Chapter Fourteen

Dawn Of A New Era
(1945-1962)

Period of reconstruction

The period following the war was necessarily dedicated to salvaging whatever was left from the wreckage of war and to rebuilding the ruins of a glorious past. This applied not only to the material setup of the Seminaries, practically all of which were destroyed or badly damaged, but also to the Vincentian personnel in the Philippines who, were virtually decimated.

Upon the death of the Provincial Visitor, Fr. Jose Tejada, C.M., the burden of that office fell provisionally by law upon his first Provincial Councillor, Fr. Teodoro Robredo, C.M. Thereafter, Fr. Robredo personally visited the various houses in the provinces, to get direct information and to immediately acquaint himself with the situation. Looking with dismay upon the ravages left by the war Fr. Robredo tried to solve the most urgent problems first. For instance, to replace San Marcelino’s beloved parish priest, Fr. Jose Fernandez, C.M., who was killed during the war, Fr. Robredo submitted the name of Fr. Jesus Ma. Cavanna. Fr. Cavanna then, received from the Archbishop of Manila, Mons. O’Doherty, his appointment as rector of San Vicente de Paul, a parish without church nor convent then, and with very few parishioners. Fr. Cavanna stayed for some months, from February to June, at the Sacred Heart Hospital, which was located beside the Asilo de Looban, near San Marcelino. There he exercised the pastoral ministry as far as circumstances would allow, until he was called back to San Carlos Seminary in Mandaluyong. He was replaced by Fr. Luis Angulo (1945-1946), then came Fr. Zacarias Subiñas (1946-1947), Fr. Gabriel Rodriguez (1947-1948), and finally Fr. Antonio Gomez (1948-1964), all of whom worked hard to accomplish the complete restoration of the Church and Convent, which were damaged during the war.

One of the first acts of Fr. Robredo, as Acting Visitor of the Vincentians in the Philippines, was the formulation of a questionnaire on the Philippine Seminaries which he sent to all the Houses in a letter dated December 1945:
1. Is it opportune or even necessary, in view of the present circumstances surrounding us, to ask the Superior General to call the Spanish Vincentians from the Province of the Philippines, changing them with American Vincentians, or—if these do not accept—with others whom he may deem more suitable and convenient?

2. In case of an affirmative answer, what effect would this course of action produce on individual Bishops? Would they accept the change? Or would this give occasion for the transfer of the Direction of the Seminary to the secular clergy or to another religious Congregation? It is desirable that each local Councillor and the Superior of the House give his opinion in writing, and bearing each one’s signature.¹

Two letters answering the above questions have been preserved. Both reviewed the Philippine situation, the small number of confreres left after the war, the tendency of Filipinos to idolize whatever is American, and the need for better trained personnel, specially those who can master English. Thus the conclusion was reached that the Spanish Vincentians should leave the Philippines. Fr. Elias Arnaiz, C.M. Rector of Calbayog Seminary wrote:

I am of the opinion that it is opportune, convenient, and even necessary, to ask the Superior General, that Spanish Vincentians be replaced in this Province by other priests of the Congregation of the Mission, perhaps from the Provinces of the United States, or of Australia.²

Fr. Alvaro Santamaria, C.M., a veteran confrere of Calbayog also, who loved the Seminary and the clergy of that Diocese, agreed with Fr. Arnaiz, but left to the Bishops the decision whether the Spanish Vincentians should go or stay:

I think, therefore, it is opportune and even necessary to submit to the Superior General the situation in which this Province is found. Unless the Bishops, whose opinion must be asked, think that it is not expedient that we should go.³

These letters give us a glimpse of the loss of heart, and a certain pessimism that prevailed among some Spanish Vincentians after the cataclysm of the war. To understand such feelings we must realize the situation of our Spanish confreres in those days. Historian Fr. John N. Schumacher, S.J., in his Readings in Philippine Church History says:
By the mid-1920s... a new generation of Filipinos, who have been brought up under the American regime, had emerged... Though some of the old obstacles to the Church were gone, so too had disappeared much of the reserve and hostility felt by many Filipinos towards the Americans in the early years after the Filipino-American War. More than two decades of education under American auspices, the removal of much of the nationalist resentment by the large-scale turnover of the government into the hands of Filipinos, economic progress — all had led to an increasing American Social and Cultural influence on Filipino Society. American ways had come to stand for progress, democracy, and modernization, while the old Hispanic influence symbolized stagnation, repression, and the old-fashioned. A later generation would evaluate more critically the worth of American influence, but in the 1920s, particularly in the more dynamic sectors of society, for better or worse, American influence was strong and increasing. In this environment the continuing Hispanic character of the Church was a serious disadvantage.

After the war of liberation from Japan, America fulfilled her promise to establish the Commonwealth, and in 1946, granted independence to the Philippines. The status of a Sovereign Republic dreamed of by our ancestors, was finally realized:

On the morning of July 4th, 1946, in front of Rizal's monument facing Manila Bay, an estimated quarter of a million people witnessed the proclamation of the independence of the Philippines... High Commissioner Paul V. McNutt lowered the American flag at the same time that President Manuel Roxas was raising the Philippine Flag. Tears of joy welled from the eyes of many as the U.S. Army band struck the Star Spangled Banner, immediately followed by the Philippine National Anthem from the Philippine Army Band. Big guns roared in the distance, as if announcing to the world the birth of a new nation.

Naturally, all these noble gestures from the United States, combined with the prestige of her last victory in the World War, and her unquestionable material resources and progress in the field of technological sciences, enhanced even more her image as a country that is developed, democratic, and modern compared to Spain which symbolized "stagnation, repression, and the old-fashioned".

The Spanish Vincentians, realizing this situation, were inclined to feel that their presence and work in the Seminaries was not as welcome
any more as it had been in the past. They did not blame the Filipinos for it, but they thought that Americans — or other foreigners, not Spaniards — would be in a better position to continue their work. Naturally, they preferred that their confreres from other Provinces be the ones to replace them, so that the work they had begun for their Congregation would not be entirely lost.

However, the Bishops of the Philippines under whom the Spanish Vincentians were working, unanimously affirmed their confidence in the Vincentian Fathers. Because of that vote of confidence, the Spanish Vincentians felt obliged to stay.

The new Provincial, Fr. Zacarías Subiñas, C.M., appointed to succeed the late Fr. Jose Tejada, had to face the most urgent problem of lack of personnel. Many missionaries had died during the war, and several others had returned to Spain and for one reason or another, did not come back to the Philippines. On June 26, 1949, Fr. Subiñas wrote to the Superior in Spain requesting for the replacements of these priests:

I don’t know if you are acquainted with the fact that the Japanese killed five Brothers-Coadjutor, and only one came to replace them up to the present. If instead of giving us more, you keep someone at home, we are on the losing end. The same things happens with the Fathers who go to Spain for vacations; some of them stay and those who can work are employed by you. It is not bad that you do what you can (to dissuade them from staying), but would it not be more logical that others come to replace them.6

In 1945, immediately after the war of liberation, the Vincentian Province in the Philippines counted only 56 members: of these, one was a Brother-Coadjutor, another a scholastic, and the rest were priests. They were distributed in 8 different Houses or Communities: in Plaridel (Bulacan, where the San Carlos Minor Seminary of Manila was temporarily lodged), Calbayog, Cebu, Jaro, Naga, Lucena, and Batangas.

However, reinforcements gradually came from the Province of Madrid, and slowly the Internal Seminary of the Congregation was able to provide new Filipino candidates to pursue the Vincentian apostolate in this country. In 1947, five Spanish confreres arrived; in 1948, seven; and by 1962, when the Vincentians celebrated the first centennial of their arrival in the Philippines, the Province numbered 66 Spanish members. There was a sprinkling of one Chinese and five Filipino confreres.

Compared to previous groups, the Spanish confreres who arrived during these years were better prepared and trained for the demands of
the Philippine situation under the American regime. Almost all of them had spent some years in the United States, and could speak English with some fluency. After long negotiations with the English speaking provinces, many of them had been sent abroad for studies in England, Australia or the States. They came back with new ideas and earnest proposals which, at times, were looked upon with some misgivings, but at other times were implemented by their elders in the Province. It was this group that would prepare the way for the change of direction the Province was to take. Formerly, the Vincentians concentrated almost exclusively on the formation of the clergy. Now they were to be gradually directed to other fields of apostolate, mainly to parish work, education and popular missions.

This period of reconstruction was covered by the provincialates of Fr. Teodoro Robredo, as Acting Visitor (1945-1946), Fr. Zacarías Subiñas (1946-1957), Fr. Leandro Montañana (1957-1969), and Fr. Modesto López, the last Spanish Provincial (1969-1976). A most important accomplishment of this period was the setting up of a Minor Seminary or Apostolic School, exclusively for training young aspirants to the Vincentian vocation, in Karuhatan (later known as Valenzuela) Bulacan, an assurance that, with God's blessings, the Philippine Province would have a steady supply of personnel.

The first decade after World War II saw fifty six confreres joining the Philippine Province. Nine of these were the first Filipinos who would form the backbone of the Congregation here. Little by little, with the increase of native vocations, the Philippine Province was becoming self-sufficient, so that, exactly a quarter of a century after the war, in 1970, the last reinforcement from Spain arrived in the person of Fr. Felix Alvarez, C.M. From that time on, the Province depended solely on the Filipino confreres, and on our Noviciate and Scholasticate at the Vincentian Hills Seminary.

