Chapter Sixteen

Our Apostolate Today
Epilogue

HOUSES OF FORMATION

St. Vincent's Seminary

We have already seen that the House of Karuhatan, in Polo, Bulacan was first occupied in 1948 by Fr. Juguera with four Filipino novices and one lay Brother, to whom were soon added a group of novices, scholastics and two priests exiled from China. In 1950 our Apostolic School, St. Vincent's Seminary was established there. In 1953 a new building was erected for Minor Seminarians. Most Reverend Gaetano Mignani, C. M., a missionary Bishop expelled from China, blessed the cornerstone of the new building. On June 17, 1955 the first novices from the Apostolic School were housed also in the Seminary of Valenzuela, Bulacan. They remained there with the Minor Seminarians, until 1960 when they were transferred to San Miguel, Bulacan.

On June 8, 1959, through the efforts of the Seminary Rectors, Fr. Eulogio Coello and Fr. Modesto Lopez, a temporary permit was obtained from the Government to operate the school, officially recognizing its offering of “A Complete Classical Secondary Course.” Ten years later, on July 7, 1969, another temporary permit was obtained for a “Complete Secondary Course under 2-2 Plan”. On June 29, 1970, official Recognition was obtained. From 1950 to 1975, a period of 25 years, there were 631 students who passed through the portals of St. Vincent’s Seminary. One hundred fifty-nine of these were able to reach the Novitiate and Major Seminary. All the Filipino Vincentian priests (41) starting from the group of Fr. Macazo and Fr. Ramos were students of this Apostolic School. Of these, 2 have become provincials, 13 superiors, 7 Provincial Consultors, and 7 Parish Rectors.

The Vincentian Fathers teaching in the Seminary have contributed generously to the evangelization of the neighboring towns and barrios. They said Mass on Sundays, heard Confessions, and administered the
Sacraments in the barrios of Potrero, Santolan, Tinajeros, Tagatog, and Acacia, in Malabon; Karuhatan, Marulas, Maisan, Malinta, Paso de Blas, Canumay, Bagbaguin, Torres Bugallon (now Tiburcio de Leon), Ugong, in Valenzuela; Lawang-Bato, Banja, Kalbaryo, Saluysoy, and Bankal, in Meycawayan. The Sisters in the surrounding area benefitted also from the presence of the Fathers. They served the Augustinian Sisters of Barasoain, Malolos, as well as the Augustinian Sisters of St. Jude Academy, in Valenzuela; the Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres in Bocaue; the Daughters of Charity at Villa San Juan de Dios, and the Good Shepherd Sisters of Villa Heart of Mary, in Maysilo, Malabon; the Religious of the Virgin Mary Sisters of St. Mary Academy in Meycawayan, and San Pascual Academy in Obando. The Vincentians also conducted spiritual retreats for the secular clergy, and for some religious communities of Sisters, especially the Daughters of Charity.

After 29 years (1950-1979) St. Vincent’s Seminary found a new site at Tandang Sora, Quezon City. The new site with an area of 52,020 sq. m. was bought in 1964. San Miguel Corporation proposed to rent to the property at Valenzuela, and after having obtained due permission from the Superior General, Fr. Richardson, the Minor Seminarians and the Theologians of our Scholasticate were transferred to the new Seminary in Tandang Sora on June 16, 1979. The three buildings of the new St. Vincent’s Seminary (the Priests’ building, the Seminarians’ building, and the kitchen) are in a compound of 4,679.08 sq. m., and could accommodate some 150 seminarians.

**Vincentian Hills Seminary in (Angono, Rizal)**

The original plan in 1961 was to build in Angono, Rizal the Novitiate, the Scholasticate, and the Apostolic School. The solemn blessing and laying of the cornerstone for the Seminary at Angono was held on January 24, 1963 with Cardinal Rufino Santos, Archbishop of Manila presiding. Dr. Jose Ma. Delgado, over-all chairman of the Finance Committee for this Seminary, Mrs. Luz Magsaysay, Justa vda. de Guido, Flocerfina de Avanceña and Jovita Fuentes were among some of the important guests for the occasion. In his message, the Provincial, Fr. Montañana, C. M. expressed the hope that the Vincentian Hills Seminary would become not only the training ground for priests who would work in the Philippines, but in Asia. He thanked all those who helped in the construction of the Seminary, especially the Ladies of Charity and the Daughters of Charity.

One year later the new building was blessed. Its architect was Imelda Cancio Borromeo, a friend of the Congregation of the Mission. The Vice-President of the Philippine Republic, Emmanuel Pelaez,
attended the ceremony, and gave very encouraging words. Fr. Montañana thanked in a very special way His Eminence Rufino Cardinal Santos, “the great benefactor of this Seminary, without whose inspiration and help the Seminary would not have been built.”

The confreres in the Seminary of Angono did not only supervise Seminary life and train Seminarians in their priestly vocation. They also taught supplementary subjects to College students who attend classes in Adamson University and the Theologians who study in the University of Santo Tomas. Furthermore they celebrated the Holy Mass on Saturdays and Sundays in Taytay, Tayuman, Darañgan and Rizal cement (in Binangonan) as well as in Angono. The Columban Fathers in Binangonan were very happy to let the Vincentians take care of some of the remote barrios which they could not reach. They also found time to give retreats in several houses of the Daughters of Charity.

On November 11, 1973, the new Chapel in Angono was blessed. The Provincial, Fr. Modesto Lopez noted that just ten years before, there were only 9 Filipino priests in the Congregation, 13 scholastics in Australia and U.S.A., 10 novices in San Miguel, and 68 Minor Seminarians. In 1973 there were already 23 Filipino Vincentian priests and 1 Bishop, 63 scholastics in Angono and in the U.S.A., 12 novices in Angono, and 90 Minor Seminarians in Valenzuela and Iloilo.

By 1979, 15 Vincentian priests had been ordained from Angono. Today, although the Theology Department has been transferred to St. Vincent’s Seminary, Tandang Sora, Quezon City, the Philosophers still have to pass through the Vincentian Hills Seminary in Angono, as novices and philosophers.

SCHOOLS UNDER THE VINCENTIANS

Adamson University

The Institution was founded in 1932 by George Lucas Adamson, a Greek national in the Philippines, as a School of Industrial Chemistry and Engineering. It was the first such school in the Philippines. The three Adamsons administered the school themselves: George Lucas was President, Alexander was Vice-President, treasurer and registrar, and George Athos was Dean of the College of Engineering. The first school building was located at San Miguel, then transferred to Intramuros, and during the war, to the E-building of Meralco.

After the war, Adamson contacted the Vincentian Fathers proposing to lease portions of the building in San Marcelino. The Vincentians accepted the Adamson proposal because they were in need of money at
that time. Besides, although the building was being used by Seminarians, it was too big for the small number of occupants at that time. The lease was for three years. In 1948, the contract was renewed for another three years. In 1952 the contract was renewed again with a clause allowing a priest to teach Religion in the University. At the start of the 1960s, more negotiations took place which concluded in an agreement that practically put the University into the hands of the Vincentian Fathers. The agreement included terms of payment, improvements, authority for building, and painting, and care of trees, teaching of Religion, prohibition of books against the Catholic Faith, observance of holydays, curfew for parties, separation of male from female students in High School, etc.

Preliminary talks about the transferring of ownership of Adamson University to the Vincentian Fathers began in 1959, but it was not until 1964 that a formal offer was made. On August 2, 1964 the Provincial Council was informed that an agreement had been reached whereby the Congregation took over ownership of the University in the form of a new corporation known as Adamson Ozanam Educational Institutions Inc. The two Adamson cousins, George Lucas and Alexander were admitted as members of the Board of Trustees for life.

With the burgeoning population of the Philippines and the lack of schools for higher learning, Adamson University under the Vincentian Fathers had to expand. The Provincial Council of June 6, 1968 approved the acquisition of the Meralco lot. This gave new impetus to the administration to improve the various departments of the University. The administration offices, including the office of the President, the Registrar's office, Engineering and Graduate School offices were transferred to that site. The main Library was also housed in this completely air-conditioned building which accommodated more than half of all the classes of the University. In 1973, two additional floors were constructed. In 1978, the administration acquired the property of Saint Theresa's College to accommodate the evening students. In the school year 1979-1980, the University began construction of the 5-story Engineering building which was to be finished by the school year 1980-1981. By 1979, there were 19,000 students in the university.

From the beginning, the work of the Vincentians in this University has been both administrative and ministerial. There are, besides the students, some 600 professors and 500 non-academic personnel whose spiritual life must be attended to. From the start, Fr. Leandro Montañana has been the President of the University. The present Provincial, Fr. Rolando DelaGoza is the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts.
Two years after the end of World War II, on July 1, 1948, a group of teachers in Iloilo organized themselves and put up a College called Lopez Jaena Memorial College. It was named after the famous Ilonggo, Graciano Lopez Jaena, a great patriot well known for having been the editor of the paper *La Solidaridad*, organ of the Philippine Propaganda Movement. The College intended to provide the youth with an effective and well-balanced education so that they may go forth as citizens physically and morally sound, intellectually and socially efficient, refined in manners and imbued with the spirit of service to the nation.”

The school was located at Burgos street, in the district of La Paz. In 1953, it was transferred to Jaro but a fire gutted the building in 1957. This did irreparable damage to the institution and consequently, its enrolment went down. By 1960, Attorney Rosendo Baltazar and his wife had found it impossible to continue running the College.

The Vincentian Fathers heard about the case and soon after decided to buy the distressed school. In 1960 the Christian world was celebrating the third centenary of the death of St. Vincent de Paul, and within two years the Philippines was to celebrate the first centenary of the coming of the Vincentian missionaries. It seemed a propitious time to expand further the Vincentian apostolate. In the past the Vincentians had educated thousands of provincial youth who could not afford to go to Manila, in the College-Seminaries. As a matter of fact, the national hero, Graciano Lopez Jaena, had been an alumnus of the College-Seminary of San Vicente Ferrer in Jaro, under the sons of St. Vincent de Paul.

