, in the 17th century. In Italy, so close to Rome, after the first attempts of St. Charles Borromeo in the 16th century, it was only in the 18th century that another advocate of Seminaries was found in St. Alphonsus Liguori. In Germany, it was only in the 17th century that Seminaries began with Bartholomew Holzhauser. And most often, what was called a Seminary in Europe or in America, was in reality just a Seminary-College, i.e., a College for Catholic education of the youth, where some attention was given to foster priestly vocations among the boarding students. And quite often the seminarians had to attend classes outside the Seminary in some College or University for lay students. Even in Rome itself, the first Tridentine Seminary admitted, together with the seminarians, other lay boarding students (“*convictores*”), and the seminarians had to attend classes at
the Collegio Romano together with lay students. An early report of the Jesuits who ran that Seminary was submitted to Pope Paul V. Among other remarks, the need of separation between “convictores” and clerics was emphasized, as well as the necessity of an environment, apart from lay students, and more conducive to recollection, for the clerics. A canonical visit of that Seminario Romano made in 1568 by the Bishops of Piacenze and of Castro, reported that the Seminary did.

not duly achieve its purposes, firstly, because it admitted also young men who did not aspire to the priesthood. . . . The difference of (educational) aims demanded also a diversity of means in their respective formation (namely, of seminarians and of lay students), in study, discipline, conduct, piety. . . . The clerics (or seminarians) need a closer attention and care in their spiritual life, fostering recollection, simplicity, mortification, modesty, and spirit of poverty in all things. But, in order to achieve this (special education), separation is absolutely needed; without it the clerics (or seminarians) upon seeing the easy life of the “convictores” will naturally desire the same way of life. Furthermore, the peculiar familiarities and privileges of the “convictores” are apt to make a cleric (or seminarian) deviate from the right path of his own vocation and state of life. Needless to say, either the (educative) exercises of both groups are to be confused in this mingling (of seminarians and lay students), or the programming of said exercises according to their respective vocations, should imply an almost insurmountable difficulty. 5

In France, seventy years after the Council of Trent, the precise formula for the authentic Seminaries had not yet been found. All the reformers were looking for it, specially Berulle and Bourdoise. Several Bishops asked Monsieur Vincent de Paul to establish some real Seminaries. The Saint hesitated until Cardinal Richelieu himself, during a memorable interview, invited him to solve the problem. In 1636 the first Minor Seminary was opened at the College “des Bons Enfants” where other clerics were following the theological course. Perhaps, St. Vincent sensed the dangers of a mixed priestly training. To forestall any such dangers, he transferred the students of the Minor Seminary to the Saint Charles annex of Saint Lazare (Central House of the Vincentians in Paris), reserving the College “des Bon Enfants” exclusively for the twelve clerics or future priests. Thus, with the separation of ordinary students from clerics (or seminarians) St. Vincent was the
first in France to find the definite formula for an authentic exclusively ecclesiastical Seminary, and the distinctive training of the Major Seminary with its desirable separation from the Minor Seminary.

However, due to the urgent need of fostering vocations at an early age, according to the mind of Trent, a mistake — quite understandable at that time — crept into this Vincentian enterprise. For admission at the Minor Seminary of Saint Charles, it was not required that the young boys should actually aim at the priestly vocation. This feature again resulted in the harmful mixture of true seminarians with lay students of rather worldly ideals. Some eight years later the sad effects of such mixed clerical training became apparent: of the 24 students, supposedly minor seminarians, only four showed some promise of reaching the priesthood. St. Vincent did not give up the Saint Charles Minor Seminary (or rather, College-Seminary), although the hope of success was quite dim. But from that time on, he concentrated his efforts on the Major Seminary of Bons Enfants. As a real Conciliar Seminary, exclusively for ecclesiastics, this was effectively contributing to the solution of the problem of priestly vocations and clerical discipline in the Church of France. With such an arrangement the basis for separate Major and Minor Seminaries was definitely laid down by St. Vincent de Paul. And so the Tridentine institution finally triumphed in France, though not yet in all its perfection, because of the latent defect of a mixed priestly training in the Minor Seminaries. These remained, unfortunately, in most cases, either as mere College-Seminaries (i.e., Seminaries where boys not aiming at the priestly vocation, are admitted) or Seminary-Colleges (i.e., Catholic Schools where some efforts were made to foster priestly vocations). That is why, as late as in the 18th century, Pope Benedict XIII declared, “not without great distress of spirit”, that the decrees of Trent on Seminaries were not yet observed in many parts of Christendom.

In France, which was far ahead of other countries in question of Seminaries, in 1789 there were still some 31 dioceses without a Seminary. In such a deeply Catholic country as Spain, many Bishops were hindered and delayed in the establishment of Seminaries during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. Besides the poverty of their dioceses, the reason most repeatedly advanced for such delay was the existence of Universities and Colleges that already served to that purpose. Such reasons could explain more easily what many scholars of Philippine history do not seem to understand (and worse still, tend to attribute to a systematic policy of Spanish missionaries against the formation of a native clergy), namely, that our first Tridentine Seminary was founded in Manila at the beginning of the 18th century only. If in the Catholic metropolis in Europe, things were not much better, what could be
expected from a poor colony in the Far East which, though flourishing, practically was still in the category of a "mission" country?

The marks of the 19th century were rampant anticlerical liberalism and the laicism of the state upon its assuming the reins of public education. The Faculty of Theology in most State Universities was eliminated. The residential Major Colleges for clerical students, annexed to the Universities were suppressed. Thus, without realizing it, the enemies of the Church were the ones who gradually liberated her from the noxious system of mixed priestly training in Major Seminaries. Clerical students and candidates for the priesthood now found no other choice than to live and be properly trained in true Seminaries, segregated from lay students. While State controlled secular Universities began to spread everywhere, the Seminaries became the only educational centers of clerical formation, in the philosophical and theological levels.

Another positive element providentially attained in most Seminaries of the 19th century was the well defined distinction — and, as far as possible, separation — between the Minor and the Major Seminaries. The specific function of Minor Seminaries was stressed, namely, the careful selection and initial formation of prospective candidates to the priestly vocation. 8

However, it is lamentable that in Minor Seminaries the pernicious feature of mixed ecclesiastical training was still retained. The Bishops and the Seminary directors were quite aware of the problems arising from a mixed education of seminarians and lay students, specially if these associated indiscriminately with each other, not only in the classroom, or during recreations and other extra-curricular activities, but also for the whole day and night in the Seminary where they resided as in a boarding school. And such was the case in most of the Minor Seminaries even in the late 19th century. In reality they were mere College-Seminaries, or "mixed Seminaries."

The reason of such situation can be traced to two factors. One was the financial motive. Lay students, in general, belonged to well-to-do families who could afford to pay well for the fine education offered in the Seminary. These lay students earnestly desired or insistently begged for it. With their pensions or tuition fees, many poor seminarians could be supported, and the Seminary's economic problems was thus solved. On the other hand, public or State non-sectarian schools established everywhere, introduced and fostered secularism and laicism among the youth. To counteract these evils the Bishops saw the urgent need to maintain a system of Catholic schools that would protect society from the evils of a godless education. Admission of lay students, even as boarders, in the Seminary was seen as a solution
both to the Seminary’s financial difficulties and the need of providing Catholic education for the youth. The Church, deprived of temporal means in those times for the establishment of two separate institutions (the Minor Seminary and a Catholic school), considered the *mixed Seminary* or a College-Seminary as the best practical solution. Thus, the mixed ecclesiastical education which fortunately was already disappearing from Major Seminaries, seemed to be left inextricably rooted in the Minor Seminaries.

However, the sad experience of centuries before and after Trent was more than enough to demand a drastic stand against such a cancerous evil that was sapping the vitality of the “heart of the Diocese” — as the Seminary was fittingly called by Pope Benedict XV,9 and more recently still by Vatican II.10

The voice of the Church was heard clearly and definitively at the end of the 19th century and more decisively at the beginning of our 20th century.

Pope Leo XIII in his Apostolic Letter to the Bishops of Brazil, *Paternae Providaeque* September 18, 1899 declared emphatically:

> The experience indeed of every day teaches that “mixed Seminaries” do not answer the mind and concern of the Church. Living together with laymen is the reason why seminarians most often give up their holy resolution. It behooves seminarians to accustom themselves from an early age to the yoke of the Lord, to devote themselves intensively to piety, to exercise themselves in the service of the sacred ministry, and to adapt themselves to the ideal of a priestly life. Hence, without delay they should be removed from the dangers, segregated from worldly pursuits, and trained according to the laws proposed by St. Charles Borromeo.11

Three years later, the same Pope Leo XIII, in his Apostolic Constitution *Quae Mari Sinico*, September 17, 1902 to the Philippines, expressly declared:

> It is therefore incumbent on the Bishops to use every means, and endeavor to have in their dioceses a House in which youthful aspirants to the sacred militia may be received at their early adolescence (“*a tenerisannis*”), formed in holiness of life, and instructed in the lower and higher branches of learning. But it would be preferable that the youths who study letters should live in one House, while those
who have finished this course and devote themselves to Philosophy and Theology should live in another. In both cases, however . . . let the Bishops on no account open the Seminaries to any except such as give hope they will offer themselves to God in Holy Orders. Let them, if it be possible, erect other establishments distinct from the above for such as wish to prepare themselves for civil callings, which may be known as "Convictus" or episcopal colleges. 12

Some three months later, on December 8, 1902 Leo XIII addressed the Bishops of Italy in his Encyclical Fin Dal Principio, and said:

Let it never be forgotten that the Seminaries are exclusively intended to prepare the youth, not for any human career, however legitimate and honorable this may be, but rather to the lofty mission of servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries (1 Cor. 4,1).

It would be indeed desirable that young ecclesiastics (seminarians) could all of them, as it should be, achieve the course of their studies always in the shelter of the sacred Institute (sc. in the Seminary). But inasmuch as serious reasons, at times, demand that some of them be allowed to attend courses in public Universities, let no one forget with how great and what kind of cautions should the Bishops grant such permission.