General view of the Philippine Province during the period of reconstruction (1945-1975)

It was but natural too, that at this point looking into the future, the Vincentians would now turn their attention to the fostering of Filipino Vincentian vocations. A tiny group had gathered around the indefatigable Fr. Máximo Juguera, Master of novices, but at that time, there was no suitable permanent seat for their formation. In the year 1948 the Provincial Fr. Zacarías Subiñas received an urgent appeal from China. The Communist persecution was forcing our Vincentians confreres to seek places of refuge for their novices and scholastics. God indeed was writing straight with crooked lines. The ravages of World War II, and
the communist persecution in China did not allow further delay. The solution to formalize a novitiate and apostolic school was found. Some 12 km. from Manila, in the barrio of Karuhatan, in the town of Polo, province of Bulacan, a House was found suitable for the purpose. It has been built by a Mexican engineer, Don Martin, and sold in 1936 to the President of the Atlantic Gulf Company, Mr. Richard Thomas Fitzimmons, an American who died in the concentration camp established by the Japanese in the campus of the University of Santo Tomas, in 1944-1945. His widow sold the property in 1945 to a certain Filipino, Mr. Indalecio Elago, who sold it to the Vincentians in 1948. Formerly the House was used as a recreation center, but now it was to be transformed into a Seminary for Vincentian novices and minor seminarians.

Actually, the Vincentian novitiate had been inaugurated in 1935 in the San Carlos Seminary of the Manila Archdiocese, in Mandaluyong, Rizal. After one year, it was transferred to the Vincentian Central House of San Marcelino, where it stayed for around 12 years (except for the long interval of the Japanese occupation). On May 8, 1947 three aspirants, Brothers Salvador Hernández, Antonio Siopongco and Toribio Macazo began their novitiate in San Marcelino under Fr. Máximo Juguera. When the House in Karuhatan, Polo, Bulacán was finally acquired, and the necessary permissions obtained to open the Internal Seminary (novitiate) there, Fr. Juguera, accompanied by the novices mentioned above and another new one, Bro. Marcelino Ramos, together with the first Filipino Lay Brother (Brother Coadjutor) Estelito Leva (who joined the Congregation on January 5, 1946) went to occupy the new House on October 13, 1948.

The first Superiors of the small community of Polo, Bulacan were Fr. Paciente Arnaiz and Fr. Antonio Mayoral. The House was solemnly blessed on November 18, by the Master of novices, Fr. Juguera, representing Fr. Provincial, Zacarías Subiñas, who could not attend due to other engagements. On November 30, the members of the Legion of Mary, so numerous in the Philippines, chose the campus of the House of Polo for the site of their annual excursion. More than a thousand legionaries were gathered. In the afternoon they celebrated a eucharistic procession. The Blessed Sacrament was carried by Most Rev. Julio (later, Cardinal) Rosales, accompanied by more than fifty priests, and endless rows of legionaries.

In the meantime, the Provincial of the Vincentian mission of southern China, Very Rev. Fr. Joseph Daymier, wishing to save his young novices and seminarians of Kashing from the communist advance to the south, asked, and speedily obtained from our Provincial, Fr. Subiñas, permission to send a group of students and priests to the House
of Polo. Fr. Joseph Tung, a novice priest, three scholastics, Joseph King, John Wang, and Andrew Jerman (a Yugoslav or Czech who fled from European communists, and now was escaping from the Chinese), and three novices, John B. Tsai, Joseph Tehen and Andrew Chaw arrived in Manila by plane on April 28, 1949. On May 13, another exile, Fr. Joseph A. Toth, a Hungarian Vincentian, and professor of the Kashiing Seminary, arrived by ship. All of them were gladly welcomed in San Marcelino, and received in the House of Polo.

In order to recruit Filipino vocations without any opposition from the Bishops (who at times were reluctant to allow some of their own diocesan seminarians to join a religious community), the Vincentians decided to open at once an Apostolic School or Minor Seminary of the Congregation. The property of 2.5 hectares of orchard grounds in the House of Polo offered ample space for a new building. On June 12, 1950, the institution that was to serve as cradle of Vincentian native vocations in the Philippines was inaugurated under the name of St. Vincent's Seminary, with seven minor seminarians aspiring to join the Congregation. Some days later one more joined them, a II-year Latin seminarian from Calbáyog, Benjamín Ortazón, who was to become one day the first Filipino Provincial (in 1976). Rufo Diño, who was to become the first Filipino Master of novices, and Director of the Daughters of Charity was also among those first seminarians. The new building for the Seminary was constructed in 1952-1953; another wing was added in 1955-1956. By that time the barrio Karuhatan of Polo, had become the new municipality of Valenzuela, Bulacan; and that is why, St. Vincent's was thereafter called the Seminary of Valenzuela.

The Vincentian Superiors however, were not fully satisfied with the House of Valenzuela. For one thing, when the number of minor seminarians began to increase, the novitiate could not enjoy anymore the tranquil atmosphere conducive to recollection. For some time, therefore, the novitiate was transferred in 1960 to a House offered to the Vincentians by the family of a Daughter of Charity, Sor Raquel Mossengeld in the town of San Miguel, Bulacán. In 1961 the Superiors decided to raise an entirely new building in a newly acquired lot in the town of Angono, Rizal, to accommodate the Novitiate and the Scholasticate there, leaving the Apostolic School in Valenzuela. The Vincentian Hills Seminary, in Angono, was erected through the efforts of the Provincial, Fr. Leandro Montañana, just as the Apostolic School of Valenzuela, Bulacan was due to the Provincial, Fr. Zacarías Subiñas. These projects held the key to the future of the Philippine Province. The Vincentian Hills Seminary in Angono, Rizal, was solemnly blessed in 1965 by His Eminence Rufino J. Cardinal Santos, Archbishop of Manila.

After the war, the St. Vincent de Paul Parish of San Marcelino was
in ruins. Although the church and the convent were still standing, these could not be used, because of the damage from fire and shelling. The parish which was formerly frequented by the elite of Manila, was now deserted. Only, a few houses stood their ground, and only squatters and very poor families were living amidst the ruins of the parish territory. But these were souls that must be tended. It was necessary to choose as their pastor someone who could speak their own dialect, Tagalog, and, at the same time work effectively to reorganize parish life. It was not easy to find someone ready for that task. The main obstacle was the language barrier. Fr Rodriguez and Fr. Gómez, together with Fr. Subiñas, the Provincial, were among the few Spanish confreres who were acquainted with the native dialect of the people.

The lack of knowledge of the native dialect was a constant barrier to our Spanish confreres. It prevented them from getting to know ordinary people better, and it hindered them from rendering many pastoral services they could have otherwise offered. Under the Spanish regime, there had been Spanish confreres who, aside from their Seminary duties, took the trouble to learn and master the native dialects, and thus helped the parish priests and the common people in many occasions. This time, however, very few wished to devote their time to learning the dialect. Perhaps they feared that, with so many frequent changes of assignment their efforts would be useless, for a transfer was possible at any time. Yet, this was a pity, because as Fathers Zacarías Subiñas, Gabriel Rodríguez, Antonio Gómez, Julio Pampliega, Samuel Martínez, José Aguirreche, Cipriano Oses, and other Spanish confreres, experienced, their knowledge of the dialect proved to be a great asset to their pastoral ministry among thousands of poor folks and helped maintain their good relations with the seminarians and their families.

Solutions To Financial Problems

Before the war, during the early years of the American regime, some changes took place in the Vincentian property of San Marcelino. The Casino Español of Manila bought a portion of the lot at San Marcelino, for which it paid the sum of P46,200.00 on July 10, 1914. Some years later, on May 13, 1937, the Vincentians decided to sell part of the lot of San Marcelino. The community then needed money to pay some debts. It was agreed that 10,000 sq. m. would be sold at P25.00 per sq. m.

After the war, a solution to the economic strain was found in the offer of the Adamson University. The Adamson University was originally located within the Walled City (Intramuros). It was situated
between the church of San Agustín and the Church of San Ignacio. During the war of liberation, the University building was irretrievably damaged. After the war, the Adamson brothers approached the Vincentian Fathers for the lease of a portion of the San Marcelino building. The lack of occupants for that huge building, plus the need for money at this time induced the Vincentians to accept the offer just for three years. The Fathers were then already planning to put up an Apostolic School or a Novitiate in their property.

But the Adamson Brothers were really hoping to stay in the Vincentian compound. On November 3, 1948 they asked to have a greater portion of the building, offering to pay the Vincentians a monthly rental of ₱2,500 for the use of the first floor with the north and west wings; the north wing of the second floor, with the entire third floor; plus the grounds and the annex built by the Adamson University.

The move to transferring the ownership of the University to the Vincentian Fathers had started way back in 1959, but it was not until 1964 that formal offers were made in writing. Thus, it came about that this institution of learning in the University level which originally was a secular, non-sectarian educational center, came to be transformed little by little into a Catholic school. From that time on, this University helped the cause of religious education in the country. At the same time, it solved some financial problems of the Philippine Vincentian Province, because it supported economically the Houses of Formation of our minor seminarians, novices and scholastics, the hope of the Congregation in these Islands.

