Chapter 8

Towards the Goal
(1870-1890)

From the time of their arrival the Vincentian Fathers have accepted the stewardship of the Philippine Seminaries in the 19th century. The following years until the turmoil of the revolution saw the growth of Seminary training in the country, providing the parishes with an increasing number of secular priests. This fact, despite the difficult times, helped to solve in some way the critical problem of secularization of parishes. It was a bright period in the history of clerical training in the Philippines.

THE SEMINARY OF MANILA

Not everything, however, ran smoothly for the reorganized Seminaries. Aside from the trouble in Vigan (1875-1876), other problems and troubles arose to hinder the progress of the work everywhere. The Manila Seminary is a case in point. This Seminary, after the Vincentian take-over, became a sort of training ground for the missionaries coming from Spain to be assigned to other provincial Seminaries. This practice proved to be a disadvantage to the Manila Seminary, because it had to give up some of its most qualified members to provide experienced priests to the new foundations. And thus there was no continuity of progress due to the constant changes in the Seminary personnel. In a short time, it had a rapid succession of Rectors: Fathers Velasco, Casarramona, Farré, then Cassaramona again, and Salmerón. This ever changing shift of staff members, however, was demanded by the needs arising from the new foundations. It became a nagging problem of the San Carlos Seminary of Manila, despite the continual interest of the Madrid Provincial, Fr. Sanz, to give them the best available personnel.

Nevertheless, the Seminary enrollment was encouraging. It averaged about 55, except after the Cavite revolt of 1872, when for the next four years the enrollment went down to 39.
The earthquake of 1863 damaged heavily the Seminary building. But the main problem that hindered Seminary training and never allowed peace, even during the years before the Vincentians arrived, was the occupation of some quarters of the Seminary building by the soldiers of the Government. To understand how this situation came about, some antecedents to the coming of the Vincentians must be recalled.

On January 25, 1768 the Manila Archbishop Basilio Sancho de Santa Justa y Rufina decided to re-erect the diocesan Seminary which since the English invasion of Manila in 1762 ceased to exist. On May 1768 King Carlos III expelled the Jesuits from the Spanish dominions. This forced them to leave their Colegio de San Jose. A week later the Archbishop took the College building for his Seminary where during the first ten years (1768-1778) some 140 seminarians were trained, with 77 among them ordained priests. But they were so hastily and poorly trained that their less edifying, nay scandalous behavior became a blot on the good name of the Filipino secular clergy. The King ordered a visitation of the Seminary in 1776. One of the results of this visitation was that the Seminary was given the former church and College of San Ignacio. So they left the adjoining building of the Colegio de San Jose which stood on the corner block at the junction of Victoria and Palacio (now General Luna) streets. Since 1768 the new Seminary began to be called Seminario de San Carlos, in honor of the King. Later, in 1806, part of this old San Ignacio College building was ceded to the Government for the use of the army. This unwise concession caused a serious obstacle to the progress and discipline of the Seminary.

Some 60 years later, in 1866, Archbishop Meliton Martinez, urged by the Vincentians, wrote Queen Isabel II about the difficulties encountered because of the presence of soldiers in the Seminary premises. In the course of his exposition, the Archbishop advanced some interesting comments of the lifestyle to which the Filipino youth were subjected because of the conditions of their poor life and the unsuitable environment in which they grew up. He explained how the indio or mestizo boys, before entering the Seminary, generally lived in small houses, six or ten yard square, without any interior compartments. There persons of both sexes live together, sleep and wear their clothes without much circumspection, remaining often without undershirt on account of the warm weather. They generally arrive in Manila at the age of 12, without any training of modesty in their homes, and go to live in some miserable boarding house or dormitory for students in the dirty suburbs of the city. There together with some varnish of Spanish dialect, they are exposed to immoral behavior and bad examples of lives of vice in the area. From such an upbringing, remarked the good
Archbishop, how can we expect to train a chaste, disciplined and zealous clergy?