In the Seminaries no youth should be admitted except those who may offer well grounded hopes of consecrating themselves perpetually to the sacred ministry. And these should be maintained segregated from the company and still more from the communal life with other youth who do not aspire to the priesthood . . . . 13

Once more, some months before his death, the same Pope in his Apostolic Letter Actum Praeclare, February 20, 1903, for the island of Cuba, insisted:

The Bishops — in their solicitude for the Seminaries should beware specially of not admitting therein other youth except those whose character and dispositions may offer some hope that they will be able to serve perpetually in the ecclesiastical ministry. 14
And the Pope recalls here the wise decrees of the Plenary Council of Latin America (decree 677, Title VII, Chapter II) held at Rome in 1899:

Minor Seminaries . . . in no way should be considered mixed High Schools in which the youth, both secular and clerical, may grow and be trained together; but rather they ought to be true clerical Houses or seedbeds of future priests, where each and every element should tend to the single scope of priestly education . . . Thus, these Seminaries shall not be open to anybody except to those whose character and disposition may offer some hope that they will be able to engage themselves perpetually to the ecclesiastical ministry.15

In one of his first pronouncements, the Encyclical E Supremi Apostolatus issued on October 4, 1903, St. Pius X who succeeded Leo XIII in the chair of St. Peter, said:

The Seminaries should definitively serve their own purpose. They should not educate youths for a purpose other than the Priesthood and the service of God.16

Some 3 years later, in his Letter Pieni L'Animo, July 28, 1906, he reiterated the same order:

The Seminaries shall be maintained in their own spirit and remain exclusively destined to prepare youths, not for civil careers, but for the sublime mission of ministers of Christ.17

And when he approved the Rules drafted by the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Religious for the Seminaries of Italy, St. Pius X reaffirmed the injunction of his predecessor Leo XIII, that in the Seminaries nobody should be received but the youths who offer well grounded hopes of dedicating themselves perpetually to the Sacred ministry.18

And in the Circular Letter, Le Visite Apostoliche published by the Sacred Consistorial Congregation for the Ordinaries of Italy, again the Pope enjoined:

Never admit in the Seminary, even in the first years of study, young boys who obviously do not want to be priests; for these, a College may be established, but separate from the Seminary. To be admitted in the Seminary, it should be a
requisite that the boys show at least an initial inclination to the priesthood.

Those positively intending to remain in the lay state will necessarily feel a dislike for the Seminary where everything is oriented — as it should be — not to worldly pursuits, but to piety, to recollection, and to ecclesiastical formation.

Moreover, that indiscriminate mingling of seminarians and lay students turns out always to be fatal to those called to the ecclesiastical state; and, as experience has already shown, is the cause accountable for the loss of many vocations.\(^{19}\)

The Code of Canon Law promulgated by Pope Benedict XV in his Apostolic Constitution *Providentissima Mater Ecclesia*, May 27, 1917, enjoined in Canon 1363:

> The Ordinary (of a Diocese) should not admit anymore into the Seminary except those . . . whose character and disposition may offer some hope that they will be able to serve perpetually and with success in the ecclesiastical ministry.

And Canon 1371 provided that

> From the Seminary should be dismissed . . . those who on account of their customs and character seem not to be apt for the ecclesiastical state.

And the *Ordinamento Dei Seminari* issued by the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries for the Bishops of Italy on April 20, 1920, after recalling the texts above mentioned of Leo XIII and St. Pius X, declared that:

> such prescription, confirmed by the new Code (can. 1363, 1) is categorical and absolute. Whereby those seeking admission in the Seminary, who may not present the proper dispositions and qualities, or rather may seem to have other intentions cannot and should not be admitted, on any ground, to the holy place. Their presence cannot but result in the detriment of those called by the Lord to the priestly life.

> And since it is not always easy to pronounce an exact judgment on the dispositions of young boys at such tender age, it is necessary that the Bishops should gather information on the conduct of each seminarian . . . and as soon as it may
be known that any one does not show signs of vocation, he should be sent home at once, according to the prescription of Leo XIII (Encycl. *Fin Dal Principio*), confirmed by the new Code (can. 1371).  

In spite of so many Church pronouncements, however, the evils brought about by mixed Minor Seminaries (College-Seminaries) were so firmly entrenched that these seemed almost ineradicable. Due to practical reasons, — mainly of economy — many, perhaps most of the Minor Seminaries in Catholic nations (as Italy, Spain, Portugal, Latin America, and the Philippines) were still College-Seminaries during the early first quarter of the 20th century. In Anglo-Saxon countries, due to historical circumstances, Minor Seminaries — quite understandably — were very few, or did not exist at all, as in the case of Germany, England, Central Europe, Ireland. Among the Catholics of U.S.A., College-Seminaries were found according to the pattern followed then by Sulpicians and Vincentians.  

Pope Pius XI, a few months after his election as Vicar of Christ, sent to Cardinal Cajetan Bisleti, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries, the Apostolic Letter *Officiorum Omnium*, August 1, 1922, where the Supreme Pontiff vigorously expressed the mind of the Church thus:  

One thing stands uppermost in Our mind’s solicitude. It is necessary to do, by all means, what Our predecessors Leo XIII and Pius X have so often commanded: that ecclesiastical Seminaries should serve no other purpose than that for which they were founded, namely, to form, as it is fitting, the sacred ministers.  

For this reason, there should be no place in them for boys and youth who do not feel any inclination to the priesthood; not only because companionship of these with the seminarians is very harmful, but also because all the acts of piety, as well as basic norms of studies and special kind of discipline (of a Seminary), have to be oriented towards the adequate formation of the students’ character for the sacred ministry.  

Let this be the most sacred law of all Seminaries, without any exception. Had this been complied with, more faithfully up to the present, there would not be such a great dearth of priests, almost everywhere. It has been noticed as a common tendency that Seminaries are not being run in accordance to their specific nature. They retain the name of Seminaries; in reality however, while they render much good to the civil
society, they are of little worth or totally useless for the sacred ministry.22

With these words Pius XI put the official and definitive seal to the verdict of the Church Magisterium against mixed priestly training in the so-called College-Seminaries, as contrary to the very nature of authentic ecclesiastical Seminaries, and most harmful to the cause of priestly vocations.

The Case of College-Seminaries in the Philippines.

In the Philippines, the first Tridentine Seminary was originally planned, some 18 years only after Trent, by the first Spanish Bishop of the country, the Dominican Friar Domingo de Salazar, on December 21, 1581. The plan is mentioned in his document to fulfill the Bull of erection of the Diocese of Manila. However, the dream of Bishop Salazar did not materialize until the beginning of the 18th century, for, as in most regions of the Christendom during those times, circumstances were acute and critical in this remote mission post of the Far East. The mission was too poor and had too little personnel for the gigantic evangelization work.

During the 16th and 17th centuries, priestly vocations were being fostered among the natives of the Philippines. There were the Seminaries for indigenous natives created by the Jesuits in the 16th century as pre-Seminary elementary schools; the Seminary-Colleges of San José (1595-1768 in Manila under the Jesuits); San Ildefonso (1598-1609 in Cebú under the Jesuits also); of Santo Tomas (founded in Manila, 1611) and San Juan de Letran (also in Manila, 1620) both under the Dominicans.

Those ancient Seminary-Colleges of the 17th century, although fostering priestly vocations among the youth (Letrán alone formed in 19 years, from 1632 to 1651, some 29 future priests), were obviously very far from providing sufficient clergy for the immense Christian population of the country. As in other parts of the world, the scarcity of vocations from the Seminary-Colleges was mainly due to the system itself, the undesirable mingling of prospective candidates to the priestly vocation with lay students, who were — in this case — the majority of them.

The first Tridentine Seminary, exclusively for those aspiring to the priestly vocation was the Manila Seminary of San Clemente established on July 7, 1706, later called San Felipe in 1715, and finally San Carlos in 1768.

The Tridentine Seminaries were later established, in Cebú (San Carlos, 1769), then in Naga (Smo. Rosario, 1793), then in Vigan
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(Purisima Concepción, 1802, 1812). Due to financial difficulties, poverty of the colony, lack of dedicated personnel to staff them, they led a languishing existence with very poor results during one century and a half, until the coming of the Vincentians. The Congregation of the Mission came to the Philippines in virtue of Queen Isabella II’s royal decree stating: “It is absolutely necessary to improve the education given at the Conciliar Seminaries, since due to lack of professors and other resources they cannot properly achieve the intentions of the Council of Trent.” The Vincentians took over the Seminaries of Manila (1862), Naga (1865), Cebu (1867), and that of the new Diocese of Jaro (San Vicente Ferrer 1869). In Vigan however they stayed only for a short time, from 1872 to 1876.

A promising period of renewal was started. The Seminaries were refashioned according to their proper nature, for the training of candidates to the priesthood. Soon, however, the very same difficulties in Europe were felt more acutely still in the Philippines. With the noble desire of providing their flock with the benefits of a higher education (in the secondary level, or High Schools), the Bishops of Naga, Cebú and Jaro earnestly requested the Vincentian directors to admit in their Seminaries day scholars (the so-called “externos”, or lay students living outside, but attending classes and joining in recreation and activities with the seminarians). This measure was seen as a practical solution to the serious economic problem of the Conciliar Seminaries. With the fees paid by day scholars, the poor seminarians could easily be supported financially. It was also expected that the sound Catholic education given to many young people would foster priestly vocations among them. The intentions were praiseworthy; but in the course of years the policy adopted was to prove a mistake. The authentic Tridentine Seminaries were transformed into College-Seminaries, or mixed Seminaries, following the same pattern of most Seminaries in Europe and America at that time. And that explains why, although this period marks a clear rise of the Filipino clergy in ecclesiastical discipline and priestly learning and virtue, still the results obtained were not all satisfactory, either in the number or in the quality of priests formed in such mixed Seminaries.

This state of affairs remained until the end of the 19th century. Even before Pope Leo XIII came forth in 1899 to condemn the evil of mixed Seminaries, our Archbishop of Manila, Bernardino Nozaleda, O.P. came to realize the fatal results of mingling ecclesiastical and lay students in the University of Santo Tomas. In his own Archdiocesan Seminary of San Carlos, under the Vincentians, no problem was found in this respect, since the Major seminarians were not trained together with lay students. Archbishop Nozaleda, noticing the evil of a mixed
priestly training, requested the Superiors of the University of Santo Tomas to provide for the necessary separation of seminarians and secular students; and his petition was submitted to the Council on August 22, 1894. Archbishop Nozaleda wrote also to the Holy See about this important matter. Some years later, Pope Leo XIII in his *Paternae Providaeque* (1899) openly condemned the practice of mixed Seminaries.

Under St. Pius X, the Secretary of State, Rafael Cardinal Merry del Val, wrote to the Provincial of the Philippine Dominicans, Fr. Payo, ordering that the ecclesiastical students of Theology and Canon Law in the University of Santo Tomas “should live completely separated from the lay people, as boarding students in the same University, in the way and with the discipline of a true Seminary exclusively for clerics”. These injunctions were fully in accordance with the teachings of the Holy See, mentioned above.

Yet, in spite of so many repeated instructions from Rome against mixed Seminaries, perhaps by the force of inertia, or under the pretext of inapplicability to our own situation, the College-Seminaries of the 19th century, remained until the 20th century, not only in the Provinces, but even in Manila. Such was the case in the new San Carlos Seminary of Mandaluyong under the Vincentians (1913-1920) which then operated with the Santa Mesa College as a single institution.