On July 25, 1961, Lopez Jaena became *De Paul College*, bearing officially this name since the beginning of the second semester of the school year 1961-1962. Father Marceliano Ramos, C.M. was the first Superior and Rector of the College; Fr. Alfredo Herrera, C.M., the Dean of Studies; Fr. Abilio González, C.M., Procurator; and Fr. Félix Saráchaga, C.M., Professor.

The Vincentians tried from the beginning to improve *De Paul College* in many ways through the construction of better buildings, a gymnasium, and the purchase of many laboratory equipment. At the end of that school year they had 70 High School graduates, 20 College graduates, and 17 Elementary school graduates.

On March 19, 1962, with the permission of Archbishop Jose Ma. Cuenco of Jaro, girls were admitted into the *De Paul College*. This partly explains why the school year 1967-1968 there were 734 students in College and 685 in the High School Department. One important fruit of the College was the fostering of good vocations to the priesthood including several for the Vincentian family.
The House bought in 1948 from Mr. Indalecio Elago for accommodating Vincentian novices and scholastics in what was called ST. VINCENT'S SEMINARY, in Karuhatan, Polo (later, Valenzuela), Bulacan. Front view.

Rear view of the original House of SEMINARY, Karuhatan, Polo, Bulacan.

Hall for indoor games, in ST. VINCENT'S SEMINARY, Valenzuela, Bulacan.
New wing added to the original House of ST. VINCENT'S SEMINARY, in 1952-1953, and gardens of the Seminary entrance. (Valenzuela, Bulacan)
Minor Seminarians in the Chapel of the Apostolic School, ST. VINCENT'S, Valenzuela, Bulacan.

Minor Seminarians working at the front garden of ST. VINCENT'S SEMINARY, Valenzuela, Bulacan.
ST. VINCENT’S SEMINARY Classroom (Valenzuela, Bulacan)
St. Vincent's Seminary, Polo, Bulacan, in 1952.

Seated (from l. to r.): Frs. Angel Plaza, José García, Rector Antonino Mayoral, Teófilo Pacis, and Bro. Estelito Leva. Apostolic Seminarians, standing.
Vincentian Bishop, Most Rev. Gaetano Mignani, exiled Missionary of China, accompanied by the Provincial Fr. Zacarias Subiñas and Fr. Teodoro Robredo, with a group of Minor Seminarians (Apostólicos), after blessing the cornerstone of a new wing of ST. VINCENT'S SEMINARY, Karuhatan, Polo, Bulacan, in 1953.
Training for the games at St. VINCENT'S SEMINARY (Valenzuela, Bulacan)
ST. VINCENT'S SEMINARY Study Hall with the boys at a Study period (Valenzuela, Bulacan, 1975)
Seminary life of our Apostolic Seminarians in St. Vincent's Seminary, Valenzuela, Bulacan, Recreation hours.
Seminary life at St. Vincent's Seminary, Valenzuela Bulacan. Playing and learning.
ST. VINCENT'S SEMINARY Chapel in Polo, Bulacan around 1955
ST. VINCENT'S SEMINARY Community in 1954.

Seated (l. to r.): Frs. Angel Plaza, Pedro Duque, Teótimo Pacis, Rector Eulogio Coello, Jose Garcia, Jesus Cavanna, Bro. Estelito Leva.
VINCENTIAN HILLS SEMINARY, Angono, Rizal, for our Novices and College students.

Blessing of the cornerstone of the VINCENTIANS HILLS SEMINARY in Angono, Rizal, January 24, 1963 with the Archbishop of Manila presiding, Rufino J. Card. Santos, D.D., the Apostolic Nuncio present, Most Rev. Carlo Martini, and Dr. José Ma. Delgado, over-all chairman of the Finance Committee for the Seminary.
Front view of the two wings of VINCENTIAN HILLS SEMINARY, Angono, Rizal.
VINCENTIAN HILLS SEMINARY, Angono, Rizal. Side views of the building.
The Chapel of VINCENTIAN HILLS SEMINARY, Angono, Rizal

Inner Court of VINCENTIAN HILLS SEMINARY, Angono, Rizal
Fr. VICTORIANO TORRES, C.M. Former Director of Students and Rector of Vincentian Hills Seminary, Scholasticate and Novitate, Angono, Rizal.

The VINCENTIAN HILLS SEMINARY. The finished building of the Congregation's Scholasticate and Novitate
The SAN VICENTE DE PAUL PARISH CHURCH as it stood gracefully besides the new Vincentian Central House of San Marcelino recently built to house the novitiate, and temporarily the San Carlos Major Seminary of Manila, and finally the Adamson University. (1938)
ST. VINCENT'S SEMINARY, Tandang Sora, Quezon City. Minor Seminarians in the chapel, and at lunch time.
Seminarians Dining Room, and side view of the new building of ST. VINCENT'S SEMINARY, Tandang Sora, Quezon City.
The new ST. VINCENT'S SEMINARY building at Tandang Sora Ave., Quezon City, Metro Manila

Fr. General Richard McCullen, C.M. and his Secretary Fr. Paul Henzmann, C.M., with the Apostolic Seminarians of St. Vincent's Seminary, Tandang-Sora, Q.C.
Front view of the old San Vicente de Paul parish church in San Marcelino
VINCENTIAN MISSION HOUSE OF SAN MARCELINO, MANILA (1927)
Front view of the old San Marcelino Central House, in Manila (1927)

Rear view of the Vincentian Central House of San Marcelino, field for games and sports, and rear view of the San Vicente de Paul parish church (1927).
Fr. IRENEO RODRIGUEZ, C.M.  
(June 1913 - June 1917)

Fr. GREGORIO TABAR, C.M.  
(June 1919 - June 1921)

Fr. BRUNO SAIZ, C.M.  
(June 1921 - May 1922)

Fr. JOSE FERNANDEZ, C.M.  
(May 1922 - February 1945)
High altar and side altars of the San Vicente de Paul parish church in Manila. (1925)

SAN VICENTE DE PAUL Parish church, in San Marcelino, restored to its old splendor by Fr. Antonio Gómez, C.M. tireless efforts after the ravages of the 1945 war.
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The Provincial Norms of the Philippine Province (1977-1978) declared: “The University and the College that we presently run are two effective means for human development in a developing nation. This is the justification of our presence in the school ministry.”

VINCENTIAN PARISHES

The First Parish Under The Vincentians

San Vicente de Paul Parish and The Central House (San Marcelino, Manila)

Historically and territorially this Parish is closely linked with the Parish of San Fernando de Dilao, Paco, of the Ecclesiastical District of South Manila. Originally it was called Parish of Dilao. At the end of the 16th century the Franciscans erected there a hermitage dedicated to Our Lady of the Purification. Destroyed during the Chinese uprising in 1603, it was rebuilt in 1606 by Dean Francisco Gómez de Arellano, and became the Parish for about a thousand Japanese residing in Manila, by order of Archbishop Benavides of Manila in 1603. In 1791, both the church and convent were torn down on Government orders, to clear the south section of the Pasig river. This was to prevent enemy attacks of the city from that part, as the English invaders had done in 1762. Then a new town was formed (with the suburbs of Dilao, Santiago and Peña de Francia) which was called by the Government, San Fernando. The people added, de Dilao, and the district was commonly known as “Paco”. In 1793, the Parish Priest Fr. Fernando Seguí built a convent of stone, but the bamboo chapel remained as it was from 1809 to 1814 when the famous Fr. Bernardo Garcia de la Concepción Perdigón, O.F.M. (later, Bishop of Nueva Cáceres) built the church of stone. The earthquakes of 1852, 1863 and 1880 destroyed the buildings. Fr. Gilberto Martín little by little reconstructed them with the alms he collected over the years 1881-1896.

In 1850 the Parish of San Fernando de Dilao comprised seven barrios, among them the former towns of Santiago, Peña de Francia and Balete, besides Concepción, San Marcelino, and Tanque. The city cemetery of Paco (built in 1820) was within its territory. In 1875 the Vincentian Fathers who from the time of their arrival in 1862 had resided as directors in the San Carlos Seminary of Manila, bought on May 13, 1875 a 60,000 sq. m. lot in the barrio of San Marcelino, Paco, as a summer vacation camp for the professors and students of the Seminary. They built a house there and also upon the initiative of Fr. Ildefonso Moral, C. M. a chapel, in honor of St. Vincent de Paul. To this semipublic oratory Fr. Francisco Potellases, who knew Tagalog, was assigned to attend the people of Manila and neighboring province who flocked to his confessional. A bigger chapel was to be inaugurate-
in 1880; but due to the earthquake that year, the seminarians of San
Carlos had to be lodged there, and so the religious services continued in
the old chapel.

The Seminary was returned to Intramuros in 1884. Since 1883 a new
Chapel had been opened to the public and a series of 5-day closed
retreats for laymen had begun to be given by Fr. Potellas, while Brother
Tarrasa attended the retreatants lodged in the house in groups of 30 or
40. The ministry ceased only with the death of Fr. Potellas in 1895. Fr.
Ildefonso Moral was also an assiduous laborer in the ministry of the
Chapel where he gave annual retreats and monthly recollections, particu­
larly to the ladies and gentlemen of the Society (Conferencias) of St.
Vincent de Paul. From 1890 retreats for the clergy were also given.

The Provincial Assembly of the Congregation in 1890 decided that
the House of San Marcelino should become the Central House and
residence of the Provincial Visitor (who formerly was the ex officio
Rector of the Manila Seminary) and of four other Fathers who were to
minister at the public Chapel of San Marcelino as well as to the College
of La Concordia and the Asylum of St. Vincent at Looban.