The zealous and active Parish Priest of San Marcelino, Fr. Antonio Gómez, established during his years of parish reorganization, the Parochial School for the elementary education of children in the parish and around it. It was supported by the Young Ladies Association of Charity (Ylac) founded by the same Fr. Gómez. Although this Parochial School was also an object of concern for the Vincentians, because of the ravages of wars, the Provincial Council could not afford to give more than ₱10,000.00 for it.

Financial problems continued to give trouble to the Philippine Province in the postwar period. The Madrid Province wanted an increased contribution for the training of students to be sent to the Philippines; the Vietnam hierarchy was asking for help, the Chinese wished to send their students to the Philippines; and the building of the St. Vincent's Seminary in Valenzuela, Bulacán, and later, the Vincentian Hills Seminary in Angono, Rizal, were urgent. It was a great relief therefore when the Vincentians got news that their War Damage claim was approved in the amount of $229,581.
Seminary Policies in the Postwar Period

Fr. Zacarías Subiñas, the first postwar Provincial, was appointed Visitor on September 30, 1946. His first years were devoted to reorganizing the decimated Province; but as soon as everything was going on well, he sought to improve, update and adapt the Vincentian traditional methods of clerical training to the demands of the new times. Before the war, the Provincial Fr. José Tejada convoked some Meetings of Seminary Directors in order to study and re-examine our Seminary policies, specially with regard to discipline, spiritual direction, and scientific formation. Fr. Subiñas, in a letter dated July 25, 1953, announced to the confreres his plans to continue the tasks set up by Vincentians before the war, and to arrange for Meetings of Seminary Professors, similar to those held in 1936-1938.

In one of his earlier letters to the Rectors and confreres, Fr. Subiñas underscored in 1949 the responsibility of Vincentians in the training of seminarians:

I feel, as all of you fell with me, the awesome responsibility which weighs on all of us in the formation of the future ministers of the Lord, whose sanctity and zeal will depend in great part on the spiritual training they receive in the Seminary.

Therefore, having thought for a long time, how could we animate ourselves in these times to do our work better, if there be place for it; after consulting whomever could advice me in this regard, it has seemed to me opportune to convoke the Rectors of our Seminaries in order to hold a series of conferences or exchange of ideas on the theme of "The Spiritual Formation of future priests", or "The Supernatural Life in the Seminaries"; these Meetings shall be held at the Central House, starting next April 25.

One of the concrete results of these meetings was the creation of a Commission for Seminaries, composed of Fr. Máximo Juguera, Fr. Lorenzo Ibañez, and Fr. Agapito Sacristán. This Commission was entrusted with the task of studying ways to improve the discipline and the intellectual life of our Seminaries. The Commission was to meet every three months, or whenever the Visitor would convoke it. The Commission was to deal with questions on Seminary discipline, plans of studies, textbooks, and the ways by which seminarians could be inspired towards greater progress.
SACRED HEART SEMINARY of Bacolod City during the Apostolic Visit of Maisgr. JAIME MORELLI, P.D., in 1950.

Seated (l. to r.): Frs. Jesus Cavanna, Pedro Bantigue (Secretary to Msgr. Morelli), JAIME MORELLI, Bishop CASIMIRO M. LLADOC, of Bacolod, Prudencio Mayoral (Rector), Rafael Bernal, and Leandro Montañana.

Standing: Minor Seminarians.
SACRED HEART SEMINARY and its beautiful church at Lizares Avenue, Bacolod City (1950)
Professors of the SEMINARIO DE SAN ALFONSO DE LIGORIO (Major Department) of Diocese of Lipa:
*Left to right: Seated: Frs. Gabriel Rodriguez, Teodoro Robredo, Rector Alfonso Saldaña, Daniel Millán, Adolfo Soto.*
Most Honored Fr. General WILLIAM M. SLATTERY, C.M., First Vincentian General to visit the Philippine Province in 1962.
Newly trained priests arriving from the United States in greater numbers, and the report to be submitted to the Apostolic Visitor from Rome occasioned a Circular written by Fr. Zacarías Subiñas to all the Houses of the Province. In this Circular, he recommended a policy of “Teamwork” — which he aptly translated into Spanish as “cooperación o mutua inteligencia”. The policy was made all the more urgent by the lack of personnel.  

During the meetings held by the Vincentians, some guidelines for the training program of the Seminary were given. In the Minor Seminaries, there should be compositions at least once a week, and in the Major Seminaries, public academic exercises and declamations. Once a month, the students had to give a written dissertation on the principal subjects of each course, in a language they preferred. Furthermore, the use of Latin, plus explanations of the textbooks, were to be stressed. The native language, or dialects, should also be fostered.

One meeting under the heading “Commission on Seminaries” recommended among other things, the holding of Seminars and symposia, the acquisition of more books, better libraries, and the presentation of good movies.

The Seminarians under the Vincentians

A few years after World War II, a series of articles appeared in the Vincentian magazine SEMINARIUM, under the title Letter to a New Seminarian, authored by T. C. de la Paz, pen name of the future Bishop of Palo, and of Legazpi, Fr. Teófimo Pacis, C. M. These short letters contain the fundamentals of Vincentian traditions and expound, among other things, on a seminarian’s mental and apostolic training, as well as on the Church’s expectations from a true seminarian. In short, the letters sum up the rules of a Vincentian Seminary, and the basic principles of ascetical theology, as presented by an excellent Doctor of Theology.

For instance, the advice given to seminarians on how to act during vacation, expressed the wisdom accumulated through years of Seminary training:

1. Upon your return home, present yourself to your parish priest.
2. Seek his advice in making plans for the disposition of your time during the vacation period.
3. Attend Mass daily, and if possible, serve at Mass. Go to confession once a week, and to Communion every day. Make a daily visit to the Blessed Sacrament.
4. Comply cheerfully with reasonable requests made upon your time in parish affairs or Church functions. Be prudent in the discharge of duties assigned to you.

5. Pray your Rosary and make your spiritual reading daily.

6. Employ yourself in giving catechetical instruction.

7. Choose as your associates, persons of good and clean reputation.

8. Avoid the spirit of worldliness in deportment, in dress, in conversations, etc.

9. Keep watch lest your conduct in relation to persons of the other sex be such as to give rise to scandal or arouse suspicion.

10. In all things behave yourself always in a manner becoming of a true seminarian. 14

It was stressed that more than mental and physical abilities, the seminarians should be of irreproachable character: he should be obedient, respectful, diligent, punctual, courteous, and conscientious; in other words, he should be a true gentleman. He should be formed in the image of Christ, if he is to do honor to the Priesthood for which he is being trained:

The ideal seminarian is one who is both holy and gentlemanly. Gentlemanliness is a great asset for holiness and for the apostolate. I mean a gentlemanliness that is, as if it were a natural blossoming of the inner man, not a mere artificial rouge on the cheek. 15

Some psychological advice, taking into account the age of the growing boy and the experience of the past, is offered for the practical life of seminarians. Temptation should be warded off by keeping busy, by avoiding bad companions, laziness, bad literature, etc.

Don't waste your time chasing golden butterflies beyond rainbow's tail, as other boys of your age do. You are embarked upon a most serious course, and it would be wonderful if, with the idealism of youth you combine the seriousness of an apostle in fieri.

At sixteen a boy enters the age of temptations. Temptations that will constitute your daily struggle throughout life. The forbidden fruit may appear sweet to you: sweet in appearance, but sour the moment you taste it. Many a youth has fallen into the snare, because of unwariness and curiosity. So, dear René, cave ne cadas. 16
The Manila San Carlos Seminary After the War

During the school year 1945-1946 the Vincentian Fathers, in spite of tremendous losses in personnel, made a worthy and commendable effort to continue their work for priestly vocations in the Archdiocese of Manila. Conditions in Mandaluyong were impossible. The old and warscarred building had been plundered and looted when the Japanese abandoned it. So the Minor seminarians had to be gathered together temporarily in June 1945 in the convent of Plaridel, Bulacán. Classes were resumed in the midst of uncomfortable conditions, without electric light and running water. Yet this proved to be a fortunate situation, for the parish town and barrios experienced for one year the blessing of having Seminary professors help the good Parish Priest in his pastoral ministry, especially for Masses and Confessions.

By August 1946 the Fathers and seminarians were back in Mandaluyong from their exile in Plaridel. The whole building was still badly damaged: its doors and windows had disappeared, and in the past months it had become a sanctuary for hundreds of American civilians who had been able to leave the concentration camp at the University of Santo Tomas.

During the following years Seminary life ran as usual. On October 14, 1949, the Archbishop of Manila, Most Rev. Michael J. O'Doherty died. His excellency Most Rev. Egidio Vagnozzi became apostolic Delegate to the Philippines, succeeding Most Rev. William Piani. Most Rev. Vagnozzi arrived here on July 29, 1949; soon he became the first Apostolic Nuncio. On January 11-17, 1950, he made a visit to the Seminary of Manila.17

To succeed Archbishop O'Doherty, Archbishop Gabriel Reyes of Cebu was appointed Apostolic Administrator, and then Archbishop of Manila, the first full-blooded Filipino to obtain this distinction. Among the first concerns of his administration was the construction of a new Seminary building, which Archbishop O'Doherty had not been able to do in the early post-war years. The plans were made for a modern building in an excellent site in the municipality of San Pedro, Makati, close to the ancient Convent of the Augustinian Fathers known as Guadalupe.