In the Philippines, the first Prelate to take a decisive step in the right direction was the Most Rev. Michael J. O’Doherty, appointed Archbishop of Manila in 1916. Three years in his big Archdiocese were enough to convince him of the necessity of putting an end to the practice of mixed clerical training. In 1919 he told the Vincentian Fathers:

It is indeed very painful for me to see how the Seminary is fading away, precisely when I need more and more priests for so many parishes without a pastor. The College is gradually advancing and prospering; it is furthermore an economical asset for the maintenance of the Seminary. But I do not like such help at that cost, at the expense of the very life of my Seminary. I like Catholic Schools and Colleges; I wish to see them multiply, and I will support them as far as I can. I know there will be some people who will criticize me for the closing of this College (*Santa Mesa College*); but I want, above all, priests, many priests; I need them; it is an agony for me to see so many towns in my Archdiocese without any pastor to give them the Sacraments. 24
As a matter of fact, with the Santa Mesa College attached to the San Carlos Seminary, there was strictly speaking no Minor Seminary at all. The so-called minor seminarians were in reality quite similar to boarding students (“colegiales internos”), subject indeed to the Rule and discipline of the House, and to the course of High School studies approved by the Government. Latin was, for most of them, a subject to be taken or left at their own pleasure: “It is optional — they remarked — and not a required subject for the students.” Gradually it became an obvious fact that every year the candidates for the Major Seminary were alarmingly decreasing in number. And it was not because the education and training given were defective. On the contrary, in the religious, scientific and literary levels it could well compare with the best Catholic Colleges of Manila, Letrán, Ateneo, and San Beda. As the Manila Archbishop remarked, the Santa Mesa College was gradually advancing and prospering with splendid results for a solid Catholic education of the Filipino youth; but the San Carlos Major Seminary of Manila was languishing because the College was undermining priestly vocations in the Minor College-Seminary.

So Archbishop O’Doherty decided on a drastic action; to transfer Santa Mesa College somewhere else, so as to leave in Mandaluyong a true, authentic Conciliar Seminary, exclusively for training and promoting priestly vocations. Accordingly, after due negotiations with the Vincentian Superiors, the College was transferred in 1920 to the Vincentian House in San Marcelino, with the name of “Colegio de San Vicente de Paul.” As a result of the phasing out of the College from the Seminary, the Major seminarians began to increase gradually also, from 13 in 1920, to 16 in 1921; then 21 in 1922; 28 in 1923; 30 in 1924; 57 in 1925 (including 20 from Vigan); and 54 in 1926.

The figures were eloquent testimonies to the wisdom of the adopted policy in obedience to Church injunctions. In the 8 years since the separation of the Santa Mesa College from the Seminary, priestly vocations prospered so well that in 1927 the Minor and Major Departments could no longer be accommodated in the same building. The Major Seminary was transferred to the Vincentian Central House in San Marcelino, where the St. Vincent de Paul College has to be closed again (like its predecessor the Santa Mesa College) as a precious sacrifice to the cause of priestly vocations. Anyhow, priestly vocations were, historically, the main raison d’être of the Vincentians’ presence and apostolate in the Philippines.

Thus, in the Provincial Council Minutes of March 21, 1927, we read:
San Carlos College and San Carlos Seminary of Cebu, separated from each other in 1924 to follow the injunctions of the Holy See.

Vincentian Professors and diocesan seminarians of San Carlos Seminary of Cebu. (1925)
SAN CARLOS SEMINARY OF MANILA, in Mandaluyong. In the School Year 1927-1928 the Minor and Major Department became for the first time two independent Communities. The Major Seminary was transferred to the Vincentian House of San Marcelino, to occupy the place of the former Colegio de San Vicente de Paul. The Minor Seminary remained in Mandaluyong. These are the Minor seminarians of that school year (1927-1928) with their Professors, (seated, l. to r.) Frs. Pedro Urdaniz, Manuel Amo, Godofredo Peces, Rector José Tejada, Agapito Sacristan, Luis Angulo, and Antonino Mayoral.
SAN CARLOS SEMINARY, Major Department, San Marcelino, Manila, 1929-1930: Vincentian Staff (l. to r.): Bro. Angel Saldaña, and Frs. Crispín Gómez, Prisciano González, Rector Jacinto Villalain, Pedro Pampliega, Manuel Gracia, Antonino Mayoral; with the Major Seminarians of Manila.
Very Rev. Fr. José Tejada, C.M., in his Apostolic Visit of the Seminary of Vigan, with Bishop Santiago Sancho and the Rector, Professors and Seminarians of the Diocese (1937)
The Very Rev. Fr. Jose Tejeda, C.M. during his Apostolic Visitation of San Jose Seminary in 1937 with the reverend Jesuit Fathers who direct it and their Seminarians of the Major and Minor Departments.
The Apostolic Visitor, Very Rev. Fr. Henry Buerschen, S.V.D. with the Professors and Seminarians of the Major Department of San Carlos Seminary (Manila) at the end of his Apostolic Visit, October 14, 1937
OUR LADY OF THE HOLY ROSARY SEMINARY, Naga, Diocese of Nueva Caceres (1912).

Bishop Francisco Reyes of Caceres with the Vincentian Faculty and diocesan seminarians of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Seminary in Naga. (1930)
FRONT VIEW OF THE COLLEGE-SEMINARY OF OUR LADY OF THE HOLY ROSARY, NAGA This was the building erected by Fr. Antonio Santonja, C.M., Seminary Rector (1868-1884)
MAJOR SEMINARIANS OF NUEVA CACERES HOLY ROSARY COLLEGE-SEMINARY (1912)
Professors of the Seminario de San Carlos (Cebú). 1938-1939:
Left to right: Seated Frs. Pedro Urdániz, Paciente Arnáiz, Rector Alfonso Saldaña, Secundino Gutierrez, and Fermín Campo.
Standing: left to right: Frs. Faustino Isaba, Luciano San Luis, Prisciano González, Bro. Angel Saldaña, Francisco Subiñas, Augusto Santamaria, Julio Corres.
Seminary of San Carlos of Cebu, 1938-1939 Vincentian Professors with Major and Minor Seminarians

Very Rev, Fr. Jose Tejeda, C.M. during his Apostolic Visit of the Central Seminary of the University of Santo Tomas, Manila, with the Rector Magnificus, Professors and Seminarians (1937)
Seminarians Jesus Cavanna (from Intramuros, Manila) and Teotimo Pacis (from Tiwi, Albay), first Filipino Vincentians, on the day of their perpetual vows in the Congregation of the Mission (July 5, 1937).

Vincentians from the Philippines and abroad who attended at the 33rd. International Eucharistic Congress, in Manila, February 1937.
POPE PIUS XI in his posthumous Apostolic Letter to the Episcopate of the Philippines, Jan. 18, 1939 declared: “We have always considered the formation of worthy Priests as the most grave among the weighty responsibilities incumbent upon Us: “We have reserved to Ourselves the Prefecture of the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries... We know, Venerable Brethren, — and it gives Us great joy — with what loving care you are striving to give the most perfect preparation possible to your young levites, while endeavouring at the same time to render your Major and Minor Seminaries ever more conformable to the serious needs of the present age. A perfect preparation, We say, and a complete formation suited to those who are to be consecrated for such a sublime ministry; hence, holiness and learning which are the mainspring of priestly zeal.” In these words of the Vicar of Christ we find an indirect praise and recognition of the Vincentians’ work in the Philippine diocesan Seminaries entrusted, almost all of them, to their direction in those years.
ASAMBLEA PROVINCIAL. Manila, 15 Abril 1931

(Left to right): Seated: Frs. Teodoro Robredo, Mariano Napal, Pedro Angulo (Provincial), Jacinto Villalain.

Standing (2nd row): Emilio Notario, Honorio García, Alfonso Saldaña, German Villazán, José Tejada.

(3rd row): Jacinto de la Iglesia, Pedro Martinez, Pedro Urdániz, Eliseo Rodríguez; Eduardo Gancedo, Máximo Juguera.
PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF VINCENTIANS Manila, 1938:
Seated (l. to r.): Fermín Campo, Federico Tobar, Lorenzo Ibañez, Pedro Angulo, Provincial José Rejada, Teodoro Robredo, Alfonso Saldaña, Pedro Martinez, Zacarias Subiñas.
Standing (l. to r.): Maximo Juguera, Crispín Gómez, Mariano Auzmendi, Prudencio Mayoral, Jacinto de la Iglesia, Elías Arnaiz, Pedro Anfon, Gabriel Rodriguez.
SAN CARLOS MINOR SEMINARY of Manila, School Year 1939-1940. Seminarians and Staff.

Seated (l. to r.): Frs. Esteban Iribarren, Antonio Gómez, Crispín Gómez, Rector, Gabriel Rodriguez, Daniel Millán, Jesus Cavanna, and Bro. Rafael Martínez, C.M.
SAN CARLOS SEMINARY, of the Archdiocese of Manila, in the School Year 1941-1942, in Mandaluyong.

According to the information of Father Visitor it seems that the Archbishop of Manila is pleased to agree with the offer of using this House of Manila as the Diocesan Seminary; he has indicated some exceptions from the clauses referring to the students and the convenient separation of the authorities of the Seminary from the Community of this House. There were proposed revisions; and we agreed on the Visitor’s going to the Archbishop to see the best way of reconciling the various interests.

By January 20, 1928 the definitive text of the agreement between the Manila Archdiocese and the Congregation of the Mission with respect to the transfer of the Major Seminary of San Carlos to San Marcelino was finalized.

The Minor Seminary of San Carlos remained in Mandaluyong while the Major seminarians were housed in the Vincentian House of San Marcelino from 1927 to 1936. In 1936 the Vincentian Fathers undertook the construction of a new, spacious and functional, building of reinforced concrete, in place of the old wooden house, in order to better accommodate the Archdiocesan Major Seminary, the Internal Seminary (or noviciate) of the Congregation, and the Community of the Central House. During the period of construction, in the year 1936-1937, the Major Seminary was for a while transferred back to Mandaluyong. The new building at San Marcelino was occupied by the Major Seminary from 1937 until the school year 1941-1942 when again both Major and Minor Departments of San Carlos were reunited in Mandaluyong. The Japanese attack and occupation of Manila interrupted classes from December 1941 to April 1942. For the school year 1942-1943 the Minor Seminary was provisionally installed in the parish convent of Plaridel, Bulacan. When the situation allowed it, the Seminary was transferred back to Mandaluyong (both Major and Minor departments) and remained there during the calamitous years of the Japanese occupation. The war of liberation started by September, 1944. Classes had again to be interrupted. When the Japanese retreated from Mandaluyong, the tragic events of February 8, 1945 put an end to the lives of some Vincentians of the Seminary and a good seminarian who had retired with them to a small nearby house. Only one Father survived.

Such is the story of the Manila Archdiocesan Seminary which since 1920 became an exclusively ecclesiastical Seminary, an authentic Conciliar Seminary in the pattern of Trent, destined only for the training of candidates to the priestly vocation.

The percentage of perseverance among the young boys in the
Minor Seminary during the period when the Major and Minor Departments were entirely separated comes to show that such separation is beneficial, not only for the Major Seminarians but even for the Minor Seminarians themselves. This is obvious in the following statistics of the Minor Seminary of San Carlos (Mandaluyong) from 1927 to 1937.26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School year</th>
<th>New seminarians admitted</th>
<th>Remained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1927-1928</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928-1929</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929-1930</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930-1931</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931-1932</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>1932-1933</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933-1934</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934-1935</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935-1936</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936-1937</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total during decade; 351 admitted 126 remained

The San Carlos Seminary of Manila has the glory of having been the first among the Philippine Diocesan Seminaries to follow the demands of the Holy See to put an end to mixed clerical training, even before the ultimatum issued in 1922 by Pope Pius XI. Soon after the Officiorum Omnium of Pius XI, the other Philippine Diocesan Minor College-Seminaries followed one after another the example given by Manila in 1920.