In the last decade of the century, stormy clouds of the oncoming
revolution were threatening the Philippines. Freemasonry with its
lodges scattered over the country, and its undeniable influence upon the
Propaganda movement (La Solidaridad became an organ of the Free­
masonry) and the Katipunan was undermining the faith of the common
people with its venomous attacks against the Friars and the Catholic
religion. On April 17, 1895 a dreadful sacrilege was committed in the
Parish church of Paco. Impious hands stole the ciborium from the
tabernacle and threw the Sacred Hosts in the street gutter. The Arch­
bishop of Manila ordered a Triduum of reparation which was celebrated
outside the desecrated church, and attended by large crowds of the
faithful from all over the city, from April 24 to 26, 1895.

Afraid of cruel persecutions against the Friars, the Franciscan
Parish priest of Paco, who had been working there for some 20 years,
fled in 1896 and hid himself in Quiapo. He left behind in the parish his
coadjutor, the Filipino secular priest Fr. Escolastico Chico, a native of
Paco, who became a substitute parish priest.

On February 4, 1899 the opening shots of the Filipino-American
war were fired in San Juan bridge (now Pinaglabanan, San Juan del
Monte). The American soldiers maddened by the losses inflicted by the
Filipinos on their ranks, and thirsty for vengeance went the next day to
the Paco convent where they thought many people were hiding. How­
ever, in the convent there were only besides Fr. Chico with his two
sacristans, some three or four families from the neighborhood who had
sought shelter there the previous day from the crossfires between
Filipino and American soldiers. Not finding what they were looking for, the American soldiers, killed a poor sacristan who had met them, sprayed the walls with petroleum, and burned the convent and the church. At the same time, the American fleet in Manila Bay was shelling Filipino positions in the outskirts of Manila. They had been informed that the Paco church was a nest of insurgents. (In reality, these had their stronghold some distance away from the church.) And so the Paco church and convent became the target of their bombs and shells. The convent and church were completely demolished leaving only the tower and the baptistry. Some people who witnessed this catastrophe saw it as a punishment for the sacrilege perpetrated in that church four years before. The ruins of the walls, baptistry and tower were later razed to the ground so that not a stone remained upon a stone of the church or convent.

Thus the Paco parish remained desolate without church or priest to minister to the people. Archbishop Nozaleda of Manila asked several secular priests, among them Fr. Dimaliuat, Fr. Dimbla, and Fr. Arceo, to take charge of the parish, but they were reluctant to accept the offer. Then the Archbishop requested the Provincial of the Vincentians, Fr. Manuel Orriols, to assign a priest who could attend to the spiritual needs of the parishioners. He also asked that the Chapel of San Vicente de Paul in San Marcelino be used as parish church of Paco, since it was located in the territory of San Fernando de Dilao. Moved with compassion for the orphaned parishioners, Fr. Orriols granted the request, and presented Fr. Gregorio Tabar, C. M. who knew Tagalog, for the work. Fr. Tabar was appointed Parish priest ad interim of San Fernando de Dilao (Paco) on February 20, 1899.

The situation presented him great difficulties. The Vincentian Chapel was not furnished properly as a parish church, since even the tower bells of the burned Paco church had been stolen. The former acting parish priest, Fr. Chico, having returned when conditions had gone back to normal, tried to claim his supposed rights to the parish, and arouse some people against the presence of a Spanish and religious parish priest in Paco. The members of the recently founded Aglipayan Church attempted several times to seize the Catholic chapel of Peñafrancia, where Fr. Gregorio Tabar said Mass on Sundays. This courageous Vincentian vigorously resisted the usurpation of the church by the schismatics even though this endangered his life. He said, "While this Fr. Gregorio lives, the other Gregorio will not enter here," referring to the founder of Aglipayanism.

In 1905 Fr. Tabar left this post to go to a new assignment, the foundation of the San Vicente de Paul High School in Calbayog. Fr. Antonio Redondo, C. M. became the ad interim parish priest of Paco,
but his administration proved to be quite inefficient. On April 13, 1909 the Scheut missionary, Fr. Raymundo Esquenet, C.I.C.M. was appointed parish priest of Paco. This however, did not mean the end of the Vincentian service to the Parish of San Fernando de Dilao. On October 5, 1909 Archbishop Jeremias J. Harty of Manila manifested his desire that the Chapel of San Vicente de Paul become a Parish church to attend the needs of the people living in the Paco barrios of San Marcelino, Concepcion and Aguadas of La Ermita. The Vincentian Provincial, Fr. Angel Martinez, acceded three days later to the request of the Archbishop. Thus, the new Parish of San Vicente de Paul separated from that of San Fernando de Dilao was erected by virtue of a Decree of the Archbishop dated December 6, 1909.

Before Fr. Esquenet took possession of the Paco parish, Fr. Antonio Perez, C.M., administered the Parish for four months, and then Fr. Castor Ordoñez, C.M. for the remaining time until 1910 when the Belgian Father took possession of the Paco parish. For one year, he used the chapel of Peñafrancia as parish church. In 1911, a new, simple mission chapel was raised on the ruins of the former church destroyed by the Americans. Later, the zealous Parish priest, Fr. Jose Billiet, C.I.C.M. began collections for building the new cement church that is Paco today. The Vincentians left, as a remembrance of their temporary administration of the Paco Parish, a flourishing unit of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and a well attended Catechetical center, both in the barrio of Peñafrancia. More than 50 children learned Catechism there every Sunday. This was considered a good number, for many people in that barrio were under the influence of the Aglipayans. During all the time that the Paco parish was administered by the Vincentians, there was in San Marcelino a free school for around 50-100 children directed by a Father of the community.

The document of erection which separated the new Parish of St. Vincent de Paul from the Parish of San Fernando de Dilao gave the following reasons: 1) there are around 300 families in the streets of San Marcelino, Concepción and surroundings; 2) these families are about 3 kilometers away from the Parish church of Paco; and 3) the spiritual needs of these parishioners cannot be properly attended to. The demarcation of the new Parish was as follows: at the North, the Pasig river from the site adjacent to the Santo Domingo church in the so called Paseo de Magallanes down to the Isla del Provisor, in front of the Isla de Convalescencia (where the Hospicio de San José is located); on the South, Nozaleda street from the city walls where the Palacio street ends, down to the intersection with Isaac Peral (now United Nations), down to the Padre Faura, intersection and then to the San Marcelino, crossing and further down to Canónigo street that ends at the Estero de Paco, in
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Ulilang Cawayan; to the East, the place called Tanque surrounded by the Estero de Paco, from Canónigo street to the Isla del Provisor; and to the West, the Manila wall from the site adjacent to the Santo Domingo church in the Paseo de Magallanes up to the point which meets with Nozaleda street.

Minor problems crept up during the first years from 1909 to 1915. The division made from the Paco Parish did not seem fair. Only some 1,000 souls were assigned to the new Vincentian Parish, while Paco had around 7,000 parishioners. The monthly income for the Parish of San Vicente de Paul amounted to about P30 only. In the previous years, the Vincentians had spent around P5,000 for the administration of San Fernando de Dilao. The Provincial submitted to the Archbishop an account of these difficulties and asked for some financial help for the new Parish. Apparently everything was settled satisfactorily. A Letter from Archbishop Jeremias Harty, dated October 2, 1915 declared that the new Church of St. Vincent de Paul should continue to be used as a Parish church, as it had been used previously; but the Congregation of the Mission should remain the exclusive owner of all the movable and immovable goods of the said church in San Marcelino; and the incomes corresponding to the Parish, even as such, should be employed for the maintenance of church and worship, for the Catholic school, Catechism, etc.

Fr. Castor Ordoñez was the parish priest ad interim of the newly created Parish of St. Vincent de Paul in 1910. After a few months he was succeeded by Fr. Bruno Saiz, C. M., the first Parish priest proper, from October 1910 to June 1911. In July 1911 Fr. Gregorio Tabar came again as Parish priest of San Vicente de Paul, in order to start the construction of the new church that was to be erected in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the Vincentians to the Philippines.

The St. Vincent de Paul church in San Marcelino was designed by architect Don Francisco Perez de Muñoz, distinguished Spanish engineer of Manila, and built by the contractor Mr. R. Loper. It was made entirely of reinforced concrete, the first of its kind in the Philippines. (The former Capuchin church of Our Lady of Lourdes in Intramuros, had its facade, cupola and pillars made of reinforced concrete, but the rest of the structure was made from materials from the previous chapel. The Lourdes church of Intramuros was destroyed during the war of liberation in 1945).

The church of San Marcelino is 50 meters long and 12.20 meters wide. The towers are 5.50 meters in length and width. From the floor to the top of the cornice 9.75 meters. The radius of the vault is 6.10 meters. The exterior cornice is 14.50 meters high. The transept is 36 meters wide. The towers are 25 meters high and the dome 30 meters high. The
sacristy is 9.75 meters long and 10.40 meters wide. The choir loft is 7.15 meters above the floor of the church. The main entrance is 3 meters wide and 5.15 meters in height.

The interior decoration was made possible through alms gathered from the people and the double family of St. Vincent. The clergy from various dioceses had contributed, by the year 1912, more than P3,000 for the main altar of St. Vincent. At both sides of the church there were two small chapels which were adjoined to the nave, one dedicated to St. Joseph, the other to the Holy Souls in Purgatory. (Later, after the 1945 war, these altars disappeared, and to widen the church two aisles were built. In both sides of the transept there were two side altars, one in honor of the Holy Agony of Our Lord, whose Archconfraternity is canonically established in this church, and another in honor of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, erected from the contributions of the Association of Children of Mary Immaculate.

The construction of this church cost around P100,000 which was money obtained by the Congregation of the Mission from the sale of a parcel of the property of some 50,000 square meters acquired by the Vincentian Fathers more than 30 years before in San Marcelino. A powerful American Company was eager to obtain this lot and proposed to the Congregation to build the new church of reinforced concrete at their own expense in exchange for the desired lot. The contract was signed on April 1911. On the feast of St. Vincent de Paul, July 19, 1911, the Right Reverend Msgr. Silvino López Tuñón, Vicar General of the Manila Archdiocese blessed the cornerstone in the name of the Archbishop who was then away from Manila.