The Vincentian Fathers of the Seminary of Mandaluyong helped design the new Seminary building, giving many practical suggestions to make it functional. Archbishop Gabriel Reyes, however, was not to see the realization of his plan, because he died on October 10, 1951. In 1953, on the occasion of the First Provincial Council of the Philippines, held from January 7 to 25, the Papal Legate, His Eminence Norman Thomas Cardinal Gilroy, Archbishop of Sydney, visited the new Seminary of Manila and saw it still incomplete and unoccupied.
Archbishop Rufino Santos y Jiao succeeded Archbishop Reyes in the government of the Archdiocese, on March 10, 1953. This was also the year that the magnificent new building in Guadalupe, Makati, was finally completed. The Graduation ceremonies for school-year 1952-1953 were celebrated in the new Seminary.

On June 8, 1953, a drastic change took place in the lives of the Vincentians in the Philippines. On that day the Provincial of the Vincentian Fathers, Fr. Zacarías Subiñas, and the Provincial Councillors, among them the Rector of the Seminary, Fr. Máximo Juguera, were invited by Archbishop Rufino Santos to a Meeting which was also attended by the Apostolic Nuncio, Egidio Vagnozzi, and the members of the Cathedral Chapter of Manila. At that meeting the Vincentians were asked to turn over the San Carlos Seminary of Manila to the Belgian Scheut Fathers, of the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. They were made to understand that this was being done with the knowledge and permission of the Holy See. Since it was rather only about a week before the opening of the school year, the Vincentian had misgivings about the wisdom of such transfer at this time. They also had doubts about the place to which the confreres could be sent in a short time. During the discussion, the Archbishop of Manila and the Nuncio argued for the transfer, and Fr. Agapito Sacristán argued to have things remain as they are for the time being. The Cathedral Chapter members were generally silent, except for Rt. Rev. Fr. Lucio Garcia who spoke up in favor of the Vincentian Fathers. Noting that there were some people who were prejudiced against the Vincentians and in fact had at times spoken calumnies against them, Fr. García pointed out that the Vincentians had trained many Seminarians who later became bishops. He also noted that unlike other Seminaries, the Seminary run by the Vincentians had not produced heretics.

Later on Archbishop Rufino Santos published an article in the Boletín Eclesiastico de Filipinas (October 1953, pp. 619-622), on “The Truth about the change of Faculty in the Archdiocesan Seminary of Manila”. There he cited a letter from the Editor of the Catholic paper THE SENTINEL where the Vicentians, Fr. Máximo Juguera, Rector, and Fr. Fermín del Campo, Vice-Rector of the Seminary, were praised for their “great understanding, and their conformity with the change undertaken, inasmuch as they — the Fathers of the Congregation of the Mission in the Philippines — were lacking in personnel and it was becoming very difficult for them to maintain an adequate Faculty in the said San Carlos Seminary.”

Archbishop Santos added: “This was the only motive for the change: the lack of personnel to fulfill all the obligations
and requirements lately demanded by the Holy See for a good and complete formation of the diocesan clergy. The last regulations of the Holy See, issued through the Congregation of Seminaries and Universities, demand the separation of the Major and Minor Seminaries, thus duplicating the needs for an adequate Faculty. Besides, in Manila we have the case of Major seminarians of all the suffragan dioceses, gathered together in the New Archdiocesan Seminary. Thus the San Carlos Seminary — that falls under the above regulations — would become a Regional Major Seminary, with a large increase of Major seminarians, and at the same time, there should be a separate Minor Seminary for the particular vocations of the Archdiocese; and these circumstances show manifestly the need of increasing the Faculty.

“We already foresaw this need in December 1952, when, as Apostolic Administrator of Manila, we mentioned the problem to the Vincentian Superior, asking him to increase the personnel, bringing from Spain, or from Paris, or from America, more Vincentian Fathers, for whom all of us — religious and the Seminary itself — feel the greatest veneration.

“Constrained, however, by the repeated and regrettable manifestations of the Vincentian Superior on the impossibility of increasing the Faculty, we were compelled to take this step. After obtaining the approval of the Holy See, and with the faculties granted for the case through a letter of the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities, signed by its Prefect, His Eminence Cardinal Pizzardo . . . we decided with great pain to take this course of action which we believed in conscience to be a duty of our responsibility in the clerical formation of our Seminary.

“We inquired from the Vincentian Superior and his Counsellors who were present on the possibility of voluntarily renouncing the stipulated clause about the “notification on the contract’s rescission with four months of anticipation”, in view of the inconveniences entailed in a transfer of Faculty at the end of September, i.e. in the very middle of the school year. And again, in a new gesture of the Vincentian Fathers, they renounced this their right, looking only for the welfare of the seminarians. The Seminary administration was then transferred to the Belgian Fathers from the beginning of the school year; and it was agreed to pay the Vincentians an indemnification amount of P22,500 as they asked, and was approved by the Metropolitan Chapter of Manila.”
In spite of the natural regret of leaving the Seminary of Manila where they had worked 37 years during the Spanish regime and 40 during the American regime, the Vincentians gladly turned over the Seminary into the competent hands of the Missionaries of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Among these were Fr. Jose Billiet, former Apostolic Prefect of the Moutain Province (whose piety and zeal as parish priest in Paco, Manila, led Fr. Cavanna, C. M. to the priestly vocation) and Fr. George Vromant, famous missionologist and canonist (whose catechetical works were well known in the Philippines). These Belgian missionaries of Scheut were confreres of the authors of Directorium Seminariorum (In Sinis) (Pekini, 1949), a masterful work of clerical pedagogy, perhaps the best of its kind, based largely on Vincentians sources and traditions.

The San Carlos Seminary of Manila was left then in good hands; there could be no misgivings about it at that time. If 20 years after, matters did not go so well, these could have been due to the winds of confusion of the post-Vatican II era. Later, on several occasions, the Manila Archbishop and first Filipino Cardinal, His Eminence Rufinó J. Santos indicated to the Vincentians his wish that they take back the Archdiocesan Seminary. But then, the Vincentians were already too busy in other apostolic fields and could not accept his invitation.

The Postwar Seminary of Naga

War wrecked the Seminaries of Cebú and Jaro, but spared the Seminary of Naga. Still, there was a lot to be done in the Seminary of Naga right after the war. The grounds were in bad condition, the buildings, and other facilities had also become inadequate for the growing number of Major and Minor seminarians.

A timely solution offered itself with the creation of two suffragan dioceses, Sorsogón and Legaspi, on June 9, 1951. Both new dioceses soon opened their Minor Seminaries. Bishop Flaviano Arriola, first Bishop of Legaspi, opened his Seminary on June 10, 1953. The Diocese of Sorsogón opened "ed experimentum" a Seminary, intended to be a branch of the Naga Seminary. There were plans to ask the Vincentians to run it. It was not until 1935 however, that Fr. Teótimó Pacis, C. M. (who was later to become Bishop of Legaspi) and Fr. Angel Plaza, C. M. were sent to direct the Seminary.

Most Rev. Pedro P. Santos, Archbishop of Nueva Cáceres, stressed the special role that good Seminaries played in the formation of priests:

When speaking of a greater number of priests, it is necessary to speak of more and better Seminaries wherein young
men may acquire the necessary formation in order to become apostles and worthy ministers of our great God.

The departure of the Vincentians from the Seminary of Manila provided an opportunity for the Naga Seminary to expand with the help of the Vincentians. Bishop Pedro Santos's desire to have a well organized religious-instruction program was realized when Fr. Juan Gómez, C. M. dedicated himself to this apostolate.

After expressing his sympathy to the Congregation of the Mission for the loss of the Seminary of Manila, the Naga Archbishop said:

Frankly speaking I can tell you, on my part, after the first shock passed, I was consoled with the dream of seeing my longtime desire satisfied with the possible expansion of the number of our professors, as the immediate result of this grave circumstance. My first impulse was to write you before anyone else; but I preferred not to anticipate your wise dispositions, knowing, as I do, that letters from you and the Nuncio would not be long in coming.

On the occasion of the request for the Congregation of Seminaries and Catholic Universities that copies of the contracts between the Congregation and the Diocese be sent to their archives, the Provincial of the Vincentians asked Bishop Santos to study the contracts and schedule a Meeting to discuss some changes in the contracts which went all the way back to 1866. The Archbishop of Naga had some objections to the existing contracts particularly regarding the increase in remuneration to the Fathers. He pointed out that the Archdiocese had to spend for the training of all the clergy without any financial help coming from the suffragan Bishops.

The Bishop of Nueva Cáceres gave a very strong encouragement to the formation of the Association of the Ladies of Charity and the Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul in his Circular Letter of April 13, 1956. He reminded the Parish Priests and all people of their Christian duty to help those in need, quoting many documents from the Holy See; and then specially praised the organizations directed by the Vincentian Fathers. He pointed out that, besides the commendations from the Pope, both the Conferences and the Ladies of Charity were mandated organizations encouraged by the National Catholic Action of the Philippines. He then announced that the Vincentian Fathers were authorized to establish these organizations in the parishes.