The Minor Seminary of San Francisco de Sales, in San Pablo, Laguna, phased out its annexed College in March, 1923, so that from the beginning of the school year 1923-1924 it became an authentic Minor Seminary, exclusively for aspirants to the priestly vocation. The first year (1923-1924) there were only 40 minor seminarians; but gradually, this number increased in numbers in succeeding years, so that in 1926 there were already more than 100 seminarians.

In 1924, the Seminaries of San Carlos, in Cebú, and San Vicente de Paul, in Calbayog, followed the way of Manila and San Pablo, and phased out also the Colleges annexed to those Seminaries. The next year, 1925, the same separation was introduced in the Seminaries of Santísimo Rosario in Naga, and San Vicente Ferrer, in Jaro.27

At last the problems brought about by mixed Seminaries were solved. As early as 1907-1910 during the First Provincial Council of Manila everyone had agreed, in principle, that our Seminaries were not
strictly speaking in accord with the mind of the Church. The Provincial Council of Manila accepted the Apostolic Constitution *Quae Mari Sinico* of Leo XIII as a basic law or Constitutional Charter of the Philippine Church.

And that Manila Provincial Council in its Tit. VIII, art 761 explicitly declared:

> It has been wisely ordered that, by no reason whatever should be admitted in the Seminary those whose character and inclinations do not present signs of ecclesiastical vocation; and this policy should be held even if such youth would promise, even with certain guaranty, to defray all the expenses incurred by the Seminary for their education.²⁸

This decree was passed in the Third Session of December 22, 1907; but it took almost 20 years before it was strictly enforced in our Seminaries. At the end of the first quarter of the century our Philippine Seminaries became at last authentic Tridentine Seminaries. From that time on, for almost half a century, a period of splendor and real progress was witnessed; the curve of priestly vocations could easily be noticed to ascend gradually from year to year. The Pope of *Officiorum Omnium*, Pius XI, the great champion of an authentic Seminary formation, could at the end of his life, address to the Philippine Hierarchy this comforting encomium in his last posthumous Apostolic Letter of January 18, 1939:

> We know for sure — and by it we feel an immense consolation — with what loving care you attend to the preparation, *as perfect as possible*, of the young seminarians, and at the same time you see to it that the Major and Minor Seminaries may respond better to the grave needs of this our modern age.²⁹

Why did it take so long — almost a quarter of a century — for the Bishops and the Vincentians in the Philippines to abide strictly by the Roman instructions issued so urgently from the end of the 19th century? A noted historian gives the following remarks about the matter: “The main obvious advantage of the "Colegio-Seminar" setup was one of financial character. The Curia of Manila, for example, spent an average of P3,200 per year for the education of seminarians while the Seminary and College formed but one institution. With the separation of functions, the expenses for the education of seminarians reached as
far high as P22,000 per annum. With these numbers in view, it is not surprising that there was some resistance on the part of the hierarchy to the breaking up of the old and rather economical “Seminario-Colegio” type of institutions.”

**Resurgence of Minor Seminaries in the Philippines**

The phasing out of the College from the Seminaries to which they were adjoined, besides promoting priestly vocations, brought along a singular resurgence of Minor Seminaries as distinct, vocational schools which prepare candidates for the Major Seminary. In the old setup of College-Seminaries, the training of these minor seminarians did not offer a well-defined orientation to the priesthood, nor a “special religious formation, particularly through appropriate spiritual direction” — as Vatican II, *Optatam Totius*, 3, demands.

The Minor Seminaries “founded to nurture the seeds of vocation” (Vatican II, loc. cit.) did not really exist in the College-Seminaries. Even in the Registry Books of students admitted to the College-Seminary “minor seminarians” were not mentioned since they were treated like other lay students.

However, once the College was separated, the Minor Seminary assumed its status as a unique institution entirely different from an ordinary Catholic High School. All the activities of the young students were, thenceforth, definitely oriented to foster possible seeds of priestly vocation. Programs of studies, exercises of piety, discipline of community life, plus the atmosphere of piety and silence; recreations, extra-curricular activities, contacts with their own families, social relations, vacation days, everything was directed to promote the lofty ideals and generous dedication of Catholic Priesthood.

So well defined became the nature and character of a Minor Seminary that gradually it attained a certain independence, and more strict separation from the Major Seminary with which it was joined in the same building for reasons of economy.

The Church desideratum of having two different buildings for the Major and the Minor Seminaries was not forgotten, and in due time it materialized. In the Manila Archdiocese this ideal set-up was achieved in 1927, when the Minor Seminary remained in Mandaluyong and the Major Seminary was transferred to San Marcelino. This separation was interrupted in 1936-1937, and then once more for reasons of economy in 1941-1954. Our Lady of Guadalupe Minor Seminary in Makati, was erected in 1954 located separately though not far from the San Carlos Major Seminary. In Naga the separation of both Departments was made in 1964, in Cebú and Jaro, in 1968. The Seminary of Calbayog, from its
beginnings in 1910 had no Major Seminary, but only the Minor Department annexed to a College until the school-year 1924-1925 when it began to function as a Major and Minor Seminary. In the Diocese of Lipa, the San Francisco de Sales Seminary in San Pablo, Laguna, after phasing out its annexed College in 1923, brought the Major Seminary to Lipa in 1931, and thus from that time the Minor Seminary in San Pablo remained as a separate institution.

Rising Dedication and Enthusiasm for the Work of Priestly Formation in Philippine Seminaries.

The great Pope of the Missions, Pius XI, who made the forceful pronouncement against the mixed clerical training, began his pontificate by declaring in that same document Officiorum Omnium (Aug. 1, 1922) that he considered as "the greatest and most urgent duty of his immense apostolic office, to procure and provide the Church with sufficient number of good ministers". Later, on December 21, 1935, he published the Magna Carta of the Catholic Priesthood, in his memorable Encyclical Ad Catholici Sacerdotii. And a few days before his death, he addressed his last posthumous document, the Apostolic Letter Con Singular Complacencia (January 18, 1939) to the Hierarchy of the Philippines. There he affirmed that the said Encyclical On the Catholic Priesthood was "his most important Document". He was the first Pope, and perhaps the only one in Church history, who prompted by his deep interest in priestly formation, reserved for himself the office of Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries. He is indeed one of the greatest champions of priestly formation of all times.

With such encouraging example from the Vicar of Christ, the Bishops of the Philippines and the Vincentian Fathers of the Philippine Province, were urged to an increased dedication and enthusiasm for the momentous work of priestly formation and promotion of vocations, a most urgent need in the Philippines in those days.

After the phasing out of the Colleges annexed to the Seminaries, the Vincentians found themselves entirely free to devote all their attentions to improve the priestly formation of the many seminarians entrusted to their care. The Provincial Visitors of this period, Fr. Pedro Angulo (1922-1932) and especially Fr. Jose Tejada (1932-1945) were the first to take heed of this new orientation especially in the Minor Seminaries. It was during these years that some Minor Seminaries became entirely independent, not only from any College of lay students, but even from the Major Seminary. Thus, the Minor Seminary of Calbayog was set up in 1925; the Minor Seminary of Manila (Mandaluyong) in 1927; the Minor Seminary of San Pablo, Laguna, in 1931.
that same year 1931, the Major Seminary of Lipa was started, just as the Major Seminary of Manila was in 1927, with a life entirely independent from the Minor Seminary. All these were signs of a new vitality in the work of clerical training, and served also as new encouragement to a more unreserved dedication.

The Very Rev. Fr. Jose Tejada was appointed Rector of the San Carlos Minor Seminary of Mandaluyong in June, 1927. His piety, wisdom, prudence and deep ecclesiastical spirit as well as his jovial character won the admiration of his confreres. In 1932 he was elected Visitor of the Vincentian Philippine Province. Once placed in that post of responsibility he took even more at heart the new orientation of the Province. He was not satisfied with exterior changes. He insisted on demanding a greater preparation for the Faculty members. He emphasized the need for our Seminary Professors to master English (which was a foreign language to them) and at least, for some of them in each Seminary to have a Doctorate degree in some Ecclesiastical sciences. Two solutions were proposed: a) to send several priests to Washington, U.S.A; b) to send others to Rome or Dublin for some academic degree.

It was during this period (1925-1935) that the Seminary Rules and Regulations were subjected to an intensive study and revision, and some of the documents, as the Rules for Minor Seminaries were written in English. The Rules in English contained, after an Introduction, several chapters under these headings: Piety, Private Devotions, Method of Performing the Pious Exercises, Study, Discipline, Time Schedule, Chapel, Study Hall and Classes, Cleanliness, Recreations, Visits, Correspondence, Infirmary, Holidays, Enforcement of Rules, and a Conclusion.

The sections on Study and Discipline interest us because it has oftentimes been so claimed that Seminary training in those days was limited to a few academic subjects, with an almost exclusive emphasis on piety. However, we read in the Rules for Vincentian Seminaries that “piety alone is not sufficient for a youth to be promoted to the Priesthood.” The Rules indicate further that without knowledge a candidate cannot aspire to his sacred calling, since a priest is supposed to be “the light of the world”. Thus he has the obligation of studying hard. The Rules compare the importance of studying to that of piety, and point out that there should be no difference between the two, because the former is a means to acquire holiness; and as long as the fulfillment of God’s Will is the purpose of study, a pious and hard-working student becomes a solid and effective candidate to the Priesthood.

The stress on discipline in the Seminary was justified by the need for order and regularity in a priest’s life. An indication of discipline
was punctuality in following timetables given by the superiors for week
days, Holydays, monthly recollection days, vacation days, etc. Father
Inspector has the right to know why a person was late for a particular
exercise. Permission from Father Inspector was required for reading
magazines, newspapers, and books not pertinent to the studies of
seminarians. Rules were enforced in various ways, including fraternal
admonitions, calling one's attention on some infraction, and in ex­
treme cases, even dismissal or expulsion from the Seminary.

In May 1938, Seminary Professors' Meeting on "Studies, Spiritual
Direction and Discipline" were held in Baguio with the following
members attending: Fathers Aurelio Fernandez, Faustino Isaba, Vic­
torino Gonzalez, Nicanor Urabayen, Pedro Anton, Agapito Sacristan,
Manuel Gracia, Angel Lucia, Esteban Iribarren, Luis Arriaza, Jose
Carrasco, Rufino Vea, and Maximino Velasco. They discussed topics
such as choice of textbooks, the use of English and native languages,
the teaching of mathematics, use of the library, the budget for the
library, and regular meetings of Faculty members.