The church construction could not be finished in time for the 50th anniversary of the coming of the Vincentian double family to the Philippines, on July 22, 1912. Instead, that day was modestly celebrated with some religious ceremonies and simple programs held in Santa Isabel College in the morning and in La Concordia in the afternoon. The construction was finally completed in April 1913. The interior decoration of the church was tastefully done by the distinguished Filipino sculptor, Mr. Cayetano Castillo.

On July 16, 1913, the Most. Rev. Pablo Ma. Reynaud, C.M., Apostolic Vicar of Ning Po (Tch-Kiang, Oriental China) consecrated the new church in the morning, and in the afternoon, the Blessed Sacrament was reserved. The next day, July 17, began the solemn Triduum in honor of St. Vincent which was participated in by six Bishops of the Philippines: Archbishop Harty, of Manila; Bishop Petrelli of Lipa, and representative of the Holy See; Bishop McGinley of Nueva Cáceres; Bishop Singzon of Calbayog; Bishop Gorordo of Cebú, and Bishop Foley of Tuguegarao. The Ecclesiastical Governor of Jaro,
Msgr. James MacCloskey, represented the Bishop of Jaro who was not around. Around fifty priests, most of the Archdiocese of Manila, took part in the celebrations. The Most Honored Fr. Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission sent Fr. Claudio M. Guilloux, Visitor of the Southern Province of China, as his personal representative. Fr. Mauricio Rouvier, Superior of Shanghai and General Procurator of the Missions in China came also with Bro. Verriere, C. M. The sponsors of the consecration were Don José Arriola and Doña Carmen de Beech, this latter representing Doña Pilar de Beech. The masters of ceremony at the consecration were Fr. Honorio García, C. M. and Fr. Nicolás de la Iglesia, C. M.; the preachers were the Rt. Rev. Eulogio Sanchez, Canon of the Manila Cathedral, Fr. Julián Misol, O. P., Fr. Enrique Balana, Parish priest of Ligao, Albay, Fr. Eduardo Gancedo, C.M., Most Rev. Juan Bautista Gorordo, Bishop of Cebú, and Fr. Gregorio Tabar, C.M., Rector of the Manila Seminary of San Carlos.

The solemn Triduum in honor of St. Vincent was closed in the afternoon of July 19 with a Te Deum and the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament officiated by the Representative of Pope Pius X in the Philippines, Most Rev. Jose Petrelli, Bishop of Lipa; the relics of St. Vincent were venerated while the whole congregation sang the beautiful hymn of Mocoroa,

Lleno de gozo y amor ferviente  
Suba a los cielos nuestro clamor;  
Cantemos todos hoy a Vicente  
Himnos de triunfo, gloria y honor.  
Tus tiernas Hijas que el orbe adora  
Al desvalido buscando van,  
Y a donde quiera que un triste llora  
Ferviente acude su caridad.  
Tus fieles Hijos con celo ardiente  
Por Dios combaten contra Satán.  
Ven en su ayuda, Padre clemente  
Y así victoria conseguirán.  
Y tras la lucha con el infierno  
Del premio eterno disfrutarán.

The next day, Sunday, July 20 a small banquet at noontime was offered to 400 poor indigents of Manila. The bad weather prevented many from attending, but the others, many of whom were fetched in automobiles, were happily served at table in the Asylum of St. Vincent de Paul, in Looban, Paco, by the Vincentian Fathers, Sisters Superior of the Houses of Daughters of Charity in Manila, and by gentlemen and ladies of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.
In June 1913, Fr. Gregorio Tabar who had been parish priest of San Vicente de Paul from July 1911, was assigned Rector of the San Carlos Seminary of Manila, which had recently been entrusted to the Vincentians once again by Archbishop Harty. He was succeeded in the Parish by Fr. Irineo Rodriguez, C.M. who remained in there until June, 1917, when Fr. Gregorio Tabar returned again as Parish priest until June 1921. Fr. Bruno Sáiz took over again the Parish of San Vincente from June 1921 to April, 1922. In May 1922, Fr. José Fernández was transferred from San Carlos Seminary of Manila to become Rector of the Parish of San Marcelino, with Fr. José Aguirreche as his coadjutor. The Parish flourished under both pastors until their untimely death during the war in 1945.

At the time of the silver jubilee of the church of San Vicente de Paul, in July 1938, the Parish priest, Fr. Fernández, gave the following statistics:

"In spite of the fact that our parish is the smallest in population in the whole city of Manila — some 5,000 inhabitants in the limited zone circumscribed by the Pasig river, the Estero of Paco, and the streets of Oregón, Taft, and Padre Burgos — the number of baptisms performed during these 25 years were 6, 564, the weddings 1,301, and very close to 1,000 the patients attended, around 5,000 the children instructed in the Sunday Catechesis, and up to 1,900 those prepared for the First Communion in the public schools opened within the Parish. There are plenty of Confessions, and every year some 70,000 Communions are distributed." In 1939 he added: "We should not forget that since April 6, 1914, by the authority of His Holiness Pius X it was determined: 1) that the canonical center of all the Units of the Association of Children of Mary Immaculate, and other Associations of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal in the Philippines, is established in the church of St. Vincent de Paul in Manila; and 2) that the General Director delegated for all of them is the Very Rev. Fr. Provincial Visitor of the Vincentians, to whom should have recourse all the priests who desire to establish in their parishes the Association of Children of Mary Immaculate, accredited by the General Center of the Mother House of the Daughters of Charity in Paris."

A report published in the *Anales de La Congregacion de la Mission* for the year 1929-1930 gives us the following statistics: 5,000 people were in the parish, of whom 4,300 were Catholics, 400 Aglipayans, 300 of different sects, and 80 Masons. The number of Confessions were around 51,400; Holy Communions, 175,000; Marriages, 51; Last Sacra-
ments, 30; funerals, 70; baptisms, 300. Eighteen Aglipayans were converted to the Catholic Church that year.

In that same year, 1929-1930, there were some 6,000 members of the Association of the Miraculous Medal; 1,500 members in the Confraternity of the Holy Agony; 70 members in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul; 500 in the Apostleship of Prayer; 420 in Catholic Action; and 20 Knights of Columbus. In that year 160 boys, 207 girls, and 20 adults received catechetical instruction.

During the First National Eucharistic Congress of the Philippines celebrated on December 11-15, 1929, and on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Priestly Ordination of Pope Pius XI, the Parish priest of San Marcelino, Fr. José Fernandez, C.M. wrote the lyrics for the Official Eucharistic Hymn of the Congress:

Pueblo Filipino
Rinde honores a tu Señor
Hecho Pan Divino
Para ser tu gloria y tu amor.
Gloria al Sacramento
Del Divino Amor;
En todo mor esto
Gratitud y honor!

STANZAS

GOD
Venid a Mi, que Yo soy
Belleza, Bien y Verdad
Y pan que la vida doy
Y eterna felicidad.
A pueblos de todas partes
uno en apretado haz
y mis blancos estandartes
son estandartes de paz.

FATHERLAND
Sol de la Eucaristia que los Tabores
de mi vida cristiana siembras de luz;
Sol que ahuyentas la niebla de mis errores
y en símbolo de gloria truecas mi cruz.
En mis bosques de flores y de palmeras
tienes miles de altares y desde allí
sobre todos mis hijos reinas e imperas
y todos sus amores son para Ti.

FAITH
Del vino entre los rubíes
Y en la blancura del pan
Señor, me hablas, me sonríes
Y eres de mi vida imán.
Tu lo dices y me basta
pues si el cuerpo no te vé
Te vé la pupila casta
y segura de la Fé.
The music of this beautiful Hymn was composed by the famous musician Dr. D. Francisco Santiago. In the Committee of Sacred Music for the Congress was Fr. Estanislao Arana, C.M., of San Carlos Seminary of Manila.

Fr. Fernández took a very active part in the preparation and celebration of the XXXIII International Eucharistic Congress held in Manila. Fr. Fernández, who was an exceptionally gifted preacher in the combined pulpit evangelical simplicity with moving eloquence that attracted the people to listen to the good news of the Gospel of Christ. He enthroned the image of Mary Immaculate of the Miraculous Medal at the main altar of San Marcelino church; and, exquisite poet that he was, he composed this poem:

FILIPINAS A LA MILAGROSA

Soy, Virgen Milagrosa, Filipinas, la última de las tierras coloniales
que halló España en sus ansias peregrinas,
cuando iban por el mar cual golondrinas
extendiendo sus alas maternales.

No por mi tez morena,
ni por mis ojos que el oriente llena
de misteriosa luz y tornasola,
ni por mi talle de ondulante palma,
júzgame por mi alma,
y mi alma es cristiana y española.

Cual todas mi hermanas extendidas
por el vasto jardín del universo,
tengo a gala en mis islas florecidas
mantener siempre el ideal cristiano.

Y este ideal que santos missioneros
de Hesperia me trajeron cierto día,
este ideal que es lluvia de luceros
y manantial de eterna poesía,
es la Cruz!, y es . . . María!

La Cruz, en cuyos brazos
toda mi gloria y mi grandeza estriba,
porque a sus pies cayeron en pedazos
mis cadenas de esclava y de cautiva.

Y María, la estrella
que parpadea rutilante y bella
sobre todas las noches de mi historia
y me tiende en sus místicos altares
una escala de rosas y collares
para subir hasta su excelsa gloria.

Por esto te acaricio y te venero
y en mis horas tranquilas
y en las borrascas del destino fiero
te llevo retratada en mis pupilas,
y mi mayor agrado
es llamarte sin mancha y sin pecado.

Y es imposible que tu nombre vaya
jubiloso y triunfal de polo a polo
sin que haga un alto en mi serena playa
y pase por mis montes de Antipolo.
Y en todas mis orillas
lo escuchan llenas de emoción intensa
cien pueblos, hijos de una misma fé,
si es para venerarlo, de rodillas,
y si es para correr en su defensa,
con la espada en los aires y de pie.