Several important changes came about by the beginning of the year 1960. The new Rector, Fr. Teótimo Pacis informed the Visitor that
Msgr. Perez and Fr. Esplana would help the Vincentians in the training of the clergy by teaching in the Seminary. The Provincial welcomed such a move:

As in other occasions I have manifested, the Vincentians Fathers are in a crisis of personnel which we cannot easily solve without the help of the secular clergy whom we have formed. In the meantime we are trying to form a sufficient number of native members of the Congregation.

When Archbishop Pedro Santos died, the Vincentians lost a good friend. Archbishop Teopistio Alberto who was appointed as his successor was very much welcomed by our Fathers.

It was during this time that the negotiations for our parish in Pili began. As early as July 11, 1967; the Provincial wrote:

If you can, obtain a lot in Pili near the projected foundation. When? I don’t know. Meanwhile, the most I can promise supposing that I get permission from the Superior General, is that one of our priests from the Seminary of Naga should take care of celebrating Mass and giving some conferences for spiritual direction.

On March 20, 1972, a new contract, slightly modified from the old one, was signed between the Provincial Superior of the Vincentians and the Archbishop of Naga. It provided for a greater amount for the Library:

The formation of seminarians require that the Seminary may have a suitable building, facilities and proper equipment. In order that the Seminary be in similar conditions to other civil establishments of the same level, there should be ₱3,000 (three thousand pesos) for the acquisition of books for the Library, and ₱2,000 (two thousand pesos) for Laboratories and acquisition of teaching materials. The said quantities should be defrayed by the Diocesan Curia.

However, this contract was not operative for long, for by May 13, 1974 the Vincentian Fathers officially turned over the Seminary to the Archdiocese of Nueva Cáceres, after 109 years of continuous service to that institution. The secular clergy they have sedulously formed was ready to undertake the work in the Seminary.
SAN CARLOS SEMINARY of Manila, in Mandaluyong.
School Year 1950-1951. Professors and Seminarians, Major and Minor.
Seated (l. to r.): Schlastics John Tsai, C.M., and Francis Bogacz, Frs. Manuel Pascual Esteban Iribarren, Fermin Campo, Rector Máximo Juguera, Vicente Tajadura, Jesus Cavanna, Jerome Calcagno, Joseph Tong, Jerman Andrean, Pedro Duque.
The Legion of Mary Praesidium Sedes Sapientiae in San Carlos Seminary, Mandaluyong of the Manila Archdiocese in a regular weekly Meeting. March 9, 1952.
San Carlos Seminary, Minor Seminarians and their Professors, School Year 1952-1953
San Carlos Seminary of Manila, in Mandaluyong. Major Seminarians, School Year 1952-1953, with their Professors (seated, l. to r.): Frs. Salvador Hernandez, Pedro Duque, Alberto Roman, Jesus Cavanna, Fermin Campo, Rector Maximo Juguera, Esteban Iribarren, Joseph A. Toth, Manuel Pascual, Jeerman Andrean.
ALUMNI DAY at SAN CARLOS SEMINARY, Mandaluyong, Archdiocese of Manila, November 4, 1952, with the Nuncio Emigdio Vagnozzi, Manila Archbishop Rufino J. Santos, Fr. Rector Máximo Juguera, C.M., Professors and alumni of San Carlos.
During the First Plenary Council of the Philippines (Jan. 7-25), His Eminence Norman Thomas Card. GILROY, Archbishop of Sydney, Legate a latere of Pope Pius XII to the Council, with the Apostolic Nuncio Egidio Vagnozzi, the last Vincentian Rector of San Carlos Seminary of Manila, Fr. Maximo Juguera, C.M., Professors and Major and Minor Seminarians during the Blessing of the new Seminary building at Guadalupe, Makati. Photo taken at the Seminary Chapel recently finished January 24, 1953.
SAN CARLOS SEMINARY of the Manila Archdiocese, transferred to the new building in Guadalupe, Makati, Metro-Manila, (March, 1953)

Archbishop Rufino J. Santos, D.D. of Manila, with the Seminary Staff, and the Minor Seminarians in their High School Graduation.

Seated l. to r.: (Fr. Teodoro Robredo, C.M.), and Seminary Professors: Pedro Duque, Alberto Roman, Joseph A. Toth, Esteban Iribarren, Rector Maxillo Juguera, Archbishop Santos, Fermin Campo, Jesus Cavanna, Manuel Pascual, Jerman Andrean, and Salvador Hernandez.
Staff and Students of the PONTIFICIO COLEGIO SEMINARIO FILIPINO, in Via Aurelia, Rome, during School Year 1964-1965.
*Standing:* student priests among whom are future Bishops, Fr.s Miguel Purug-ganan, Alberto Piamonte, Patricio Alo, Edmundo Abaya, Angel Hobayan, Rafael Lim, Edmundo Surban, and (Archbishop) Oscar Cruz. At the request of H.E. Rufino J. Card. Santos, the Vincentian Fr. Jesus Cavanna was sent by the Philippine Hierarchy to the Pontificio Collegio Seminario Filipino in Rome from 1961 to 1970.
PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF 1955 in St. Vicent’s Seminary Valenzuela, Bulacan

(Left to right): Seated: Frs. Manuel A. Gracia, Antonino Mayoral, Eliseo Rodriguez, Zacarias Subiñas (Provincial), Teodoro Robredo, Pedro Urgániz, Agápito Sacristán, and Luis Angulo

Standing: Frs. Rafael Bernal, Samuel Martinez, Julio Corres, Jesus Cavanna, Constancio Alcalde, Esteban Iribarren, Jacinto Iroz, Luciano San Luis, Maximiano Velasco, and Teótilo Pacis.
PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF 1963 in the Central House, San Marcelino, Manila.

(Left to right)


Standing, 2nd row: Frs. Manuel Gómez-Chana, Samuel Manzanal, Angel Plaza, Modesto López, Salvador Hernández, Angel Oyanguren, Rafael Bernal, Alberto Román, and Lorenzo Fuente

3rd row: Frs. Vicente Torrellas, Abilio González, Cándido Arrizurieta, and Francisco Amézqueta.
The new Seminary building of the SEMINARIO MAYOR DE SAN CARLOS, Mabolo, Cebu City.
Msgr. Jaime Morelli, P.D., Chargé d'affaires of the Holy See, in his Apostolic Visit at the Major Seminary of San Carlos of Cebu (Sibolga, Cebu) in 1950, with the Professors, (l. to r.): Frs. Luciano San Luis, Rector Francisco Subiñas, Faustino Isaba, Daniel Millán, and Major Seminarians.
San Carlos Seminary of Cebú in 1951. (Major Dept.)

Seated (from l. to r.): Professors: Frs. Santiago Sanllorente, Luciano San Luis, Faustino Isaba, Agapito Sacristán, Rector Francisco Subiñas, Paciente Arnáiz, Alvaro Santamaria, Julio Corres, Benigno Presa.
San Carlos Seminary of Cebú in 1951. (Minor Dept.)
Professors, as above; and Minor Seminarians.
Most Rev. Egidio Vagnozzi, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines during his Apostolic Visit of the Holy Rosary Seminary of Nueva Caceres, Naga City, with the Seminary Professors and Seminarians, October 10, 1952.
Archbishop Julio Rosales with Professors and Minor Seminarians of San Carlos of Cebu (1962-1963)

Fr. Teodoro Robredo, C.M., at the age of 90, is awarded on April 1, 1961 by the Spanish Government through Ambassador Don Mariano Vidal Tolosana the Encomienda de la Orden de Isabel la Catolica. On the following April 15 His Eminence Rufino J. Cardinal Santos, D.D., Archbishop of Manila conferred to him in solemn ceremonies at San Vicente de Paul parish church in San Marcelino the “Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice” Medal granted to him by His Holiness Pope John XXIII on October 18, 1960. And the Philippine Government, through His Excellency the President Carlos P. Garcia honored him with the Presidential Award Medal in a ceremony at the Malafian Palace on June 25, 1961. The President’s citation recalls “Fr. Robredo’s educational work during 51 years of his life in the instruction of the Filipino clergy and laity in local colleges and seminaries, particularly in Naga, Jaro, Calbayog, San Pablo, Lipa and Manila, his contribution in the training of Filipino priests, among them 4 Bishops, 9 Monsignori and 109 parish rectors, and his nearly seven decades fruitfully spent here in service of God and humanity.”
Born in Guagua, Pampanga, August 25, 1908
Entered Seminario de San Carlos (Manila) Mandaluyong, June 15, 1927
Doctorate in S. Theology at Pont. Gregorian University (Rome), July 1931
Ordained Priest at San Juan de Letran Basilica (Rome), October 24, 1941
Consecrated Bishop, October 24, 1947
Elected Cardinal, March 3, 1960

His Eminence Rufino J. Cardinal Santos, first Filipino Bishop raised to the Cardinalate, illustrious Alumnus of the Vincentian Fathers in the San Carlos Seminary of Manila (Mandaluyong)

Seated (l. to r.): Frs. Blanco, Huerga, Fuente, Ubierna, Roman (Rector), Archbishop Cuenco, Rodriguez, Urabayen, San Luis, Macazo, Temprado and Blazquez.