They discussed what a good and ideal professor should be, and
proposed the following qualifications: he should have mastery of his
subject; he should be forming Christ in his students; he should be
hardworking, disinterested, impartial, and zealous. He should prepare
well for his classes and should try to know the students individually.
The professor should not entertain questions not related to the subject
matter; and should encourage compositions and practical applica­
tions.

The Bishop's Interest and Concern for their Future Clergy

In the critical transition period from College-Seminaries to pure
Seminary work, the Vincentian Fathers were admittedly encouraged
by the increase in priestly vocations. Taking their cue from the
Apostolic Letter of Pius XI on the need for more priests, the Bishops of
the Philippines tried to devise effective means of attracting many more
men to the priesthood.

From 1923 to 1937, Pastoral Letters to Seminaries on safeguarding
priestly vocations, and the founding of Associations "Pro Seminario"
(For the cause of the Seminary), occupied the Bishops of Nueva
Caceres, Lipa, Cebú, Jaro, and Calbayog. For the record, it must be
noted that all these Bishops relied on the Vincentians for the training of
their clergy.

The drive towards increasing the number of priests was epitomized
by Bishop James McCloskey of Jaro (1920-1945). He placed the
Seminary first in his scale of priorities and took every occasion to
make himself available to the Seminarians, by staying and celebrating Mass in the Seminary. The deep interest of Bishop McCloskey was reflected in a Pastoral Letter to the clergy and the faithful of his Diocese.

Bishop McCloskey expounded lengthily on the need to training more priests for the care of the people, regardless of sacrifice and work. He addressed himself to the love of the Ilonggos — laymen and priest alike — for their country and their faith, and he placed the fate of the country and of Religion in their hands.

The underlying purpose of his Letter was to invite all families to join the Association "Pro Seminario", and contribute to the support of the Seminary. He quoted St. Vincent de Paul on the beauty of the Priesthood and urged everyone to help poor seminarians go through their religious career, giving full scholarships or some generous contributions.

The Filipino Bishop Mons. Francisco Reyes, of Nueva Caceres (1925-1938) agreed fully with the judgment of other Bishops that the number of Filipino Priests needed preservation and growth. He pointed to the perceptible increase of native vocations and attributed it to "the zeal of the Vincentian Fathers, the selfless educators of the secular clergy, and the help of diocesan priests."

Bishop Reyes presented to the clergy and the people the recurring needs of the seminarians: food, clothing, housing, school supplies, improvement of buildings, payment for helpers, etc. By way of suggestion he proposed to help in solving the problem by endorsing the idea of the Association "Pro Seminario", already introduced by the Vincentians in other dioceses. He finally expressed a difficult but not impossible dream, that all the faithful, religious congregations, parish priests, and lay people, may take delight in working to promote priestly vocations.

A Vincentian Magazine for Seminaries in the Philippines.

In order to spread the message on the importance of Seminary training, and to attract more students towards the lofty summits of the Priesthood, the Vincentians put out a periodical, Seminarium, on July, 1936. The idea came from the zealous apostle of the printed word, Fr. Máximo Juguera, C.M., then Master of novices in the budding Internal Seminary of the Congregation in the Philippines. The magazine existed for nearly two decades, and became a rich source of information on Seminary life and activities, as well as an open field that encouraged seminarians in the apostolate of the pen.

The effort to foster priestly vocations among the Filipino youth
received valuable support from the *Seminarium*. In its first year of publication, we find eleven articles under the section “Encouragement of vocations”, twenty-four in the section “Echoes from the Seminaries”, and fourteen in that of “Ecclesiastical Sciences”. These articles produced a wholesome impact on the aspirants to the priestly vocation.

Seminarians and lay people were purposely drawn into participation by encouraging them to write about their experiences with the Seminary. An article by a seminarian entitled “Mothers and Vocations” carried a simple but fascinating message to many mothers. Another article, “My Son, a Priest” bore an infectious emotion that inspired parents of priests and seminarians, and invited others to hanker for the same privilege.

Within the context of these initiatives, it was to be expected that the number of seminarians would increase as indeed it did during the years 1925-1936. To single out one instance, the Seminary of Nueva Caceres at the close of the College-Seminary in 1925, had only 25 seminarians; while in 1936 the Naga Seminary had 47 Majors and 118 Minor seminarians.

**Guidelines on Formation of Seminarians Redefined**

Through the periodical *Seminarium*, Fr. Jose Tejada, C.M., Provincial of Vincentians in the Philippines, published some excellent guidelines for the priestly formation of young men. He stressed that seminarians should be formed in an integrally sacerdotal manner. The specialization of the Seminary consists thus in taking in hand the soul of the young seminarian, and little by little, with constancy, with method, with the powerful aids that the whole life of a priest offers by itself, to work in such a way that the seminarian’s soul, at the end of his career, becomes as priestly, as possible.

The life of a seminarian should be, a life of piety, of cultural formation, and discipline — all leading to one end and purpose . . . the infusion of a sacerdotal spirit which should grow little by little, until the moment in which it receives from Jesus Christ, its omnipotent powers of sanctification and salvation for the souls of other people.

In his study of the role of Seminary directors, Fr. Tejada noted that although the Rector had such a great responsibility in the Seminary, he did not have to possess eminent or brilliant qualities; a harmonious group of
ordinary attributes may be sufficient, namely, mental capacity, solid piety, attentive and delicate manner of acting serene judgment, and freedom from enslavement by the impressions of the moment... It is his duty to see to it that the wise and prudent laws of the Church on seminarians be adjusted to actual circumstances in the regulations of the Seminary, and that such regulations be the most effective and sure means by which his government will be steeped in a priestly educative spirit.

The Moot Question of Government Recognition of Minor Seminaries.

In our times, Government recognition of High School and even college studies in the Seminaries, like in other Catholic High school and Colleges, is taken for granted; nobody discusses its convenience or necessity. But half a century ago, the issue was not so clear. As late as 1955, Fr. Rafael Bernal, C.M., Rector of a Seminary in the Philippines, was still insistently recommending the Government recognition of Minor Seminaries as certified High Schools, empowered to issue academic diplomas. Fr. Bernal’s point was that Government recognition will encourage the Bishops to give a greater financial support; and the Directors will be able to increase the teaching staff with better prepared personnel.

During the days of the College-Seminaries, Government recognition was considered as necessary, at least for the lay students who otherwise would not enroll if they would not be able to pursue their careers later in a University or other institutions of learning. But once the Colleges were phased out and the Seminaries were independently existing as purely ecclesistical institutions, Government recognition began to be seen as a hindrance — possible or real — to the specialized vocational training of future candidates to the Priesthood. It was feared that Government standards and requirements might prove an obstacle to the necessary freedom of action of the Church in the formation and education of the future ministers of the altar.

The moot question was taken up and discussed thoroughly in the Vincentian review Seminarium. In 1937 fifteen articles were published, debating the merits and difficulties of Government recognition of studies in the Minor Seminaries. The controversy was triggered off by an article of the well known Parish priest of San Vicente de Paul Church (San Marcelino), former Professor of San Carlos Seminary (Mandaluyong), Fr. José Fernandez, C.M. In his article entitled “La High School en los Seminarios” he gave the pros and cons of Government recognition of High School Seminaries. Some of the reasons he cited in favor of Government recognition were:
1) It has been done in some places, notably in the USA, and seems to have brought favorable results;
2) It would invite seminarians from the higher ranks of society;
3) It would help the alumni who could not finish or continue in the Seminary;
4) It would help the economic life of the Seminary.

The reasons he cited against Government recognition were:
1) It would be difficult to follow Government requirements and conditions regarding examination of teachers, titles, revised textbooks, etc.
2) Some, at least, of the subjects offered by Government High School were not relevant to ecclesiastical life;
3) A relaxation of discipline among the seminarians, might result and many might leave the Seminary;
4) The economic advantages were doubtful.

In general, foreign missionaries were in favor of Government recognition because they had seen abroad and had seen for themselves that Government recognition could actually work without causing serious impairments to the internal life of a Seminary or the ecclesiastical training of seminarians. The Spanish Vincentians who had known of sad experiences and unjust interferences in Church institutions under the liberal Governments of Spain, specially in the 19th or 20th centuries, were reluctant to allow any form of State control of Seminaries, or any tendency to equate the Seminaries with other common High Schools or Colleges of lay students.

Famous educators of the clergy such as the erudite scholar and canonist, Fr. George Vromant, CICM; Fr. Herman Kondring, SVD (who was once appointed with Fr. José Tejada, CM, as Apostolic Visitor of Philippine Seminaries); Fr. Lawrence Bunzel, SVD; Director of Studies at Christ the King Seminary; Fr. Albertus Van Gansewinkel, SVD, of Vigan Seminary; and Fr. Jose Alojipan, of Sogod, Cebú, wrote excellent articles defending the State recognition of studies in Minor Seminaries.

Fr. Kondring's articles explored thoroughly this problem and highlighted the advantages that would accrue to the Seminaries, to the public and to other people concerned. Taking up the argument about possible loss of seminarians, he pointed out that there would always be seminarians leaving, anyway; so Government recognition would simply make their transfer to other schools easier. Otherwise, Seminary professors would have to give a satisfactory explanation as to the kind of
education these students got in the four years they spent in the Seminary.\textsuperscript{43}

The people in general seemed to think that Seminaries were not given Government recognition because the education they give was inferior. This of course was not true; the Seminary course was often superior to those offered by many ordinary High Schools. Government recognition of Seminaries was to reveal that priests were as perfectly trained and educated in secular disciplines as any lawyer or physician.

And looking far ahead, Fr. Kondring insisted that, at any rate, there was, and will always be, a continuous need for more Catholic schools with a professed Catholic orientation from directors and principals who might be priests themselves. It is but natural to expect that the Government would let qualified priests become directors and principals of such schools. Further training might be needed for professional administration and supervision in order to enable secular priests to direct and supervise diocesan institutions; but how could such priests continue their studies along these lines if they do not even possess a High School diploma to begin with?

Although it was true that an institution could give academic courses with or without official Government recognition, yet it had been observed in other countries that, with the supervision and recognition of the Government, the academic standards of the Seminaries improved. As long as textbooks and methods of teaching were reasonable and modern, the Government did not interfere in school policies and choice of books. The Government limited its demands to certain external circumstances which, it believed, help in keeping schools' common standards, for example, Library and other necessary equipments for the benefit of the students. Even Government inspection and supervision had rarely been shown to harm schools. It is commonly accepted that because the Bureau of Education had some experience in teaching secular subjects, it could give many useful suggestions.\textsuperscript{44}

Fr. Albertus Van Gansewinkel, SVD parried the arguments of too much State Interference in the Seminaries, saying that it simply did not happen in many countries; and besides, if a Government were really that bad, it could disturb the Seminaries anyway, whether these Seminaries are recognized or not.\textsuperscript{45}

Fr. Jose Tejada, C.M., Visitor of Vincentians in the Philippines, joined the debate on Government recognition of Minor Seminaries. Personally he was against this move, mainly because he felt it was not consonant with Instructions issued by the Holy See, and from some lessons taken from experience; but still he was open to the other side. He preferred to leave the solution of this problem in the hands of the Ordinaries, assisted by the Directors of their Seminaries.\textsuperscript{46}
Fr. Federico Tobar, C.M., offered the opinion that the question of State recognition of Seminaries was analogous to that of Private Schools; and so, applying the lessons learned from them, he felt that the independence of Seminaries would be placed in jeopardy. He referred to Church documents and provisions of Canon law:

These declarations of the Church supreme authority are directed to stop the modernist tendency which — holding on to merely human motives, namely, of material advantages and increase of students in the Seminaries — would place obstacles to the divine mission of the Church in the selection, preparation and perfect formation of those called by God to be the salt of the earth and the light of our materialistic world.