Instead of letting them exposed to an environment of degradation and corruption, they should come when still young to the Seminary to live in an atmosphere of piety and good example. If instead of coming to board in the Seminary at the age of 23 when they had already been acquainted with all sorts of evil, they enter at the age of innocence, when only about 12 years old; then, in all certainty, "the pious desires of Your Majesty openly expressed in the Royal Cédula of October 19, 1852, could be fulfilled." The Archbishop concluded thus:

"Taking into account the docility of the Filipino indigenous natives, and the great improvement that can be gleaned in the few priests prepared by the Fathers of the Congregation of St. Vincent de Paul, under whose direction the Seminary of San Carlos — in accordance with the above mentioned Cédula — has been during the last four years already, there is no doubt that soon a learned, well disciplined and zealous clergy might be formed. But to attain this end, it is absolutely necessary to adapt the Seminary discipline to the wise prescriptions of the Sacred Council of Trent. And there would be no serious difficulties to overcome in order to achieve the Tridentine norms, if only the whole Seminary building, which in all justice and by right of property belongs to the Seminary, would just be left free and available for its purpose. Unfortunately, out of a series of concessions, and through natural calamity, the building has been reduced to such an extreme where the seminarians are forced to dwell in cramped quarters, and the zealous Directors confined to stuffy and unbecoming rooms."3

The following excerpt from the Exposition of Archbishop Meliton Martinez disproves the claim that the Church in the Philippines was not interested in the formation of an indigenous native clergy. The Spanish Archbishop wrote.

"Even if the admission to the honors of the Priesthood of all those endowed with vocation and aptitude without any discrimination of race were not according to the mind of the Church, the very impossibility of Spain to provide the Philippine Archipelago with sufficient number of ministers to meet the needs of its immense and ever growing population, would render necessary the existence of an indigenous native Clergy."4
Since the Spanish clergy were too few then to attend to the needs of an ever growing population, it was obviously imperative to form an indigenous native clergy to take over the administration of parishes, not just to become subordinate coadjutors of Spanish parish priests. And this was unquestionably the mind of the Manila Archbishop and of the Spanish Vincentians working in his Seminary.

The Bishop's petition to the Queen for the evacuation of the army from the Seminary building went unheeded nevertheless. On October 28, 1868 the Seminary Rector, Fr. Antonio Farré presented another Exposition to the Archbishop of Manila, insisting and urging that the provisional use of a certain spacious hall which former Archbishop Seguí granted to Lieutenant Ordobao (for the establishment of the General Academy of Cadets of Infantry, and later for a very small Military Library) be finally revoked, and the hall returned back for the use of the Seminary. The reasons supporting the claim were that, on one hand, the Military Library was actually so small and the persons visiting it so few that it seemed a pity to deprive the Seminary of such hall when the Library could easily be transferred to any of the military quarters in Manila and on the other hand, the Seminary chapel had been heavily damaged by the earthquake of June 3, 1863. The upstairs room being used as chapel lacked both the decency and the size demanded for this sacred purpose. If only the chapel could be transferred to the hall, and the Library moved to another place (smaller but suitable), the Seminary will have fitting dormitory accommodations. In addition, the general public may fulfill Sunday obligation in the Seminary chapel which will be open for public worship. This arrangement — the Exposition added — will be in full accord with the Royal Order of January 30, 1862 by which the Government of her Majesty took upon itself the duty of providing the priests of the Congregation of the Mission with adequate house and furniture including a suitably furnished public oratory.5

This lengthy Exposition of Fr. Farré was at once forwarded by the Manila Archbishop to the Governor General, D. José de la Gandara. The Governor, in turn, passed it on to the military. As might be expected, the military stood pat and refused to give in, alleging as excuse their need of room for military archives. And thus the Seminary was forced to live precariously in its own house, because a guest courteously admitted refused to leave, taking over the place as though he owned it. And this unfair situation was to continue for 12 years, until the destructive earthquake of 1880 completed the damage done by a previous one in 1863, compelling the whole Seminary to transfer to the Vincentian house in San Marcelino.

The intervening years (1868-1880) were tumultuous. The Cavite revolt of 1872 did not affect, to any great extent, the Seminary life. But
for the good Archbishop of Manila, Meliton Martinez, the burden and the strain was heavy. First, he had to show the unbreakable firmness of a Church’s Pastor when he unhesitatingly rejected the unjust demands of Governor General Rafael Izquierdo for the defrocking of the unfortunate Filipino priests, Fr. Jose Burgos, a creole from Vigan, Ilocos Sur; Fr. Mariano Gomez, a full-blooded Filipino, from Sta. Cruz, Manila; and Fr. Jacinto Zamora, a Spanish mestizo from Pandacan, Manila, condemned to capital punishment for their falsely alleged complicity in the Cavite revolt of 1872. Archbishop Meliton Martinez openly rejected the iniquitous demand, protesting, together with Bishops Gainza of Naga, and Jimeno of Cebu, against the Government’s unjust sentence for a supposed crime that could not be substantiated with any legal proof or competent evidence. And so, the three victims of a noble and patriotic fight for the rights of the Filipino clergy were at least given the supreme consolation of dying with all due honor to their priestly dignity, as heroic martyrs of their motherland.