Seated (l. to r.): Frs. Miguel Blazquez, Sergio Blanco, Luis Heredia, Lorenzo Fuente, Celestino Ubierna, Alberto Roman (Rector), Archbishop Cuenco, Eliseo Rodriguez, Nicanor Urabayan, Luciano San Luis, Toribio Macazo, and Maximino Temprado.
Most Honored Fr. General WILLIAM M. SLATTERY, C.M., during his Visit to the SAN VICENTE FERRER Seminary and DE PAUL COLLEGE of Jaro, Iloilo City in 1962.

Seated: (l. to r.): Frs. Alberto Roman (Seminary Rector), John F. Zimmerman, C.M. (Secretary General), (Fr. General), Leandro Montañana (Provincial), Zacarias Subiñas (Sisters' Director).

Standing, 2nd row (l. to r.): Frs. Eliseo Rodriguez, Maximino Temprado, Abilio González, Celestino Ubierna, Carlos Langarica, Luciano San Luis, Lorenzo Fuente.

3rd row: Frs. Toribio Macazo, Félix Saráchaga, Alfredo Herrera, Victor Elia, Agustin Ruiz, Marceliano Ramos, and Bro. Teodoro González, C.M.
HOLY ROSARY MAJOR SEMINARY OF NAGA (Caceres) (1974) Major Seminarians in the last year the Seminary was under the Vincentian Fathers (for 109 years).

(Seated, from l. to r.): Frs. Fausto Luzentales, Lorenzo Fuente, Renato Ruelo (Rector), Benjamon Ortazon, and Felix Alvarez.
The Seminary of Cebú reorganized

The problem of finding a place for the Seminary whose building had been destroyed by the war, was solved by Archbishop Gabriel Reyes with the turn-over of the parish convents of Argao and Sibonga, to the Minor and the Major Seminarians respectively. Following consultation with the Vincentians who were the Seminary Directors, the respective communities, Professors and Seminarians, departed for the corresponding towns, in June 1943. Between that time and the return of the Seminary to the city of Cebú, 28 priests were ordained in Sibonga.

The construction of the new Seminary started in October 1948. It was intended to be finished by June 1949; but unfortunately, it was not. In October, orders were received from the Archbishop to occupy the reconstructed Seminary. However our contingent of Priests and 31 Seminarians had to wait till December 9, 1949 before they could establish themselves in Cebú. Even then, they experienced many discomforts while trying to get themselves settled in the new Seminary. For one thing, there was no water, windows had no panes, and cement and paint littered the place. It was not until the end of the school year that the Seminary was almost completed.

The new Seminary of Cebú, erected in Mabolo, was intended at the same time to serve as the home of Major Seminarians of the Diocese of Calbayog during their ecclesiastical studies proper. Although the Major and Minor Seminarians were all lodged in the same building, complete separation between the two departments was achieved and enforced by the building itself. The only time they were allowed to stay together was when they performed the common acts of piety. A change in the academic curriculum took place when, in the Minor Department, one more year was added to the High School course recognized by the Government.

After some time the Seminary of Cebú became too small because many vocations were in, coming not only from Cebú but from the other islands around. So Archbishop Julio Rosales decided to start the construction of a new Seminary building on February 18, 1951. Many people were present at the inauguration, including students from San José and Colegio de la Immaculada. Bishop Manuel Yap spoke of the need to have more priests for Cebú, and the Philippines as a whole. Archbishop Rosales stressed the necessity for greater cooperation among all catholics in the formation of priests, by helping the institutions where priests are trained.

Thereafter many cultural and religious activities began to flourish in the San Carlos Seminary of Cebú. Among the cultural undertakings
were literary compositions in Spanish, Latin and Greek, academic theses, scholarly conferences of the alumni, and artistic renditions and interpretations of religious and profane music by the students. In the religious field, there were held, besides the customary exercises of piety, such activities as liturgical celebrations in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, eucharistic functions, activities of the Apostleship of prayer, the Children of Mary, the Propagation of Faith, and the Pontifical works for the Mission.\textsuperscript{23}

In their lectures to the students, the priests shared their pastoral experiences with the seminarians. Fr. Jose Alojipan talked “on the process to follow for the establishment of a Parochial High School, and the actuation of a Parish Priest in it.” Others who read papers in the lecture hall were Fr. Wenceslao Yonson, C. M., Fr. Manuel Yap, Fr. Felix Zafra, Fr. Narciso Magsalang, and Fr. Natalio del Mar.\textsuperscript{24}

Archbishop Rosales did not limit the activities of the Vincentians to the Seminary classrooms. He invited them to give Spiritual Retreats to his Clergy. Thus in a letter to Archbishop Rosales, the Provincial, Fr. Zacarías Subiñas promised to give a Retreat to two groups of the Clergy of Cebú, because everybody else was busy with Retreats in Vigan, and the Miraculous Medal Novena:

On the occasion of his canonical visitation to the Seminary of Cebú, Fr. Zacarías Subiñas presented to Archbishop Rosales several suggestions necessary to improve the Minor Seminary. He recommended better rooms, a bigger space for Seminarians, an improved Library, and economical support from the Archdiocese. He also noted the following points, not as criticism but as a matter of necessity:

Several repairs could not be made — though they are necessary in the Seminary building — because of lack of money; e.g. the Chapel needs a carpet, repair of windows and painting. The dividers of the rooms need repairs, the corridors lack paint, the eaves and the water pipes are broken and water passes through the walls. . . There is no proper place for the Library of the Seminarians, and more books are needed. . . \textsuperscript{25}

On May 23, 1958, Fr. Rafael Bernal was appointed Rector of the Major Seminary, and Fr. Salvador Hernández for the Minor Seminary. Fr. Hernández was the first filipino Vincentian to have been appointed Rector of a Seminary. A few months later, Fr. Bernal noted some of the problems of the Major Seminary: lack of space, lack of money to defray expenses of the seminarians coming from other dioceses, and lack of good facilities for Seminarians and Faculty. He suggested several solutions, and also offered to meet with the Suffragan Bishops in order to
discuss the ways by which vocations could be encouraged. He emphasized the urgent need to separate Philosophers from Theologians in order to give each group the proper formation. This was impossible as long as both groups lived together. For instance, he pointed out that Theologians should have greater independence, while philosophers needed greater supervision. 26

Around 1960, various proposals were put forth for the improvement of relations between the Diocese and the Vincentians. The Vincentians requested for a greater subsidy in order to support the basic needs of the confreres and to subsidize in part the formation of Vincentian seminarians. The main expenses that the Archdiocese was supposed to pay for were the trips from and to Spain, the insurance for old age, hospitalization, and in part, the formation of young Vincentians. At that time the Seminary Professors were receiving ₱100.00 every month, or around ₱1,200 a year. The total estimated expenses every year per confrere for trips, clothing, old age insurance, and hospitalization was approximately ₱7,700. The formation of a young Vincentian cost around ₱1,000 every year. Obviously, there was not enough money for the support of the Vincentians working in the Seminary. The letter suggesting the above proposals ended with these words:

It is being lamented that we are losing the Seminaries, but it is not taken into account that without the means for developing and growing in number and quality, a time may come when we will have to leave everything and will have nothing because of our spending everything for the formation of the clergy. . . 27

Meanwhile, the Archbishop of Cebú continued to show great appreciation for the Vincentian Fathers, often inviting them to give Spiritual Exercises to the Clergy. He also granted a special Award of recognition to Fr. Teodoro Robredo, C. M. He offered the Vincentians the Parish in Capitolio, but — for one reason or another — the idea did not materialize. By July 23, 1964, negotiations for the erection of the Parish of Subangdakú, Mandawe, Cebú were going on. It was agreed that the Parish to be erected would be run under the same terms as other parishes run by the religious.

The Minor Seminary of Cebú was at last taken over by the Secular Priests in the school year 1968-1969. The official communication from Archbishop Rosales was dated March 7, 1968.

As early as April 5, 1968 the Provincial Council of the Congregation of the Mission in the Philippines had been notified that the Archbishop of Cebú would like to give the direction of the Minor Seminary
to the Secular Clergy; but it was not until May 27 that the written document was presented to the Council.

By this time, the secular clergy in some places, was capable of meeting the most urgent needs of the diocese, and with the formation received mostly from the Vincentians, could well take care of the direction of a Seminary, particularly, the Minor Department. It was then but natural that they should take over the work that, properly and strictly speaking, belonged to them. We should take this fact into account in order to understand well what happened in Cebú and in Naga.

It was in Cebú that the Congregation wanted to set up an Apostolic School, either in the Talambán property or in the newly acquired property in Subangdaku, Mandawe. The Archbishop of Cebú had also invited the Vincentians to take over the chaplaincy of a Hospital in a Sugar Central called “Central de Bogó y Medellín”. He proposed that the same Vincentian priest could also take care of the Sisters in Bogó, Daanbantayan and Palompón.

On April 13, 1972, the Sacred Congregation on Catholic Education, in a Letter to Cardinal Julio Rosales, Archbishop of Cebú, praised the work being done in the Seminary of Cebú under the Vincentians.

Evidently, the very fine condition of the Seminary is due, not only to the hard work and diligent zeal of the Staff there, but also to the interest that all your priests and people seem to show for this “heart of the diocese.”

Among the recommendations, the Holy See remarked:

A very good and well-functioning Library is an absolute necessity in these days, if any upgrading of the intellectual and academic life is going to take place. We are sure that you will encourage the Faculty at the Seminary to make every effort to improve the Library there.