Fr. Cipriano Oses, C.M., in opposing the move to seek Government recognition, pointed out that, although Government recognition would help those who leave the Seminary, the primary concern of Seminary directors should be, not those seminarians who leave, but those who stay, since the main task of Seminaries is to train priests, and not to prepare young men for secular professions. This question, therefore, had to be seen in terms of the common good, and not of the few who leave. With respect to the argument that the Seminaries were inferior to other schools in educational achievements, because of lack of Government recognition, Fr. Oses replied that if the people were ignorant of facts, they should be corrected, for it is obvious that seminarians are equal to other students in their academic attainments.

This grave controversy, ventilated in the pages of the Vincentian magazine, helped to clarify ideas on the question of Government recognition for the High School studies of Minor Seminaries. As a result, action on the matter proceeded cautiously for it was considered to be such a delicate decision that could affect the momentous work of the Church in the early formation of young aspirants to the Catholic Priesthood. As the best proof that the Spanish Vincentians who apparently opposed to the idea, were not closed to wholesome innovations, one notes that it was a Spanish Vincentian, the Rector of the San Carlos Minor Seminary of Manila, in Mandaluyong, Fr. Gabriel Rodriguez, C.M., who took the first steps to seek official Government recognition of the same Minor Seminary by the year 1939.

The San Carlos Minor Seminary in Mandaluyong was the first strictly ecclesiastical Minor Seminary in the Philippines (after the period of College-Seminaries) to obtain State recognition of its High School studies. And, even before the Holy See issued an Instruction on
the inclusion in the Major Seminary curriculum of some subjects in the science of education and pedagogy, Fr. Gabriel Rodriguez, C.M. invited all the Faculty of the Mandaluyong Minor Seminary to attend classes in the University of Santo Tomas to obtain academic degrees in the Faculty of Education, and thus be well prepared to qualify before the Bureau of Education for their teaching office. Then, little by little, the example of the Manila Minor Seminary was followed by the rest of Diocesan and religious Minor Seminaries in the Philippines. And experience has shown that the step taken redounds to the advantage of the priestly formation in the Philippines.

Major Seminary Rules ("Regulae Seminaristarum").

Side by side with the dispositions and laws and decrees of the Holy See on Seminaries, is the booklet Regulae Seminaristarum, fruit of the secular experience of the Vincentian Fathers in running Seminaries, and published by the Philippine Vincentian Province for the use of Major Seminaries in the Philippines. It was prepared and edited by Fr. Fermin Campo, C.M., Doctor in Canon Law, and Professor of the Manila Archdiocesan Seminary. Fr. Campo worked strenuously to fulfill the instructions given him by the Provincial, Fr. Jose Tejada, C.M.

It may be opportune here to recall the history of the Rules for Philippine Seminaries. The most ancient Rules were drafted and approved in the Council of Manila (November 12, 1771) celebrated in the days of the famous Archbishop Mons. Basilio Sancho de Santas Justa y Rufina. This Manila Council was not approved by the Pope or the King. But the Seminary Rules published then served as Norms of life and discipline in the Philippine Seminaries until the mid-19th century.

By the years 1840-1850 there was a marked decadence in the discipline of Philippine Seminaries. To remedy this, and in order to enforce strict compliance with the Rules, the Rector of the Manila Seminary, Very Rev. Juan Bonifacio, and the Rector of the Seminary of Naga, Very Rev. Narciso Doyague, issued other revised and updated Seminary Rules for use in their respective Seminaries. In 1865 the zealous Bishop of Nueva Cáceres, Mons. Francisco Gainza, O.P. published the newly revised Rules for his Seminary, and these obtained full vigor with the arrival of the Vincentians in Naga. These same Rules, with slight variations, were introduced in the Seminary of Vigan by Mons. Juan Aragones, O.S.A. These Rules were faithfully observed by the Vincentians, with certain modifications according to the general Directory of the Congregation of the Mission for Seminaries, and in full agreement with the respective Bishops.
FRONT VIEW OF THE COLLEGE-SEMINARY OF SAN VICENTE FERRER, JARO Rebuilt after the fire of Oct. 7, 1906 by Bishops Frederick Rooker and Dennis Dougherty of Jaro.

SAN VICENTE FERRER SEMINARY, Jaro, Iloilo, Playground in the Seminary field. (1912)
Major Seminarians of the San Vicente Ferrer College-Seminary of Jaro, Iloilo (1912)
Minor Seminarians and Boarding students of the Seminario-Colegio de San Vicente Ferrer of Jaro (1912)
Rector and Professors of the San Vicente Ferrer Seminary of Jaro (1927)

Most. Rev. James MacCloskey, Bishop of Jaro with the Vincentian Staff and Seminarians of his College-Seminary (1927)
Major and Minor Seminarians of Jaro with the Rector Fr. Mariano Auzmendi, and Professors Frs. Lucio Ortega, Luis Egeda, Honorio, Garcia, Eliseo Rodriguez, Pedro Pampliega, Jacinto de la Iglesia, Cayetano Goicoechea, Victorino Gonzalez, Nicanor Urabayen, Jacinto Iroz and Jose Villar, C.M. (1937)
San Vicente Ferrer Seminary of Jaro. Jaro Seminarians belonging to the Association of Children of Mary Immaculate (1937)
SAN VICENTE FERRER SEMINARY, Jaro, Iloilo City (1935)
SAN VICENTE FERRER SEMINARY Chapel, Jaro, Iloilo City (c. 1935)
The Apostle of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Fr. Mateo Crawley Boevey, SS.CC., with a special mission entrusted to him by Pope Pius XI, came two times to the Philippines in 1937 bringing the message of love of the Sacred Heart to priests, seminarians and the laity. Here we see him with the Vincentians and secular clergy in the Retreat he gave at the Seminary of Jaro.
His Eminence Dennis Card. DOUGHERTY, Archbishop of Philadelphia, Legate a latere of Pope Pius XI in the 33rd International Eucharistic Congress in Manila, February 1937 with his friends the Vincentians, so close to him when he was Bishop of Jaro (1908-1916). Photo taken at the Palace of Malacañang, courteously offered by President Manuel L. Quezon for his residence during the Eucharistic Congress.
When the Vicentians arrived in Manila, however, they found that the Rules prepared by Fr. Juan Bonifacio were practically dead letter; and so our Fathers there were not constrained by any previous standing Rules. After some time of prudent experiment, with Vincentian traditions adapted to the circumstances, Fr. Jose Casarramona, C.M. was entrusted to draft new Seminary Rules for the Seminary of Manila. These were approved by the Manila Archbishop, Mons. Pedro Payo, O.P. in 1878, and thenceforth were observed in the Seminary of Manila, and in other Diocesan Vincentian Seminaries of the Philippines.

In our century, we find that the Rules adopted by the Seminary of Calbayog in 1914, were the same Rules as those drafted by Fr. Casarramona with some variations.

In 1925, the Vincentian Province published in Manila a Philippine adaptation of the Directory of Seminaries the official book of the Congregation of the Mission. Five years later; in 1930, the San Carlos Minor Seminary of Manila, under the Vincentians, published in English and Spanish the Seminary Rules for that Minor Seminary and these Rules were adopted in other Vincentian Minor Seminaries of the Philippines.

Finally, in 1935 the masterful work of Fr. Fermin Campo, C.M. was printed, the Seminary Rules for our Major Seminaries, Regulae Seminaristarum, in Facultatibus Philosophiae et Theologiae. Published in Manila by the Catholic Trade School, this 95 paged booklet of 22.5 x 15 cms. carried the Imprimi Potest of Fr. Jose Tejada, C.M., dated on the feast of the Translation of St. Vincent’s Relics, and the Imprimatur of Most Rev. Michael J. O’Doherty, Archbishop of Manila, which was signed in Baguio, on May 19, feast of St. Potenciana, Patroness of the city of Manila.

Most Reverend Guillermo Piani, Apostolic Delegate of the Philippines showed his enthusiasm and interest in this work. It was he who took the trouble amidst his many occupations, to correct the proofs from the printers, in order to render the work as perfect as possible even in its material aspect.

The Latin was flawless. The content was excellent and comprehensive, solidly grounded in Church documents and Vincentian traditions. Archbishop O’Doherty of Manila sincerely expressed the hopes he entertained of happy fruits to be derived from the faithful application and observance of these Rules. Archbishop Gabriel M. Reyes of Cebú, as well as the Bishops of Calbayog, Lipa, Nueva Caceres and Jaro, received the book with praise and decided at once to adopt the Regulae Seminaristarum for their respective Seminaries.
Spurred by the suggestion of the Apostolic Delegate, and prompted also by the desire to have his Major seminarians present at liturgical services at the Cathedral, Bishop Alfredo Verzosa of Lipa decided to bring the Major Seminary to Lipa, Batangas. Since there was no other suitable building for the purpose, nor was there any financial means to undertake a new construction, the Bishop gave up his own palace for the use of the Seminarians, and went to live in a modest house nearby. During the months of March, April and May of 1931, the necessary repairs and changes were made in the episcopal palace to adapt it to the needs of a Seminary. At the end of May, the Bishop called the Rector, Fr. Alfonso Saldaña, C.M., and gave orders for the immediate transfer of the Professors and seminarians of the Major Department of San Pablo to the city of Lipa.

The community was composed of Fathers Alfonso Saldaña, Rector; Manuel Amo, Vice-Rector; Daniel Millán, Procurator; Gabriel Rodriguez, Master of ceremonies at the Cathedral, and Prudencio Mayoral, Choir Director; with some 44 seminarians, students of Philosophy and Theology. The school year was formally opened on June 15, and, although there were certain inconveniences as to be expected of any new project, the school year opened smoothly and joyfully, thanks to the good will and help of the town people of Lipa.

In the beginning of the next school year 1932-1933, Fr. Teodoro Robredo, Superior of Manila, was assigned Rector of the Major Seminary of Lipa, in place of Fr. Saldaña who had left for Spain. That same year, Fr. Antonio Gómez also was transferred from San Pablo to Lipa, to become Secretary of the Seminary. The pious and exemplary missionary, Fr. Manuel Amo, fell seriously sick on December 25, 1932, and from that Christmas day on could not work any longer in the Seminary. Later, he was transferred to the House of Manila, where after a long sickness of 11 months which he patiently endured, he died peacefully in the Lord on November 23, 1933, at the age of 46, with 29 years of Vincentian vocation, and 18 years of service in the Philippines (1915-1933), at the Seminaries of Mandaluyong, San Pablo and Lipa.