Another parallel occasion which tested the fortitude of the Pastor of the Archdiocese of Manila was the arrival of the Schismatic priest Alcalá Zamora, nominated by the masonic government of Spain, with utter disregard of the Holy See, for the suffragan Bishopric of Cebu. Archbishop Meliton Martinez, as a sign of protest against intrusion of the State in Church affairs, refused even to see the illegitimate appointee.

The burden of disgraceful events during the revolutionary years, added to the weight of his age, prompted the Manila Archbishop to tender his resignation from the pastoral responsibility of the Archdiocese. This resignation was reluctantly accepted by Rome in 1875. Then he retired to his native town, Pradoluengo, in Burgos, Spain, where he spent his last years until his death in 1885.

His successor, Most Rev. Pedro Payo, O.P., took over the Manila Archdiocese in 1876. He had been teaching in the University of Santo Tomas, Manila on occasions. He always had good relations with the Vincentian Fathers of the Seminary, although occasionally there was some friction. Father Payo — as he was always called — knew the needs of the Dominican University very well. To help the Ecclesiastical Faculties, which at that time was short of students, he decided to send the seminarians of San Carlos to attend classes of Dogmatic Theology at Santo Tomas.

The Vincentian Directors of the Seminary were unpleasantly surprised and bothered by this move. However, with the memory of the loss of the Vigan Seminary in that same year 1876 (due to a misunderstanding with the Bishop) still fresh in their minds, the Vincentians cautiously took their time and pondered well how to react. They
resolved “to send a respectful letter expressing the inconvenience that might result from such disposition.” However, the Archbishop replied that he did not agree with them. A sense of disappointment prevailed among the Fathers. The Vincentian Provincial, Fr. Diego Salmeron then wrote to General Fr. Eugenio Bore (Fr. Etienne had died on March 11, 1874) asking him whether it might not be better under such circumstances to rescind the contract and leave the Manila Seminary. The Most Honored Father Bore answered that even without teaching Dogmatic Theology, the Fathers could still do plenty of good for the seminarians and the Archdiocese, so that they should remain in the Seminary.

Thus, the Fathers patiently continued in their silent and obscure work during four years, from June 1877 to June 1881, even without teaching Dogma in the San Carlos Seminary. To make things worse, at the end of the school year 1879-1880, Archbishop Payo decided to change the classes in such a way that the two years devoted until then to Theology, "should be dedicated to teaching Latin and Spanish." The good Fathers saw to it that the new practice was carried out without delay. But the experiment did not succeed. And by June 1881, they were forced to explain to the Archbishop the problem of having no Theology classes and the value of returning to the arrangement followed in the previous school year. Their humility and patience obtained for them at last the long desired reward. Having suggested to the Archbishop the opportunity of reestablishing in the Seminary the teaching of Dogmatic Theology, the Fathers finally convinced Archbishop Payo who this time acceded at once to a reestablishment. It was resolved that Father Moral (Ildefonso) be charged to explain Dogmatic Theology (June 23, 1881).6

What brought about this change of mind? The earthquake of July 18, 1880.

The Manila Seminary is Transferred to the Vincentian House on San Marcelino Street

At 12:40 p.m. of Sunday, July 18, 1880, the city of Manila was rocked by a terrible earthquake tremor which lasted a mere one minute and ten seconds. But that short time was enough to make the finest buildings of strong materials to collapse, and to reduce to ruins most of the structures in the city. The Manila dwellers ran in fear to the suburbs where houses were of light materials. Others took refuge in the ships.