By this time an unfortunate incident happened. The Archdiocesan Senate in its Meeting of March 14, 1972, declared:

It is recommended: a) the take over of the Theology Department by native diocesan priests. Target-date: School year ’74-’75.

An immediate apology came from the Archbishop, the Consultors, and Vicars Forane of the Archdiocese, in a resolution that stated:
Be it therefore resolved, as it is hereby resolved, on motion of His Excellency, the Most Rev. Nicolas Mondejar and duly seconded: 1. That we apologize to the Very Rev. Modesto Lopez, C. M., Provincial, and to the Vincentians Fathers, for what was improperly written in the above mentioned Minutes of the Archdiocesan Senate; 2. That we assure them that the Archdiocesan Senate did not pay attention to the said recommendation, since it was inopportune and impractical.

The appointment of the filipino Vincentian, Fr. Jesus Dosado (who later became Bishop) as Rector of the Major Seminary of Cebú, brought along clear and distinct policies regarding the seminarians. Various reports and letters indicate that there were various attempts to improve the services rendered to the seminarians and the strengthening of the pastoral and disciplinary programs. In his April 28, 1977 Report, Fr. Dosado said:

One feature of the Pastoral Program was the weekly evaluation and the Professors Meetings at the end of the year. There was a general evaluation of all pastoral activities. . .”

After having taken care of practically 70% of all the Philippine Seminaries for over a hundred years the Seminario Mayor de San Carlos of Cebu was, by that time, the only Major Seminary left to the Vincentian Fathers in the Philippines. This Seminary has also the distinction of being one of the oldest existing Seminaries in the hands of Vincentians around the world.

The Seminary of Jaro after the War

The Seminary of Jaro, reduced to shambles by incendiary bombs, received the good fortune of having Most Rev. Jose Ma. Cuenco appointed Bishop of the Diocese on November 24, 1945.29 He was the man for the hour in the Diocese because he knew what problems there were, and was ideally qualified to plan the tasks ahead. As Apostolic Administrator, following the advice of the venerable Fr. Eliseo-Rodriguez, C. M., he decided to reconstruct the Seminary in the same place where the old building has stood. Nipa and bamboo canes were temporarily used so that the Seminarians could be recalled at the earliest possible time.

Classes started on January 1946 with Fathers Eliseo Rodriguez, as Rector, and Jacinto Iroz, Nicolas Urubayen, Jose Villar, and Victorino Gonzalez forming the Faculty.
Despite the dearth of funds, and the earthquake of 1948 which destroyed numerous churches and institutions in Panay, the Seminary was reconstructed. Bishop Cuenco made a worldwide tour, getting people interested in his plans for the reconstruction of the Seminary. He found generous help everywhere, especially among his old friends in America. Cardinal Dennis Dougherty of Philadelphia gave the initial substantial contribution; then Archbishop William O’Brien, Msgr. Charles Hagerty, and others, made the dream of Bishop Cuenco’s Seminary a reality.

On September 1949, the main building of the Seminary was inaugurated by its new Rector, Fr. Eulogio Coello, C. M. It was not until 1955, however, that the building was finally completed.

Throughout the years, relations among the Archbishop, the Seminarians and lay people were more or less cordial, although once in a while, there were strains as may be expected in a community that lived close together. Besides Seminary work, Archbishop Cuenco asked the Vincentians, particularly one Vincentian Priest, Fr. Manuel Gracia, to take care of the Spiritual Exercises of the Clergy, and at the same time to visit the Legion of Mary. Archbishop Cuenco expressed in 1953 his regret that the Manila Archbishop took away from the Vincentians his Seminary:

I came to know, with no little surprise, through your Letter, about what happened in relation to the administration of the Archdiocesan Seminary of Manila, and I deplore greatly the uncalled for and sudden measure.\(^\text{30}\)

The contract between the Congregation and the Archdiocese of Jaro was revised on February 16, 1955. The new contract included some provisions for higher salary, special professors in the Seminary and emphasized the degrees required for teaching in the Seminary. In his comments on the proposed contract, the Archbishop remarked:

It would be desirable that the Professors in Philosophy, Theology and Canon Law be at least, holders of a Master’s degree in their subjects, because this is a Regional Seminary. If they are not, they should be competent in the materials they teach. No Professors of the Seminary should be allowed to teach a subject with which he is not acquainted.\(^\text{31}\)

On January 10, 1962, the Report from the Sacred Congregation on Seminaries and Universities came. It was a commendatory document praising the Archbishop, the Vincentians, and all others who helped in
the fostering of vocations and the training of the clergy. It singled out
the good will, devotion and hard work of the Vincentians in the
Seminary. However the Report noted some complaints of the seminar­
rians regarding favoritism, severity and lack of discipline on the part of
some members of the Congregation:

The Apostolic Visitor spoke highly of the Vincentian
Fathers who are in charge of the Seminary, stressing their good
will and devotion to the delicate task assigned to them. How­
ever, he called our attention to the following points: a) The
seminarians complained much that the Fathers were inclined
to open favoritism, and that they treated the young students
too severely. . .

For their part, the Vincentian Fathers proposed some improve­
ments and recommendations such as repair of walls and window rails, a
better Library, a Museum. These recommendations are contained in the

The apostolic life of the Seminarians was taken care of to a greater
degree after Vatican II, as can be gleaned in various reports, notably
that of the Rector on March 4, 1968. After noting the different activities
in the Seminary in the academic, scientific, and cultural fields, the report
singled out the apostolate carried out by the Seminarians:

The Theologians, almost all of them, go to the near
parishes in order to help the Parish Priests on Sundays. It
seems that the majority of the Parish Priests are satisfied with
the services of the Seminarians. All our students are assigned
to teach Catechism either on Sundays or Thursdays, in private
non-sectarian schools and in the nearby barrios. Their work is
greatly appreciated and it is a pity that we don’t have more of
them, because many are asking for Catechists around here.

The changes in the Seminary methods of training were felt in the
Jaro Seminary as almost everywhere else after Vatican II. The seminar­
rians were allowed to go out more often than before, and were given a
greater sense of self-responsibility. They could now enjoy stereophonic
music, movies, plays, and excursions to beaches, etc. Among the
Vincentians not everyone looked approvingly at some of these innova­
tions, but it was clear that those who favored them were animated with
the best of intentions. They said: “It is better that they have contact with
the world now, in order that they come to know it, and thus they may
better know how to take it to Christ at a later period.”
Certainly, some changes in the church were quite reasonable and justified. However, the opening of windows to let in fresh air into the church proved to be at times the occasion for the enemy of all good to arouse winds of confusion and inflict incalculable damage among the faithful. Compared to other seminaries, the Vincentians generally proved to be more cautious in instituting changes in their Seminaries, probably because of their sound traditions. It is possible though that, at times, they may have gone too far in allowing certain dangerous freedoms in the Seminary discipline.

Those years after Vatican II were indeed crucial years for Seminary directors. Those were years characterized by “identity crises”, secularization, lack of ecclesiastical spirit, and worldliness among the ranks of the clergy. It was very difficult to keep the right balance in preserving and fostering the priestly spirit among the candidates for Holy Orders.

When a Vincentian Rector of the Jaro Seminary decided to take a drastic step to correct and stop certain flagrant excesses, the final result was the closure of the Seminary in 1975. The administration of the Seminary was then turned over to the secular clergy.

The Vincentian Fathers had administered the St. Vincent Ferrer Seminary of Jaro for over a hundred years (1869-1975), full of apostolic activities and fruitful in an authentic training of the secular clergy. In this case, as in other similar ones, it was opportune for the Vincentians to give up the tremendous responsibility of forming priests if they could not maintain properly and with due firmness the Seminary discipline.

The Sacred Heart Seminary of Bacolod

Despite the fact that so many of their priests were lost during the Japanese war, the Vincentians did not balk at the call of another Bishop, Most Rev. Casimiro Lladoc, to organize a new Seminary in the island of Negros, in 1946. The Vincentians’ decision to heed the call for a new Seminary was greatly influenced by the fact that the Seminary of Jaro where the Seminarians from Bacolod had been studying had been destroyed during the war. The new Seminary was called “Sacred Heart Seminary”, and started very modestly, under the shadow of the Cathedral.

The Vincentians were not restricted to the care of the Seminary. They were also invited to give Spiritual Retreats and to help out in the neighboring towns. Almost every year the Bishop invited them to give two groups of Retreats to the Clergy. A survey made in 1958, entitled “Cuestionario para preparar el Informe sobre las actividades de la C. M. en Filipinas”, featured some of the activities of the Vincentians in Bacolod: two Chaplaincies, the direction of the Ladies of Charity, the
YLAC (Young Ladies Association of Charity), the Novena of the Miraculous Medal and of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. In addition to their classes of about 44 students in the Seminary, the Vincentians gave monthly Recollection days to the Clergy and to some groups of the Daughters of Charity.

On December 17, 1955 the Sacred Heart Seminary of Bacolod saw its first Priests ordained. It was a big day, indeed, for the Seminary had been opened just after the war, and had undergone many difficulties during the first decade.