Y hoy que se postra el mundo
a los pies de tu imagen milagrosa
y celebra sus triunfos y los glosa
con amor mas ardiente y mas profundo,
quiero acercarme al manantial fecundo
de tu gracia amorosa.

Y con esa medalla, donde impresa
dejaste tu hermosura, en mi estandarte,
vengo esta noche azul..., azul princesa
de mis Islas de ensueño a proclamarle.

Y mañana al pasar entre clamores
en carroza triunfal por mis caminos,
haré que caigan sobre ti las flores
de todos mis vergeles filipinos
para envolverte en sedas y en colores.

Y yo mi corazón saldré a rendirte,
y anegada en los limpios rosicleres
de tu belleza, volveré a decirte:
Ninguna como tú, bendita eres,
Madre mia, entre todas las mujeres!
The church of San Marcelino became the center of the Bicentennial celebrations of the Canonization of St. Vincent de Paul (1737-1937). A solemn Triduum sponsored by the Vincentian Fathers, and Daughters of Charity, and participated by the San Carlos Seminary of Manila, the Parish of St. Vincent de Paul, the Seminaries of Lipa and San Pablo, the secular and regular clergy and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, was celebrated in the church of St. Vincent with the attendance of the Apostolic Delegate, Most Rev. Guillermo Piani, and the Archbishop of Manila, Most Rev. Michael J. O’Doherty who wished to honor the Patron Saint of all charitable organizations in the world.

At the beginning of the Japanese occupation of the city of Manila, the Vincentians did not suffer much. The preparatory petition to introduce the cause of beautification of the Catholic Japanese Justo Takayama Ukon was celebrated in the church of San Marcelino in September 1942. Many Bishops, religious and laymen attended the solemn celebration in honor of the servant of God, Venerable Justo Ukandono (Ukon Takayama).

Except for the high-handed and dictatorial ways of some of the Japanese, the following years were peaceful ones in Manila. In 1943 the young Jesuit scholastics and their professors came to occupy a portion of the Vincentian House of San Marcelino, but in June 1944 the Japanese Army forced them to depart, and the soldiers occupied two thirds of the House. The terrible noise created by the movement of ammunitions and food caused many sleepless nights and agonizing days to the Vincentians. For almost seven months, the Fathers and the Japanese soldiers lived side by side, but hardly communicated with each other. All the stairs and doors leading to each other’s quarters were blocked. When rumors were rife that the American soldiers were fast approaching, the Japanese in their despair, burned the interior of the church, including altars, images, and pews, and then burned also the interior of the chapel and the library of the Vincentian residence. Finally, as we have seen, they massacred all the innocent dwellers of the House.

Later after the Liberation of Manila, the engineer Don Emilio Moreta y Pujol declared on December 20, 1945 that the church of San Marcelino, in spite of the impacts of 164 artillery shells and countless machine gun bullets, had been so solidly built, that it could be reconstructed immediately. Indeed, the church was speedily repaired so that the following year, the customary celebrations of the feast of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal were already held in the restored temple of San Marcelino. In 1947 Fr. Gabriel Rodriguez, C.M. acquired for the church a new Tabernacle, which was fireproof and burglar-proof, recently designed in America. In 1948 Fr. Antonio Gomez Vences was appointed new Parish priest of San Marcelino.
The tireless Fr. Antonio Gómez brought to completion the restoration of the church. During his rectorship of the Parish, the new temple of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal was solemnly consecrated. He established the Young Ladies Association of Charity (YLAC), and with the help of this Association, founded the Parochial School which was later to be incorporated into Adamson University.

On October 22, 1958 the Archbishop of Manila, Most Rev. Rufino J. Santos, successor of Archbishop O'Doherty, assigned new demarcations to the Parish of San Vicente de Paul, namely:

NORTH: Pasig river, from Estero de Paco to the Manila Post Office.

WEST: From the Manila Post Office, following Taft Avenue to Herran Street.

SOUTH: From Herran Street to San Marcelino Street, back to Oregon Street. Oregon Street-Looban. From Looban to Belen Street, from Belen Street to Ducepec Street.

EAST: Estero de Paco from the Pasig River to Ducepec Street.

Through the years, over a dozen organizations of lay people involved in the spiritual and social upliftment of the community have been established and have flourished in St. Vincent de Paul Parish. Among these are the Miraculous Medal Association, the Legion of Mary, the Young Ladies Association of Charity, the Luisas, the Ladies of Charity, the Knights of the Miraculous Medal, the Cofradía de la Santa Agonía, the Adoración Nocturna, the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, the Holy Name Society, the "Conferencias" or Society of St. Vincent de Paul, the Apostleship of Prayer, the Catholic Women’s League, the Cursillos in Christianity, the Children of Mary Immaculate, etc.

Fr. Antonio Gómez was Parish priest from 1948 to 1954, and again from 1957 to 1964. Fr. Samuel Martínez, C.M. succeeded Fr. Gómez from 1954 to 1957; and Fr. Balbino Monreal succeeded the same Fr. Gómez from 1965 to 1971. The next Parish priests were Fr. Ezequiel Galerón, Fr. Mariano de Silva, Fr. Francisco Vargas, Fr. Renato Ruelos, Fr. Justo Moro, and Fr. Norberto Carcellar.

Other recent Parishes
San Roque Parish, Subangdaku, Cebú

This Parish was established in Subangdaku, Mandawe, Cebú on August 30, 1964. Like other parishes erected and administered by the religious, this one was only temporary although renewable for a stipulated number of years. On September 3, 1964 Archbishop Julio Rosales of Cebú granted the petition to erect canonically the House of Subangdaku. At that time the parish was one of the poorest in Cebú. There were plans of putting up a High School there after a number of years.
The parish was given to the Vincentians in appreciation of their services in the Cebu Seminary. The geographical limits of the parish were: Subangdaku Creek, Seashore, Mandawe Creek, and the Municipal Road from Tipolo to Banilad. It included the barrios of Subangdaku, Nawanao, Banilad, Dailid, Tipolo and Po-o, which were part of the St. Joseph’s Parish in Mandawe. The parish had under its care 6,000 souls. Of these 98% were Catholics but with only a rudimentary knowledge of their religion, and only the middle class fulfilled their religious duties. A few people belonged to Protestant sects.

The first parish priest was Fr. Salvador Hernandez, C.M., one of the first Filipino Vincentians. He died in 1968, four years after the foundation of the new Parish. His coadjutor Fr. Fructuoso Morquillas, C.M., a young Spanish missionary, relieved him. On June 16, 1965 the construction of a convent not far from the old chapel was begun. Fr. Victor Elía, C.M., came as an Assistant Parish priest in December 1966 and in February, 1967 took over from Fr. Morquillas. Fr. Elia built a large church to commemorate the centennial of the arrival of Vincentians in Cebu.

Miraculous Medal Parish, Calumpang, Iloilo City

In February, 1971, the Archbishop of Jaro offered the parish of the Miraculous Medal to the Vincentians. It was inaugurated on July 19, 1971. Its boundaries were the River Batiano and the Batiano Bridge up to the boundary of the municipality of Oton. The erection of this parish was a form of thanksgiving for the services rendered by the Vincentians to the Archdiocese of Jaro. The Parish also sought to provide for the spiritual needs of the people of the parishes of Molo and Arévalo and some of the distant barrios. The Parish had about 6,000 souls scattered in the barrios of Boulevard, San Juan, Calumpang, Calaparan, Santo Niño Norte, and Santo Niño Sur. The first Parish “fiesta” was celebrated on November 27, 1971 with Fr. Michael Gimarino, C.M., and Fr. Luciano San Luis, C.M., as pastor and coadjutor respectively. A popular mission was given on May 4-14, 1972 by four Vincentians, ten Daughters of Charity, and ten Vincentian seminarians, aside from the Parish priest. Fr. Alberto Roman, C.M., was the mission Coordinator.

Christ the King Parish, Cadlan, Naga City

This parish was canonically erected on December 13, 1975, with Fr. Michael Gimarino, C.M., as Superior of the House and the first Parish Priest. In 1979 the Parish had 10,000 souls from 2,000 families. Poverty, religious ignorance, disease (especially tuberculosis), poor housing
conditions, malnutrition, and land conflicts were the problems confronting the parish. The first Vincentians in Christ the King were Fr. Michael Gimarino, C.M., Fr. Mariano Silva, C.M., and Fr. Vicente Robles, C.M.

By September, 1976 the Rectory was completed and blessed by Archbishop Teopistico Alberto of Nueva Caceres. Three missions to reawaken the faith of the poor people were given in Barrio Palestina, Cadlan, and Tinangis.

The National Shrine of the Miraculous Medal Parish, Sucat, Parañaque, Rizal, Metro Manila

The Parish is located at Sucat, Parañaque in the province of Rizal, overlooking the picturesque Laguna de Bay. Designed by the noted Filipino architect, Jose M. Zaragoza, the plans of the shrine and the construction contract were officially signed by the Provincial, Fr. Rolando DelaGoza, the Director of the Marian Center, Fr. Teodoro Barquin, C.M., the Architect, Jose M. Zaragoza, and the building contractor, Eduardo Santiago, on July 1979.

The blessing of the cornerstone was given by His Eminence Jaime Cardinal L. Sin, Archbishop of Manila, on July 19, 1979. At 4:00 p.m. on September 7, 1980, the vigil of the feast of the Nativity of Mary, the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal was solemnly consecrated by His Eminence Jaime Cardinal Sin. His Eminence, Julio Cardinal Rosales, Archbishop of Cebu was present together with two Bishops, Téotimo C. Pacis, C.M., and Godofredo Pedernal, and 30 priests of the secular and regular clergy and some 3,500 faithful.