For the school year 1933-1934, Fr. Prudencio Mayoral was assigned to the Seminary of San Pablo; and Fr. Daniel Millán was sent to América to study English. To fill these vacant posts, Fr. Honorio Garcia of the Seminary of Naga, Fr. Federico Tobar of the Seminary of Mandaluyong, and Fr. Constancio Alcalde, who had recently arrived from Spain, were sent to Lipa.

For the school year 1934-1935, again two vacant posts left by
Fr. Federico Tobar, who returned to Spain, and Fr. Antonio Gómez, who was sent to Australia to study English, were filled by Fr. Julio Ruiz from the Seminary of Naga, and Fr. Daniel Millán, who had just arrived from America.

During the school year 1935-1936, Fr. Constancio Alcalde remained in Baguio, acting as Chaplain of the Sisters of Charity; and since the Bishop asked for one more Professor in the Seminary, Fathers Federico Tobar and Antonio Gómez, who had recently arrived from Spain and Australia respectively, were sent back to Lipa. At the end of that school year, Fr. Gabriel Rodriguez was sent to England to study the language, and to substitute him, Fr. Pedro Antón came to Lipa as Vice-Rector.

Pastoral Training in the Seminaries During this Period.

In accordance with Church teachings, the emphasis of Seminary training was on the spiritual formation, ecclesiastical studies, and clerical discipline. The need for pastoral training for the future minister of the Church, however, was not forgotten or neglected. As Vatican II demands, seminarians were “carefully instructed in all matters which are specially relevant to the sacred ministry . . . catechetics, preaching, liturgical worship and the administration of sacraments” (*Optatam totius*, 19).

Catechetical instruction has always been a religious necessity in all parts of the world, but even more so in countries, like the Philippines, where there is such scarcity of priests for such immense multitudes of people who wander like sheep without a shepherd. In other countries perhaps the faithful can obtain knowledge of their religion by other means of social communication. In the Philippines however catechetical instruction served as the principal channel of imparting Catholic doctrine to the masses. The Vincentians looked at catechetics as an extension of their priestly ministry; and so they trained the seminarians in this form of apostolate and community service.

Minor seminarians, during the school year, were sent on free days to teach catechism in some centers where the boys were gathered. During summer vacations they were encouraged to offer their services to their respective Parish Priests as altar boys, or help in any Parish work. Major seminarians were entrusted with the teaching of religion in some parish church or center. During vacations they assisted the priest in his pastoral functions and helped in other parish activities, such as popular missions in the barrios, etc.

The seminarians from San Carlos Major Seminary of Manila were
sent during summer vacations of 1934-1936 to parish priests in the provinces of Rizal, Bulacan, Cavite, Pampanga, Laguna, Tarlac, and Nueva Ecija who requested for their help in teaching religion to the children, and preparing first communicants, and adults for Baptism and Marriage validations. The results of these fruitful and laborious vacations in 1936 are evident in the following figures: 12,322 children received catechetical instruction; 9,463 young people participated in general Communion; and there were 3,677 first Communicants; 109 Baptisms, and 239 Marriages.\(^5^2\)

The Diocese of Lipa, Batangas, in 1935 reported that there were 4,361 persons who attended the catechetical instructions; 678 First Communicants; and 3,516 other Communions were distributed.\(^5^3\)

In Southern Luzon, the Bikol region undertook very zealous activities in the catechetical field. The Seminary of the Most Holy Rosary of Naga published a newsletter, entitled *The Catechist*, which featured catechetical data and Sunday homilies. In some way, the editors of *The Catechist* anticipated Vatican II, by their publication of the weekly texts of the Sunday Gospel in Bikolano. The sermons that appeared in the pages of *The Catechist* were authored by Fr. Cipriano Oses, C.M., a veteran in the region, and were translated into Bikolano by the seminarians.

The Bikol seminarians, like their counterparts in other dioceses of the Philippines, also taught Catechism during summer vacations. On July 13, 1939, *The Catechist* presented the following reports from different towns of the region: \(^5^4\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Towns</th>
<th>No. of Communicants</th>
<th>Towns</th>
<th>No. of Communicants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iriga</td>
<td>1,115</td>
<td>Magallanes</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goa</td>
<td>985</td>
<td>Pasacao</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nabua</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>Daet</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pili</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>Viga</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulan</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>Casiguran</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabaco</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>Virac</td>
<td>1,896</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In all these works of catechetical apostolate the seminarians were constantly guided and supervised by the Vincentian Fathers. Deserving special mention in this respect was Fr. Lope Legido, who, in the Seminary of Cebú prepared various manuscripts for publication: *El Catequista Auxiliar* and *Preparación para la Primera Comunión*, in 1933; *La Catequesis Parroquial* and *Manual de los Catequistas Auxiliares*, in 1934, excellent handbooks, clear, concise and inspiring for catechists, translated to the Bisaya; and “*La Acción Católica*”, in 1936,
a complete treatise on the apostolate of Catholic Action that was then introduced in the Archdiocese of Cebu.

In the Philippines, with the American policy of separation of the Church and State, and with the suppression of official religious instruction in the public schools of the nation, an ever increasing number of people, especially among the rising generation, were baptized Christians with little, if any, knowledge of their religion. Realizing this sad state of affairs, some of our Seminary Directors, zealously dedicated many of the hours they could spare from their regular ministries in the Seminary, to direct the catechetical apostolate of the Diocese. Thus, in Lipa and San Pablo the works of Fr. Gabriel Rodriguez and in Naga those of Fr. Juan Manuel Gomez Chanas became well known and appreciated by all. On his part, Fr. Antonio Gomez worked effectively to foster priestly spirit, union and zeal among the diocesan clergy.

In passing, we may also recall here the notable contributions of Fr. Manuel Gracia, C.M. for the cause of religion among our people. In 1940 he founded the Legion of Mary in the Philippines. It was he who, in 1935, as archivist of the Manila Archdiocese discovered the original document of Dr. José Rizal's retraction and conversion to the Catholic Faith. Fr. Manuel Gracia, for the remaining years of his life, was acknowledged everywhere as the tireless promoter of the vigorous apostolate of the Legion of Mary all over the islands, and the final authority on the historical fact of our national hero's return to the faith of our fathers.

The Second Diocesan Synod of Manila

An important event for the Archdiocese of Manila was the Second Diocesan Synod convoked by Archbishop Michael J. O'Doherty and celebrated in the Manila Cathedral on April, 2 and 3, 1925. Among the Fathers convoked were Fr. Aurelio Fernández, C.M., Rector of the Archdiocesan Seminary, Fr. José Fernández, C.M., as Notary of the Synod, and Fr. Pedro Martinez, C.M., as Superior of the Vincentians.

Properly speaking this was the Third Synod, since the First was that convoked by Bishop Salazar in 1581-1586, and the Second the one convoked by Archbishop Harty on April 20, 1911.

Dawn of a New Era: The Philippines, 1925-1941

The period 1925-1941 ushered in a new era for the Philippines as a nation. Politically, the efforts of the Filipino leaders to obtain greater
autonomy from the United States began to show concrete results. On November 15, 1935 the Philippine Commonwealth was inaugurated — the start of a ten-year transition government before the final grant of Philippine Independence. Materially and socially, the country during this time experienced significant growth. Philippine population increased from 10,314,310 in 1918 to 16,000,000 by 1938. Agriculture, manufactures and industries developed along with the expansion of commerce and trade. Social life greatly improved with better means of transportation, communication, water supply, electrification, health centers and hospitals. Public education was allotted more revenues enabling the establishment of schools all over the country even in the remote barrios.

The Philippine Vincentian Province: Consolidation and Development

For the Philippine Province of the Vincentian Mission, the period was also characterized by vigorous growth and consolidation. For the first time, the Vincentians in the Philippines officially admitted Filipino native candidates to the Congregation’s Internal Seminary or novitiate. It was indeed a significant step which opened a new horizon for the native aspirants to the Vincentian vocation, after almost three quarters of a century since the arrival of the first Spanish Vincentians in the country.

Opening of the Vincentian Internal Seminary in the Philippines

The decision was not arrived at overnight. As early as 1904, the Spanish Vincentians in the country, urged by some Bishops, considered the prospect of setting up a novitiate or Internal Seminary for native vocations. The Superior General of the Congregation favored the idea. Unfortunately, the Provincial of Madrid did not approve of the plan. (Two years later, the Jesuits also planned to open a novitiate but it was turned down by their superiors in Spain).\(^7\) Thus, the admission of native vocations among the Vincentians in the Philippines was delayed by some thirty years.

An obvious question arises at this point: Why did it take so long for the Spanish Vincentians to open a novitiate in the Philippines for the Filipinos? Was it due to racial discrimination on the part of the Spanish Vincentians? The question deserves some attention.

It may be recalled that when the Spanish Vincentians arrived in the Philippines on July 22, 1862, they took over the direction of the Manila Seminary the following month on August 2. By virtue of a Royal Cedula from the Regent Queen Isabel II, dated two years before, they
took charge of the teaching and running of Conciliar Seminaries in the
country. Gradually, they took over the administration of the Seminaries of Manila (1862-1899; 1913-1953), Nueva Cáceres (1865-1974), Cebú (1867 up to the present), Jaro (1869-1975), Vigan (1872-1876), Calbayog (1911-1964), Lipa (1914-1945), and Bacolod (1946-1959).

During all these years the Vincentian missionaries generously and
quietly devoted their lives and energy to the ecclesiastical formation of young Filipino aspirants to the priestly vocation for the diocesan
clergy. In the exercise of this task, which was their almost exclusive
apostolate, they saw with their eyes and they often bore witness to the
intellectual and moral capacity of the Filipino youth for attaining the
lofty ideals and sublime dignity of the Catholic Priesthood. But, true to
the spirit of their Holy Founder who discouraged the use of human
means to recruit prospective candidates to the Congregation of the
Mission, the Spanish Vincentians consistently refrained from any
propaganda that might subtract valuable elements from the ranks of the
secular clergy. Moreover, the Vincentians feared that such a recruit-
ment for their Congregation might be resented by the Bishops who had
precisely trusted them with the formation of their diocesan clergy. They believed that it would have been some kind of a violation of their
duty if at the expense of the Diocese they served, their own Congrega-
tion would grow and be enriched with native elements from among the
seminarians.

It is also possible that the Vincentians in the past had been
influenced in this regard by a certain colonial mentality common
among the Spanish religious working in the country during the Spanish
regime. It was taken for granted then that a colony would remain
indefinitely under the tutelage of its mother country. Consequently,
they might have believed that the natives should be kept under the
colonizers as permanent wards or subjects. That was indeed a mis-
taken, shortsighted and regrettable mentality; but certainly it was not
due to racial prejudice or odious discrimination. The missionary ideal
regarding the primary duty in mission lands of establishing the Church
by the creation of a self-sufficient native clergy was not clearly defined
in those days as it was later through the Papal Encyclicals Maximum
Illud of 1919 and Rerum Ecclesiae of 1926. It was only at the turn of the
century when the colony broke away from Spain that the need for native
vocations in the regular as well as in the secular clergy became more
apparent.