Unfortunately, some years later, on account of some difficulties with the Vincentian administration, particularly with the Rector, Fr. Angel Oyanguren, the Bishop of Bacolod, Most Rev. Manuel Yap decided to transfer the administration of the Seminary to the Diocesan Clergy. On April 27, 1959, The Vincentian Provincial, Fr. Leandro Montañana, wrote to the confreres the following valedictory:

The Bishop of that Diocese judges that our services in his Seminary are no longer necessary. Therefore, faithful to the teachings of our Father, St. Vincent, our position is to leave the field for others, and pray God that He give them great success in the initial labor of the formation of priests. 36

The Seminary of St. Vincent de Paul, in Calbayog, Samar, after the war.

Principally because of its location, the Seminary of the Diocese of Calbayog luckily remained unscathed by the ravages of war. It continued its task of training the future clergy for that Diocese. The Vincentians Fathers undertook their usual tasks and helped the Parishes wherever they were needed.

A Relatio signed by Fr. Alberto Roman, C. M. included, among the various activities of the Vincentians in 1959, the direction of the Ladies of Charity and of the Children of Mary Immaculate. 37

In 1953, plans were made for the building of a new Seminary in a better location. But even before the completion of the new Seminary, some progress had been achieved with the purchase of a new Tabernacle, and the installment of an electric altar bread-baker. 38

The Seminarians engaged in sundry cultural activities under the direction of the Vincentian Fathers. Wherever they went, they impressed the people with their good behavior and excellent training.

During these post-war years, the Vincentians in Calbayog were kept quite busy, giving all they could to serve the three Bishops who governed the Diocese during that period: Bishop Miguel Acebedo
(1958-1959), Bishop Manuel del Rosario (1959-1962), and Bishop Cipriano Urgel (1962-1973). They not only entrusted their Seminary to the Vincentians, but invited other Vincentians such as Fr. Manuel Gracia, to give Retreats to their Parish Priests; and they requested over and over again to have the Daughters of Charity in their Diocese.

On April 26, 1962, Rt. Rev. Lino Gonzaga, Apostolic Administrator of Calbayog, received a letter from the Vincentian Provincial, Fr. Leandro Montañana, thanking him for the encouraging and favorable report received from the Sacred Congregation for Seminaries on the occasion of the Apostolic Visit to the Seminary of Calbayog. The question of having more professors was not solved, but it was proposed that some Secular Priests might help in the formation of the seminarians.

With the coming of the new Bishop Mons. Urgel, and the newly appointed Rector, Fr. Angel Oyanguren, things changed in Calbayog. At the beginning, the Bishop was satisfied with the administration of Fr. Oyanguren, although he had already heard about the former Rector of Bacolod, and put this in writing to the Vincentian Visitor. However, after one year, on February 12, 1964, Bishop Urgel wrote a 3-page letter complaining about the situation in Calbayog, particularly about the new Rector, Fr. Oyanguren.

Fr. Oyanguren explained that the Bishop at times did not support the Faculty, and remained hesitant in his decision regarding the expulsion of some seminarians. Quite humbly, he admitted that sometimes he thought he was not fit to become a Superior:

I am willing to leave this office even at the least insinuation from you. I believe that the priests do not agree with my administration. It seems that God does not want that I be a Superior. 39

The final step towards relieving the Vincentians of the direction of the Calbayog Seminary came about with a letter from Bishop Urgel:

Since, therefore, it is my God-given duty to look after the welfare of the Diocese in general, but particularly of the Seminary, I have finally decided to turn over the administration of the Seminary to the Diocesan Clergy beginning the school-year 1964-1965. After all these years of unselfish labor of the Vincentian Fathers in the Seminary, we cannot but acknowledge with deep gratitude the immense good the Congregation of the Mission has done to the Diocese.
I only regret that the situation obtaining here in Calbayog
has unfortunately compelled us to take this decision.

This was already announced in the Provincial Council as early as
April 3, 1964. The years "of unselfish labor of the Vincentian Fathers"
referred to by Bishop Urgel were 59 years which included the American
and Japanese regimes.

The Seminary of Lipa under the Vincentians

As we have seen in the previous Chapter, the St. Francis de Sales
Minor Seminary in San Pablo remained separated from the St. Alphon­
sus Ligouri Major Seminary in Lipa, from 1931 until 1941. That year, it
was transferred to a new building in Lipa, which was finished in time for
the Episcopal Silver Jubilee of Bishop Alfredo Verzosa.

Aside from a short interruption from December 1941 to May 1942
due to the turmoils of the Japanese occupation, both the Major and the
Minor Seminaries of Lipa continued to operate during the school years
1942-1945. However, the last school year, 1944-1945 proved very dif­
ficult. Classes were stopped in February 1945. The following days and
weeks saw the holocaust of Lipa. Approximately 12,000 to 14,000
persons were cruelly massacred by the Japanese. In the Minor Seminary
alone some 1,500 men were gathered, and treacherously killed. The
Seminary Fathers, with a group of people in the Major Seminary, were
almost miraculously saved, and succeeded in fleeing from the doomed
city of Lipa, until they reached the American Liberation lines. All in all,
within Lipa and its environs, over 50,000 people were killed during the
war. 40

In the face of magnitude of the disaster in the whole Diocese, with
almost all churches and convents destroyed, Bishop Verzosa decided to
send his Major Seminarians to the University of Santo Tomas Seminary,
and to entrust his Minor Seminarians to the direction of the Diocesan
Clergy.

Thus in 1945 the Vincentian mission for the training the clergy of
the Diocese of Lipa ended, after some 30 years of faithful labor, from
1914-1944.

The First Plenary Council of the Philippines

In the year 1953, from January 7 to January 25, an important event
for the Church in the Philippines took place. The Hierarchy unani­
mously decreed to celebrate the First Plenary Council of the Philip­
pines, since the statutes of the Provincial Council of Manila held in 1907
before the promulgation of the Code of Canon Law in 1917 were not suitable any more to the new conditions in the Philippine after the World War II. Pope Pius XII appointed the Archbishop of Sydney, Norman Cardinal Gilroy, as his Legate a Latere for the Council. The Council was celebrated in the oldest church in Manila, San Agustin Church, which had withstood the ravages of war. The Council was attended by the Apostolic Nuncio, Egidio Vagnozzi and 31 members of the Hierarchy, 21 Superiors of Religious Congregations, among them the Vincentian Provincial, Fr. Zacarías Subiñas, 5 Canonists Consultants, among them Fr. Fermin del Campo, C.M., three Ceremoniaries, among them Fr. Agapito Sacristán and Fr. Pedro Duque, C.M., and the Consultants of the Bishops, among them, Fr. Cipriano Osés (for the Archbishop of Caceres), Fr. Teófilo Pacis, C.M. (for the Bishop of Tagbilaran), Fr. Jesús M. Cavanna, C.M. (for the Bishop of Tuguegarao), Fr. Manuel Gracia, C.M. (for the Bishop of Palo), and Fr. Alberto Román, C.M. (for the Bishop of Capiz). The Congregation was well represented among the Conciliar Consultants. At the end of the Council, our Hierarchy expressed the hope that the salutary decrees enacted would provide the groundwork for a thorough-going reform of Christian life.

New Hopes, New Horizons

It should not be disheartening to see during this period of reconstruction after the ravages of war (1945-1975), the transfer, one after another, of almost all the Seminaries from the hands of Vincentians to secular priests. The Congregation of the Mission had generously and successfully directed them for about a century of history, and it was time for the secular clergy to assume control of their own Seminaries.

The growth of the Church in every country demands, that the local Church or diocese develop to a stage where it becomes capable of assuming autonomy in the training of its own clergy. Among all religious Orders and Congregations working in the country, the Congregation of the Mission has the distinctive honor of having brought the Filipino diocesan clergy to such a stage of maturity and responsibility.

The transfer of institutions of higher education rarely happens without misinterpretations of events and misunderstanding from the people. Some such incidents can be found in this stage of the Philippine Seminaries. However the major consideration is the actual coming of age of the Filipino Church.

Vincentians will be remembered in history for their eminent role in the training and formation of a worthy Filipino clergy capable of ministering their people spiritually and governing their own Seminaries.
Thus, it must be emphasized that the Congregation of the Mission did not lose their Philippine Seminaries. She just transferred them to the proper care of the local clergy she had formed in the growing Church. As the Apostolic of the Gentiles said, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.” (1 Cor 3:6). The glory of the Congregation of the Mission is that she formed a worthy Filipino diocesan clergy of whom she may deservedly claim, “You are our glory and joy.” (1 Thes 2:20)

Providence guided the Philippine Province of the Vincentians to new horizons, and inspired new hopes for a bright new future. During this period of reconstruction, we see the gradual blooming of the Houses of formation for Filipino Vincentian vocations in Valenzuela (now Tandang Sora) and Angono, as well as the opening of new fields of apostolate in Adamson University in Manila and De Paul College in Jaro. Furthermore, there are what may be called “permanent missions”, or the pastoral ministry of the new parishes of San Roque in Subangdaku, Cebú, of the Miraculous Medal in Jaro, of Christ the King in Cadlan, Naga, of Jesus Nazareno in Cagayan de Oro, and of the National Shrine of the Miraculous Medal in Muntinglupa, Metro-Manila. Finally, the Philippine Province has been happy to send some confreres to the mission lands of Indonesia, Japan, and Thailand.