The funds for the construction of the Shrine were generated from the operations of the Marian Center. The main source of funds came from the Miraculous Medal Apostolate and a Special Finance Committee of influential people organized for this purpose by Fr. Teodoro Barquin, C.M. The first Parish Priest, Fr. Victor Elia, C.M., was installed on February 15, 1981. The parish has around 70,000 souls scattered in the barrios of Cupang, Buli, Sucat, Tanyag, Pagkakaisa, Daang-Hari, Bunyi and other sitios

VINCENTIAN DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

The Association of Children of Mary Immaculate

In her Apparitions to St. Catherine Laboure on July 18-19, 1830, the Blessed Mother expressed her desire to have a Confraternity of the Children of Mary which was to be founded and directed by the Vincen-
tian priest, director of the novices of the Daughters of Charity, Fr. John Mary Aladel.

Following these instructions, Fr. Aladel established the Association in the orphanage school at Beaunne, France, under the Daughters of Charity. The first associate was a pious orphan, Benigna Hairon, who received the Miraculous Medal with the Blue Ribbon of the Association on December 8, 1838. The first Unit of the Association, composed of 18 girls from the same orphanage, began to operate on February 2, 1840.

Rome approved the Association with the Rescripts of foundation signed by Pope Pius IX on June 20, 1847, and on July 19, 1850. Soon Marian Units multiplied in the Houses of the Daughters of Charity so that the number of Children of Mary Immaculate during the first half-century of canonical existence (1847-1897) reached 410,000. According to statistics taken during the last Marian Year, (1954), the Association was flourishing in 71 nations in all continents, with 10,000 Marian Units and a total of 500,000 associates. The Association was acknowledged as true “Catholic Action” by the hierarchies of France, Spain, and Brasil.

In the Philippines, the Association of the Children of Mary Immaculate was first established in the Colegio de la Inmaculada Concepción, La Concordia, Manila, under the Daughters of Charity, on September 8, 1868. On April 6, 1914, the Holy See granted the Vincentian Provincial of the Philippines, Fr. Angel Martinez, C.M.I and his successors, the “faculty to subdelegate Parish Priests for erecting in their parishes the Association of Children of Mary Immaculate.” This privilege was extended by Pope Pius XI to the whole world on March 25, 1931, in memory of the Centennial of the Miraculous Medal. During the Marian Year 1954, the Association in the Philippines had 310 Units with around 25,000 associates; in 1961, there were in the Philippines some 555 Units with around 50,000 associates. During the Lourdes Centennial Year, on September 29, 1958, the Hierarchy of the Philippines granted the Association to operate as a National Catholic Action organization.

From 1961 to 1975, National Council in Manila extended the Association to practically all the dioceses of the Philippines and in most of them Diocesan Councils were organized and erected. In the year 1983 with the approval of the Ordinaries of the Dioceses within the regions, three Regional Councils were erected: the Regional Council of Eastern Visayas and Mindanao with the seat in Cebu, the Regional Council of Western Visayas with the seat in Iloilo, and the Regional Council of Bicol with the seat in Naga.
His Eminence Jaime Card. Sin, D.D. Archbishop of Manila, most illustrious Alumnus of the Seminary of Jaro under the Vincentian Fathers. He consecrated the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, in Sucat, Parañaque, Metro Manila
OUR LADY OF THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL Parish church (Calumpang, Molo, Iloilo)


Fr. TEODORO BARQUIN, C.M., National Director of the Association of Children of Mary Immaculate and of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, as well as Director of the Miraculous Medal Apostolate, of the National Marian Magazine, MARY’S ARMY, and of the MARIAN CENTER established in the Vincentian Central House of San Marcelino, Manila.
OUR LADY OF THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL NATIONAL SHRINE, Muntinlupa, (Sucat, Paranaque), Metro-Manila, formally inaugurated in 1980. On August 15, 1982 the beautiful image of Our Lady was solemnly crowned in a concelebrated Mass with Papal Nuncio Bruno Torpigliani and Archbishop of Manila, Jaime Cardinal L. Sin. The gardens and parking facilities were blessed in February 20, 1985.
Interior of the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal at Posadas Village, Sucat, Parañaque, in Muntinlupa, Metro-Manila
Superiors General of the Congregation of the Mission
1878-1939
Superiors General of the Congregation of the Mission
1947 –

Provincial Superior of the 19th Century Fr. MANUEL ORRIOLS, C.M. (1836-1908) arrived to the Philippines in 1870 with the 7th mission; succeeded the first Visitor, Fr. Diego Salmerón in 1875 and governed the Philippine Province during 27 years until 1903 when due to ill health he resigned from the office.
Fr. Cristeto Mendez, C.M. (middle), Superior of Manila Central House, visiting the first Filipino Vincentian Missionaries in Japan, Fr. Benjamin Ortazon, (left), and Fr. Michael Gimarino, (right).
The Association of the Miraculous Medal

The Association of Children of Mary Immaculate was intended mainly for some chosen youth who wished to honor and to encourage others to honor Mary Immaculate through the imitation of her virtues. But Mary is the Mother not only of these privileged youth but of all faithful Christians in the world, and the manifold graces bestowed through her Medal should reach all members of the Mystical Body of Christ. For this reason, the Church decided to open to all the faithful of the world the portals of a pious association known as the Association of the Miraculous Medal. On July 8, 1909 Pope St. Pius X in his Brief Dilectus Filius approved the Association of the Immaculate Conception of the Miraculous Medal. The only requirement for membership in this Association was to wear on the breast suspended from the neck a Miraculous Medal blessed by a priest according to a rite of the Roman Catholic Church.

This Association was widely propagated in the Philippines by the Vincentian Fathers and the Daughters of Charity.

The Miraculous Medal Apostolate

This wonderful movement to bring the Immaculate Virgin of the Miraculous Medal not only to all faithful Christians but to non-Catholics, unbelievers, atheists, pagans, and to the remotest corners of the world, originated from a devout layman of the parish of San Vicente de Paul (San Marcelino), Manila, Mr. Jose Chebat.

Chebat was a member of the Central Association of the Miraculous Medal established in the United States by the famous Father Skelly, C.M. In some conversations with Fr. Jesus Ma. Cavanna, C.M., Mr. Chebat suggested setting up in the Philippines a movement similar to the one in the United States which was so effective in spreading the devotion to the Medal of Mary. The devotion had brought abundant blessings to all sorts of people, proving that all men, without exception, have been entrusted to the maternal care of the Mother of God.

With the approval of the Provincial, Fr. Zacarias Subiñas, Fr. Cavanna established in the Philippines on August 15, 1957 the Miraculous Medal Apostolate, a movement to propagate devotion to the Mother of God through the Medal. It also sought to help in the formation of future apostles of that devotion, the Vincentian seminarians.
This apostolic movement had three kinds of members: Affiliates who receive a Miraculous Medal and contribute a small "affiliation fee;" Workers who recruit one or more affiliates; and Promoters who recruit ten or more affiliates.

The Miraculous Medal Apostolate was indeed a tiny mustard seed planted in the fertile soil of our country. In four short years it had sprouted and grown slowly but steadily so that in 1961 it offered good hopes for a bright future. No one however, dreamt then of the gigantic proportions it would take 20 years later.

Fr. Cavanna was succeeded briefly by Fr. Luis Angulo, and then by Fr. Teodoro Barquin who practically since 1961, has been steering this movement successfully. In 1967, the files of the apostolate revealed half a million members recruited. In 1982 there were already more than 2 million affiliates from all over the Philippines and 50,000 perpetual family members.

The Vincentian Houses of formation have been greatly helped by the donations from so many members. A new Marian Center Building was completed and blessed on December 24, 1970. To commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Apparition of Mary to St. Catherine Laboure, a National Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal was solemnly consecrated in Posadas Village, Sucat, Parañaque, Metro-Manila on September 7, 1980. The beautiful shrine was built from the contributions of thousands of affiliates of the Miraculous Medal Apostolate. The Immaculate Mother was solemnly crowned in that Shrine on August 15, 1982, to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Miraculous Medal Apostolate in the Philippines. These achievements have been due in great part to the zeal of the apostle of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, Fr. Teodoro Barquin, C.M., who in turn acknowledges that nothing would have come about without the generous cooperation of the millions of affiliates of the Marian movement, and, of course, without the heavenly blessing of our Immaculate Mother.

The National Marian Magazine, MARY’S ARMY

The founder of this Marian magazine was Fr. Máximo Juguera, C.M. Before the war Fr. Juguera had been publishing Ráfagas, a modest newsletter that served as the official organ of the Association of Children of Mary. After the war of liberation in 1945, the Association was reorganized in many places through the zeal of Fr. Juguera. The celebration in 1947 of the first centenary of the pontifical approval of the Association marked a new life for many of the Unites of Children of Mary Immaculate. One of the best fruits of that centenary was the
organization of a National Council with the purpose of coordinating and directing the activities of the different Units in Colleges and Parishes.

From the beginning of its organization, the National Council felt the necessity of keeping contact with the different Units by means of a publication similar to Ráfagas. In 1949 the Association published a newsletter named The Monthly Reminder which functioned for two years as the paper of the Children of Mary. In 1951 The Monthly Reminder became a magazine Mary’s Army, the official organ of the Association in the Philippines. The title Mary’s Army was borrowed from the words of Pope Pius XII who, in his address to the Marian Congress held in Paris in 1947, called the Association of Children of Mary Immaculate, “the great army of Mary.”

The first issue of Mary’s Army appeared on August, 1951. Until the time of his holy death of October 17, 1955, Fr. Maximo Juguera ran the magazine with great enthusiasm. The assistants of Fr. Juguera were the National Directress of the Association, Sor Ana Maria Casasas, D.C., and the first Editor of the magazine, Miss Nelia Pacia (who later became a Daughter of Charity, and Superior of the Immaculate Heart of Mary College, her alma mater.)

In the beginning, Mary’s Army had 8 pages and used a Bulletin format. After 4 months, the number of pages increased to 12. The actual size began to be adopted 4 years later (vol. V, June-July 1955). The printing was done by St. Paul Press, Pasay City, from 1951 to 1955; then, from 1955 it was done by the U.S.T. Press.