Thus, as a matter of history, the Spanish Vincentians did not
recruit any Filipino native vocation for the “Little Company” of
St. Vincent until 1935. Although they fully trusted the excellent
qualities of the Filipino youth whom they were moulding for the priestly
vocation, they did not exert any effort to attract some of the good seminarians to join their Congregation. Perhaps they took into consideration St. Vincent’s dictum or saying: “If we are worthy, God will provide us with vocations, at His own time, and will multiply our Houses; but if we are not what we should be, the Houses we have are too many already; they should be closed.”

During the last 36 years of the Spanish regime, the Vincentians unselfishly prepared 651 Filipino priests or about 95% of the total 674 secular priests working in the whole country by the year 1898. Of the 651, there were 260 of Manila, 119 of Cebu, 125 of Naga, 117 of Jaro, and 30 of Vigan. In the present century, the first Filipino Bishops, Singzon, Barlin, Francisco Reyes, and Sancho have been trained by the Vincentians. Therefore, the humble missionaries of St. Vincent could well say with St. Paul: “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glory, glory, before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy!”

At last God’s hour had arrived. On November 21, 1928, without any invitation from the Vincentians and even with procrastinations on the part of the superiors (who faithfully observed St. Vincent’s slow-footedness to better find out God’s holy will), a young man presented his petition for admission in the Congregation of the Mission. He was an alumnus of Letran College and Santo Tomas University under the Dominicans. Since 1927 he had been studying in the San Carlos Minor Seminary of Mandaluyong. At that time there was still no Novitiate for Vincentians in the Philippines. The Provincial Fr. Pedro Angulo told the candidate, Jesus Ma. Cavanna y Manso, to wait till the end of his ecclesiastical career for his admission to the Congregation. In the meantime, in order to help his poor widowed mother who generously consented to his religious vocation, the Congregation looked for a benefactor who could provide for Cavanna’s pension in the Manila Seminary. Although this benefactor wished to remain in anonymity all the time, it was learned later that the kind help came from Sister Visitatrix of the Daughters of Charity, Sor Josefa Gurbindo.

Six more years elapsed. To be free from any bond with the Archdiocese, the candidate finished his Philosophy and Theology in San Carlos Major Seminary (1929-1935) without receiving even the First Tonsure with its consequent incardination. By 1935 the Provincial Visitor, Fr. José Tejada received another petition for admission in the Congregation, from a Major seminarian of the Most Holy Rosary Seminary of Naga, Teotimo C. Pacis. Finally, it was evident that the hour had arrived to open in the Philippines the Internal Seminary or novitiate of the Congregation for the first Filipino Candidates. Fr. Maximo Juguera, former Rector of the Naga Seminary, was appointed
Master of novices. On June 29, 1935 the candidates were received in the Seminary of Mandaluyong where they were allowed to make their novitiate.

After the spiritual retreat, customary before investiture, the two aspirants, Jesus Ma. Cavanna and Teotimo C. Pacis, were officially clothed with the Vincentian cincture in the chapel of the San Carlos Minor Seminary in Mandaluyong, on July 4, 1935. The simple ceremony was attended by several Spanish confreres who came from San Marcelino to witness the inauguration of the Congregation’s Internal Seminary and to give the fraternal welcome to the first Filipino Vincentians. Nobody even dreamed then that one of those young candidates, Teotimo C. Pacis, would be, some 30 years later, elected Bishop of Palo, Leyte, and then, later, the second Bishop of Legaspi, Albay.58

The Vincentian novitiate stayed in the Seminary of Mandaluyong during the school year 1935-1936; then it was transferred to the Central House of San Marcelino. By the end of its second year, a new novice came to join the first two; he was the seminarian, Wenceslao Yonzon, of the Manila San Carlos Seminary, a native of San Luis, Pampanga. His vocation day was April 5, 1937.

Brothers Jesus Ma. Cavanna, C.M., and Teotimo C. Pacis, C.M., professed their perpetual vows on July 5, 1937 before the Provincial Visitor, Very Rev. Fr. Jose Tejada, C.M., in the church of San Vicente de Paul, San Marcelino. After these first sprouts of native vocations, the Internal Seminary was interrupted for lack of vocations, until the end of the Japanese occupation and the war of liberation. It seems that the blood of our martyred Spanish Vincentians became the seed of abundant native vocations in the Philippines.

Spiritual Retreats for the Clergy

In the year 1939 and in subsequent years we find Fr. Jose Tejada, Fr. Luis Angulo, Fr. Antonino Mayoral, Fr. Cipriano Osés, and Fr. Máximo Juguera, giving retreats to the clergy throughout the Philippines, mostly from Luzón and Visayas.

These retreats, organized by various Bishops, were a clear testimony of the Vincentians’ practical concern for the Filipino clergy. The chance of attending these spiritual retreats gave the priests an exceptional opportunity to assess their spiritual lives and to avail themselves of the invaluable spiritual guidance offered during those retreats. Fr. Juguera reported:

We have approached several Directors of the Priestly Retreats to find out what was their personal opinion, and all
have assured me that they have been very happy over the sincere desire they observed in the venerable attending pastors, to profit from the retreat; their recollection, their very punctual assistance to the pious exercises and the admirable order of all their community acts.₅⁹

Some details of those retreats could not but impress, even a casual observer. For example, during a Retreat in Baguio, it was noticed that the priests recited the Divine Office with fervent devotion and with care, marking time and tone of the voice. Also they sang the sacred chants with precise execution during the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament every night, and at the Holy Hour on the last day. The retreats were inspired and patterned according to the famous Priestly Retreats recently given in 1937 to the seminarians and clergy of the Philippines by Fr. Mateo Crawley, SS.CC., the world known apostle of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Notwithstanding the inconvenience of having those retreats scheduled during the months of summer vacation, the Vincentians involved in this work took to these activities gladly. They realized that the choice of such a time was determined by several factors. On one side, there was the problem of housing the retreatants, since the Seminaries were often the only places where the priests could comfortably and economically be accommodated. On the other hand, the Directors of these Retreats had to come generally from among the Seminary Professors themselves who were busy with classes and other duties during the school year.₆₀

Slight modifications and adjustments were adopted as time went along. Traditionally, strict observance of silence was insisted upon, and no common recreations were allowed. But for the sake of the first, something of the second was given up. Fr. Juguera observed:₆¹

We want to record this curious finding on ascetical psychology, namely, when, at the expressed desire of the famous Fr. Mateo, some moments of recreation were granted to the priests during the retreat days, silence became better observed. As far as the priests from Tuguegarao were concerned, I can testify in favor of this fact with great satisfaction.

Church Efflorescence during this Period₆²

The Catholic Church was also multiplying its educational institutions and social welfare organizations, especially for the benefit of the
poor. Before World War II the San Juan de Dios Hospital had 150 beds and was spending ₱10,000 a month of free service for the poor. St. Paul’s Hospital was giving about 15% of its work completely free to the poor. The so-called Patronages undertaken by religious Sisters, were making daily visits to the poor and abandoned families, offering them medical services, gifts of food, clothing and medicines, and attending to their many other needs and miseries. At the same time, students of Catholic schools were trained to look kindly on the poor.

Works of charity by the Conferencias de San Vicente de Paul continued to flourish, this time, under the direction of the Vincentian Fathers who took over from the Jesuits. It is interesting to note how the Vincentians finally became the national directors of the Society by 1935. It would be recalled that the Conferencias or Society of St. Vincent de Paul, founded by Frederick Ozanam in Paris in 1833, was introduced in the Philippines by the Jesuit Superior Fr. José Hernandez Cuevas by the end of 1860. Since then, its branches (one for gentlemen and another for ladies) were directed by the Jesuits. Among their major charity works besides the weekly visits to the poor, was the establishment of primary schools for poor children in the suburbs of Manila. There, the children were taught Christian doctrine, orthography, calligraphy, elements of arithmetic and good manners. When the Vincentians arrived, the Jesuit Fathers repeatedly offered them the direction of the Society; but the Vincentians judging that the Society was already in very good hands constantly declined the offer. The Vincentians have always observed the policy that it does not matter by whom or through whom the good works of God are done, as long as they are well done. It was only in 1933 when the Vincentians, acceding to the request of Archbishop of Manila, Michael J. O’Doherty, took over the direction of the Conferencias or Society of St. Vincent de Paul, which until that time had been so zealously directed by the Spanish Jesuits in the Philippines. One of the first initiatives undertaken by the Society under the Vincentians was the celebration of the Ozanam Day with a Mass and substantial gifts distributed to poor families, every December 20 on the feast of the Patronage of St. Vincent de Paul upon all works of charity. (cf. Appendix 20).

The Church during this period was growing and expanding marvelously in the Philippines. Ecclesiastical jurisdictions were divided and subdivided with new dioceses erected at a rapid pace. At the beginning of the century there was only one Archdiocese, Manila, with four suffragan sees, Cebú, Nueva Cáceres, Nueva Segovia, and Jaro. In 1902 Leo XIII established by Quae Mari Sinico four new dioceses which however were erected only April 10, 1910 by St. Pius X: Lipa, Tuguegarao, Calbayog, Zamboanga, and the Apostolic Prefecture of Palawan.
Pius XI created: in 1929 the Diocese of Lingayan; in 1932 the Diocese of Bacolod and the Apostolic Prefecture of Mountain Province; in 1933 the Diocese of Cagayan de Oro. In 1934 Cebú was elevated to the rank of Archdiocese; in 1936 the Apostolic Prefecture of Mindoro was erected; in 1937 the diocese of Palo; in 1938 the diocese of Surigao. Pius XII erected on November 8, 1941 the diocese of Tagbilaran. Obviously, the Church was flourishing in the Philippines.

On December 11-15, 1929 the First National Eucharistic Congress of the Philippines was celebrated. Lastly, on February 3-7, 1937 Manila, the unique Christian capital of the Far East saw the astounding celebration of the XXXIII International Eucharistic Congress. Dennis Cardinal Dougherty, once Bishop of Jaro (1908-1916), and later elevated Cardinal-Archbishop of Philadelphia, U.S.A., presided as Papal Legate; over half a million pilgrims from 54 countries of the world attended. The Congress culminated with a mammoth Eucharistic procession and the Papal Legate’s Mass in the afternoon of February 7, at the Luneta Park. At the end of the Mass the voice of Pope Pius XI with a Message and a Blessing was reverently heard by an immense multitude of 600,000 people, as it was broadcast from the Vatican Radio Station. Let us consign here as a closing remark of these consoling events, a private but unforgettable incident for the Philippine Vincentians. On March 21, 1937 the famous Apostle of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Fr. Mateo Crawley, SS.CC., enthroned an image of Our Lord’s Divine Heart in the Vincentian Central House of San Marcelino, Manila. He had previously given extraordinary and moving retreats in the St. Vincent de Paul Parish church of San Marcelino.