In the beginning, Mary’s Army was presented as an organ of the Associations of Children of Mary and of the Miraculous Medal. In 1958 it became also an organ of the Miraculous Medal Apostolate. Within the pages of this magazine were interesting articles on faith and morals, inspiring poems, thrilling short stories, suggestions for wholesome activities, and comic strips. Mary’s Army was all that a Catholic magazine should be, a real instrument of apostolate among the faithful.

Following the challenge given by Pope Pius XII to the Director General of the Association of Children of Mary, in these words: “Propagate the Purity Crusade among the Children of Mary”, the magazine undertook for 20 years the noble campaign against immodest clothes and entertainments. It was a persevering and unremitting struggle waged by Mary’s Army beginning in its first issue of August 1951 up to January 1970, under the guidance and encouragement of its Moderators, Fr. Juguera, Fr. Cavanna, and Fr. Barquin. Fr. Barquin succeeded Fr. Cavanna on September 1961. In January 1974, Mary’s Army became a National Marian Magazine, not simply the organ of any particular organization or movement. Today it continues unswervingly in its original purpose, to spread devotion to the Mother of God and our
Mother, and provide authentic guidelines of Christian life.

The MARIAN CENTER, Home and Office of the Marian Apostolate

Since its reorganization on a national level after the war in 1945, the Association of Children of Mary Immaculate had entertained the dream of a modern and well equipped Marian Center for its National Council. This dream became a reality on April 6, 1962 when the Most Honored Father William H. Slattery, C.M., Superior General of the Vincentians and Daughters of Charity formally inaugurated and blessed the Marian Center located in the ground floor of Asilo de San Vicente de Paul at 1148 Isaac Peral (now, United Nations).

In the beginning, this office space served its purpose adequately, but in time, it could not meet anymore the growing needs of the various activities of the Marian apostolate of the Vincentians in the Philippines. Not only the Association of Children of Mary, but also the Miraculous Medal Apostolate, and the magazine Mary's Army needed space for its different offices. Furthermore, the building which served as the Central House of the Vincentians in Manila was being occupied by Adamson University. The Vincentians needed their own quarters adjoined to the offices of the Marian Center. Thus it was decided that a new building be erected at the corner, on the left side of the San Marcelino compound facing the church. This would be the Central House of the Vincentians and would also house the various organizations of the Marian Apostolate. This small building of three floors was inaugurated and blessed by His Eminence Rufino J. Cardinal Santos, Archbishop of Manila on September 5, 1965. The Cardinal praised the noble aims of the Marian Center saying: “With this powerhouse of Marian apostolate, Mary will be better known and thus better loved by our Filipino People.

Very soon the small house became inadequate for the needs of the Marian Apostolate and a new plan of constructing the Marian Center building was presented to the provincial Council by the Director Fr. Teodoro Barquin, C.M. The plan was approved and with funds generated from the operations of the Marian Center the actual building was constructed consisting of five floors. The building was blessed by the Most Honored Father James W. Richardson, Superior General, in his first visit to the Philippines on December 24, 1970. At present, part of the building is reserved for the living quarters of the Vincentian Fathers and their Provincial Visitor. The rest is devoted to offices of the Association of the Children of Mary Immaculate, the Miraculous Medal Apostolate, the National Marian Magazine, Marian Army, etc. In the ground floor there is a bookstore, where religious articles are also offered to the public. The Marian Center is located at 959 San Mar-
celino Street, beside the church of San Vicente de Paul (San Marcelino) Parish.

POPULAR MISSIONS. VINCENTIAN MISSION TEAM

"The name, missionary or Priest of the Mission, — wrote St. Vincent de Paul in his Common Rules (Ch. 11, art. 10) — which has not been assumed by us but has been given us under Divine Providence by the common voice of the people, shows sufficiently that of all our works on behalf of the neighbor, missions are the first and principal. Wherefore, the Congregation should not, on pretext of another pious work otherwise in some respects even more useful, ever neglect them, but everyone should devote himself to them with all the earnestness of his soul, so that he may be prepared always for them when called by obedience."

The Provincial Norms of the Congregation of the Mission in the Philippines in 1977 declared: "Our Congregation was called "of the Mission", because God inspired it for the "evangelization of the poor, especially those of the countryside." The Philippine Province has always felt the desire to devote missionaries to this work, which is peculiarly ours." (no. 9.1)

As a matter of fact, we have seen that in the past, although through historical circumstances the Vincentians in the Philippines had been almost exclusively devoted to the formation of the clergy in the diocesan Seminaries, to the education of the youth in the College-Seminaries, and to the spiritual direction of the Daughters of Charity, still whenever there was the possibility and an occasion to give retreats to the clergy or the lay people, they zealously undertook such sort of reduced or limited missions.

We know of individual cases of Vincentians who occasionally attempted to give "popular missions" or to lend a helping hand to some missions given by other priests to the country folks in far-off barrios. We mentioned above (Chapter Eleven) about the missions given in 1909 by Fr. Bruno Saiz, C.M. in Cavite, and another mission given in the provincial jail of Cebú. Then towards the years 1938-1939, the Provincial Fr. José Tejada and the Rector of San Carlos Seminary of Manila, Fr. Zacarías Subiñas gave also a mission to the people of a barrio of Malabon, Rizal, for one week.

In previous years, Fr. Subiñas was often called to help in hearing confessions in some missions given by diocesan priests in the towns of Lucena, Lukban, Tayabas, etc. etc.; and in 1945 he gave a mission to the folks of a barrio of Plaridel, Bulacan. In 1944 the same Fr. Subiñas, with Fr. Antonio Gómez, and Fr. Cavanna gave a mission to the barrio people of Huló, Mandaluyong. Then, in 1955 Fr. Teótilmo Pacis and
Fr. Cavanna gave two missions, one in Hermosa, Bataan (March 27-April 1), and another in Orani, Bataan (March 30-April 7). Again, in 1956 Fr. Salvador Hernández and Fr. Cavanna gave two missions in Balanga, Bataan, one in the barrio Puerto Rivas (March 7-11) and another in the town proper. Then in 1957, the same missionaries, Frs. Hernández and Cavanna gave a mission in Bagac, Bataan (March 31-April 7), and another in Pilar, Bataan (April 7-14). In 1958, Fr. Toribio Macazo and Fr. Cavanna gave one mission in Abucay, Bataan (March 20-26) and another in Orani, Bataan (March 26-April 2); and in 1959 Fr. Marceliano Ramos and Fr. Cavanna gave a mission in Meycawayan, Bulacan. In 1960, Fr. Antonio Gómez and Fr. Cavanna gave a mission in San Antonio, Nueva Ecija; and in 1961 the same missionaries gave a short mission in Balanga, Bataan (March 16-19) in the town proper, with plenty of Confessions on the occasion of the town “fiesta” or “pintakasi”, St. Joseph, and another short mission in the barrio of Tenejeros (March 20-23) and still a third one, in the barrio Catani (March 23-26) of the same town, Balanga.

It is noteworthy that the setting up of a Mission Team was officially proposed and unanimously approved in the 1974 Provincial Assembly of the Vincentians in the Philippines, which was preparatory of the General Assembly in Rome tasked with the revision of the Congregation’s Constitutions and Statutes. The last Spanish Provincial, Fr. Modesto López announced on March 29, 1974 with general applause of the Assembly, the setting up of a Philippine Mission Team. A Provincial Circular of April 6, 1974 assigned the first members of the Mission Band: Fr. Toribio Macazo, Fr. Renato Ruelos, and Fr. Francisco Vargas, C.M.

Between June and August of 1974 the Mission Team gave a mission in the parish of Subangdaku, Mandawe, Cebú, aided by members of the religious organizations and catechists of the parish. On April 15-20, 1975 a mission was given in San Luis, Pampanga, and in June-August, another mission in Balanga, Bataan; and on December 8-24 a third mission in the parish of San Vicente de Paul (San Marcelino) Ermita, Manila.

In 1976 the Mission Team assisted by a medical band sent by the Daughters of Charity of the Sacred Heart College, Lucena City, gave a mission in Barra Island, Quezon Province. This mission was the first step in bringing together the sons and daughters of St. Vincent in a work so much loved by our Founder. From April 26 to May 2 of that year 1976, Fr. Jesus Cavanna, aided by a group of good seminarians of St. Vincent’s Seminary, Valenzuela, Bulacan, gave a mission to the barrio folks of Ugong, Valenzuela, Bulacan, observing the traditional Vincentian method, with a dawn Rosary, early in the morning, followed
Our Apostolate Today

by the Mass and a short “panayam” (homiletic talk), then house to
house visits during the day, Way of the Cross in the afternoon, a
“pañgaral” (catechetical instruction on the Commandments and Sacra-
ments) and the “sermon” (proclamation of Jesus Crucified, the eternal
truths necessary for salvation, the last things, God’s Merciful Love,
forgiveness of enemies, devotion to Mary, and fraternal charity) exci-
ting the faithful to repentance and conversion and to a vigorous renewal
of Christian life, specially through the Sacraments of Confession and
Communion.

In 1977 the Mission Team gave missions in three barrios of San
Luis, Pampanga, and also in Coron, Palawan. In 1978 the Team gave a
mission in San Roque Parish, Subangdaku, Mandawe, Cebu; and also in
Ransuhan Island, Tagaytay City, Cadlan and Palestina of the Bikol
region. In 1979 the missionaries Fr. David Dulfo, Mariano Silva, Rue-
los, Arturo Bonto, and Gregorio Bañaga gave four missions in the
barrios of Christ the King Parish, Cadlan, Pili, Naga, and a fifth mission
in Barrio Bugarin, Pililla, Rizal. In 1980 four missions were given: one
in Malayan, Pililla (April), another in Bataan Exporting Processing
Zone (May 1-10), a third in Mabatang, Abucay, Bataan (June 29-July
13), and the last in the Dinalupihan, Bataan (June 8-December 8). This
last was the longest mission ever given (in 14 barangays of Dinalupi-
han). It was climaxed with a Mission Rally presided by Bishop Celso
Guevarra of Balaringa, and attended by around 700 people.

We hope that with God’s blessing, and through the intercession of
St. Vincent, our Mission Team will continue in succeeding years to bring
the Good News of salvation, and a “vigorous renewal of Christian life”
(John Paul II, Catechesi Tradendae, 47). Our missions to the most
abandoned people of our remotest barrios must be made through an
authentic catechesis, which is a powerful “means of evangelization,
(Paul VI, Evangelii Nuntiand, 44), and must aim at the worthy recep-
tion of the Sacraments, especially Confession and Eucharist, towards
which St. Vincent wished his popular missions to be directed.

Mission Goal Achieved.
Filipino Vincentians at the Helm.

On June 2nd, 1951 Pope Pius XII definitively proclaimed the goal
to be pursued in any missionary enterprise. In his Encyclical Evangelii
Praecones the Vicar of Christ declared:

The object of missionary activity is to bring the light of the
Gospel to new races and to form new Christians. However the
ultimate goal of missionary endeavour, which should never be
lost to sight, is to establish the Church on sound foundations among the non-Christian peoples, and place it under its own native hierarchy.

... The magnanimous and noble purpose which missionaries have is the propagation of the faith in new lands in such a way that the Church may ever become more firmly established in them and as soon as possible reach such a stage of development that it can continue to exist and flourish without the aid of missionary organizations. ... When that has been attained, then let them be happy to turn to other fields.

The religious missionaries of Spain who came to evangelize the Philippines, concentrated their efforts in propagating the Christian faith among our people, and with heroic zeal achieved a glorious record, unparalleled in the history of missions. But due to historical factors and circumstances of their times, during three centuries they lost sight, to certain extent, of the urgency in establishing the Church on the sound foundations of a native clergy, and to place it under its own native hierarchy.

To remedy the situation, the Spanish Royal Patronage sent in 1862 the Vincentian missionaries to devote themselves to the formation of a sufficient and worthy Filipino diocesan clergy. Half a century later, the Catholic Church in the Philippines was able to stand with more than 500 Filipino priests and three Filipino Bishops prepared and formed by Spanish Vincentian missionaries. The Church was evidently beginning to be established on sound foundations of a native clergy and hierarchy.

But this was not enough. Besides forming a native clergy among the pastors and ministers of the local Church, it was necessary to proceed further. According to the mind of the Church, native vocations were to be fostered even within the ranks of the Vincentian Congregation itself, so that in due time Filipino Vincentians could take over the mission entrusted to their Spanish confreres, and they, having accomplished the final goal of their mission, might happily continue to labor with the Filipino Vincentians in an auxiliary capacity, or turn to other fields “already white for the harvest” (Jn 4:35).

The Spanish Vincentians thought of this from the very beginning of their mission in the Philippines. Some months after their arrival in 1862, a young Filipino, probably from among the students of San Carlos Seminary of Manila, asked to join the Congregation of the Mission. The Provincial Visitor of Madrid, Fr. Ramon Sanz, granted the request of this young Filipino candidate to be allowed to make his novitiate under the pioneer Vincentian, Fr. Ildefonso Moral. However, perhaps it was still too early. The proposal did not succeed.
At the beginning of our century, in 1904, the Spanish Vincentians in Manila, upon the suggestion of several Bishops of the Philippines, entertained serious thought about establishing a Novitiate in the House of San Marcelino for Filipino candidates to the Congregation. Unfortunately, this time the idea was not accepted by the Provincial of Madrid, Fr. Eladio Arnaiz. And so the project had to be postponed for many years, a regrettable shortsightedness on the part of Fr. Arnaiz.

It was true, that as long as the Vincentian apostolate in the Philippines remained almost exclusively centered on the formation of a diocesan clergy in the Seminaries, it was not easy for them to recruit candidates for their Congregation. The Bishops under whom they worked would not be pleased to lose some of their best seminarians, when the need for more and more priests for their vast dioceses was so acute.

And this was precisely the reason that finally prompted the Philippine Vincentian Province to open in Polo, Bulacan a House, St. Vincent’s Seminary, that in 1950 served as Internal Seminary (Novitiate) of the Congregation. In 1954, it became its Apostolic School (Minor Seminary) to train the Filipino aspirants in the priestly and missionary vocation for the Congregation.

The establishment of this Vincentian Apostolic School in 1954 was a momentous and definitive step towards the attainment of the final goal of the mission entrusted to the Spanish Vincentians in the Philippines. The step was given — by a happy coincidence — just two years after Pius XII proclaimed that “the ultimate goal of a missionary endeavour is to establish the Church under its own native hierarchy.” St. Vincent’s Seminary was to be seedbed of future Filipino Vincentians destined to constitute the Philippine Province of the Congregation.

Ten years later, the work of St. Vincent’s Seminary was brought to perfection in 1964 when, leaving it exclusively as an Apostolic School, a separate House was established in Angono, the Vincentian Hills Seminary, to become the Novitiate and the Scholasticate of the Congregation in the Philippines. For the last 30 years the great majority of Vincentians making up the Philippine Province have received their basic formation in these two key Houses, St. Vincent’s and Vincentian Hills. In them have been trained the many zealous Filipino confreres who courageously maintain and advance the works entrusted to the “little Company” of St. Vincent in the Philippines. Some are now engaged in the obscure and silent but preeminent and sublime task of training, selecting and moulding in the Seminaries the future priests and apostles of Jesus Christ; others work generously as pastors and assistant priests in the parishes administered by the Congregation; others involve themselves in the educational apostolate of our University and Colleges; others
have been called and chosen to preach the Gospel to the poor and abandoned folks of the remotest barrios, spending and overspending their youthful energies in the glorious work of popular missions, so dear to our holy Founder; and finally, others dared selflessly to pioneer the apostolate of foreign missions in pagan lands, leaving behind their homes and dear ones to bring the Name of Jesus among nations and kings, just as the Apostle of the Gentiles did.

And to culminate this gratifying blossoming of Filipino Vincentians, many of them have been called to occupy posts of leadership: 21 have been appointed Local Superiors, 9 Seminary Rectors, 7 Seminary Spiritual Directors, 5 Novice Masters, 12 Parish Rectors, two Directors of the Daughters of Charity, 12 Provincial Counsellors, and two Provincial Visitors or Major Superiors of the whole Philippine Province.

For a sensible appraisal of the present situation, we prefer to transcribe here some excerpts from a report prepared recently by an American confrere who had the chance to know personally the past and the present set up of the Philippine Province within the last 33 years. Father Jerome Calcagno, C.M. worked with us in the San Carlos Seminary of Manila (Mandaluyong, Rizal) in 1950, and was invited to visit the Philippines last March 29-April 13, 1984. He belongs to the Southern Province of the United States, and upon his return to America, made this report to his confreres about his impressions:

For the Province of the Philippines, the passage of time (specifically over the past thirty-five years) has witnessed an amazing growth, the fruition of genuine missionary development. Thirty-five years ago, Vincentians in the Philippines were predominantly Spanish, with less than a handful of native Filipinos. Now, our fellow-Vincentians in the area are predominantly Filipinos with very few Spanish confreres remaining . . . and remaining supportive of the new order of things.

It would be difficult (if it is possible at all) to express adequate appreciation and praise for what our Spanish confreres accomplished during those early years of a Vincentian presence and engagement in the Philippine Islands. Their many years of hearty sacrifice and labor have blessed them: they have proven themselves authentic, magnanimous missionaries of the Church. Having planted the seed, they can witness now an extraordinary growth and flowering. In great measure because of its roots, the new life in our Filipino community is healthy and beautiful.
This "young church" of our Community in this Pearl of the Orient is indeed precious. It has all the characteristics of praiseworthy youth: an obvious dedication to its mission, enthusiasm for the tasks at hand, eagerness for the challenges of the days to come, a strong sense of being proudly a native community, simply and sincerely devoted to the Lord and to His people.

On the other hand, the Province itself feels that its youthful community presently suffers — gently enough — from some imbalance in its personnel. It is seeking presently some temporary assistance to realize whatever benefits come from maturity in age and experience. An older confrere (or two) is being sought actively now by the Filipino leadership. It is hoped that a community ‘veteran’ would volunteer (for a year or two) to function in spiritual direction and facilitation. . .

There is reason enough for us, Vincentians in other parts of the world, to be proud and happy in having confreres of the Philippine Province as brothers in the Lord.

(Dated April 20, 1984 — Jerome Calcagno, C.M.)

Indeed, a mission goal desired by the Church has been achieved in the Philippine Province of the Congregation of the Mission. Filipino Vincentians are now practically running the works of the Province, and have been placed at the helm to steer the course of our Vincentian apostolate in this country. Gradually and quietly, without any strident commotion of what is untimely or unexpected, but rather in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and fraternal charity, the Filipino Vincentians and the remaining Spanish confreres continue working harmoniously together, following the Vincentian tradition of giving "all glory to God" in whatever post each one may be assigned.
We have seen in the previous chapters the record of one hundred years of Vincentian missionary labor in the Philippines. As in the history of any other human endeavor we notice bright passages of remarkable achievement side by the side with dark areas revealing regrettable shortcomings. May the former inspire and encourage us to imitate them, and may the last teach and forewarn us to avoid them.

Let all glory due the good deeds achieved by our predecessors be assigned to God alone, without whom nothing good can be done; and let the failings and shortcomings keep us in the truth of humility. As St. Vincent de Paul said “we must be firmly convinced that when, according to the words of Christ, we have done everything that was commanded us, we ought to say’ “We are unprofitable servants; we have done what it was our duty to do”; and, indeed, “without Him we could have done nothing.” (Common rules of the Congregation of the Mission) (cf. Lk. 17:10; Jn. 15:5)

Omnis Gloria Deo
(Reg. Comm. XII, 3)