On the following day, July 19, feast of St. Vincent de Paul, there was a momentary respite. But on July 20, at 5:40 in the afternoon,
another more violent earthquake that lasted for 45 seconds, and then a third one at 10:40 stronger than the previous ones came to destroy what was left, bringing havoc and suffering among the population. The Seminary of San Carlos of Manila, located in the former Jesuit building of San Ignacio College at the corner of Victoria and General Luna (then, Palacio) streets, in Intramuros, was left uninhabitable. On that very day, Fathers decided to transfer the seminarians to the Vincentian House in San Marcelino street, (casa de Campo de los Padres Paules) outside the city walls, until the necessary repairs might be finished. Fr. Francisco Potellas and Brother Gabriel Tarrasa were left amidst the ruins to guard and recover whatever could be saved.\footnote{7}

The House of San Marcelino was a Casa de Campo, (a summer-house for field days) which was quite small to accommodate the whole Seminary. But the Community found a way to adapt itself to the limited quarters. They set up a shed or hall (which later became a public chapel) for the seminarians' quarters. The Seminary directors were accommodated in the former room of Brother Cobisa. The dining room was arranged to make it common to the seminarians and the Fathers. Some innovations were made.

The Seminary paid a small rental fee for the house. In the meantime, the Archbishop, realizing that the old San Ignacio building could not be used again, planned, with the cooperation of the Fathers, a new Seminary near his own Palace in Intramuros.

In view of the changed circumstances, Archbishop Payo granted that Dogmatic Theology would be taught again in the Seminary at San Marcelino. There was indeed quite a difference between walking 400 meters from the Intramuros Seminary to the University of Santo Tomas, and walking four kilometers from and to San Marcelino. Thus, providentially, through the misfortune of the 1880 earthquake and the subsequent transfer of the Seminary to the House of San Marcelino, the Vincentians were happy to resume teaching Theology in the Seminary itself. This was for the good of the students who could now be trained in an atmosphere better suited to their ecclesiastical formation, without having to wander around the city streets.

**New Rules for the Manila Seminary**

From the days of Archbishop Basilio Sancho de Santa Justa y Rufina in the 18th century, the San Carlos Seminary of Manila was supposed to be governed by the Rules established by the same Archbishop. But such Rules during the 19th century were only nominal, since Seminary life was simply organized according to legitimate traditions. That is why in December 1863, a year after the Vincentians
arrived, Fr. Velasco wrote to the Spanish Provincial, Fr. Sanz thus: "Here we have no standing Rules for our boarding students in Manila". As soon as Fr. Jose Casarramona arrived in the Philippines in November 1863, he was therefore entrusted with the work of preparing a draft of Rules according to the traditions of the Congregation’s Directories and taking into consideration the needs of the country. When finished, the Fathers longed to have the Rules promulgated officially. But prudently, they did not rush in this important matter, but rather proceeded cautiously, especially after the sad experience of the Vigan Seminary in 1876. They preferred to wait till the Archbishop himself would say something about it.

It was only on September 23, 1878, when Archbishop Pedro Payo, O.P., asked them for a draft of Seminary Rules, that the Rector Fr. Manuel Orriols dared to present him the draft prepared by Fr. Casarramona. Three days later the Archbishop of Manila officially approved the Rules of the Seminary of San Carlos of Manila, ordering everybody belonging or residing in the Seminary to observe them faithfully. The Vice-Secretary who signed this document together with the Prelate was a well known disciple and benefactor of the Vincentians in Spain, Fr. Francisco Paja.

In contrast to the Rules of the Seminaries of Nueva Caceres and Nueva Segovia, these Rules of the Manila Seminary did not include anything related to the direction and administration of the Seminary. They regulate exclusively the life and discipline of seminarians. Briefly, in only six chapters, they covered all the pertinent aspects of Seminary training, viz.:

| Chapter | I — Conditions for admission into the Seminary (5 articles) |
| Chapter | II — Discipline in the Seminary (20 articles) |
| Chapter | III — Time Distribution (12 articles) |
| Chapter | IV — On the spirit that should animate the seminarians (5 articles) |
| Chapter | V — On vacations (8 articles) |
| Chapter | VI — Requirements for Holy Orders (4 articles) |

The newly promulgated Rules featured sweeping changes in the discipline of seminarians, and proved a most effective instrument in the difficult task of training future priests. Under the new regulations, the aspirants were to be not older than 25 years of age, and should have finished Philosophy. The Rules noted:

Due to special circumstances it has not been possible to establish the Manila Seminary until the present date as strictly
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Conciliar Seminary (admitting candidates from their early age, according to the desire of the Council); yet the Seminary is established with the same aim, that is to prepare worthy priests for the Diocese. It is true that the aspirants to the priesthood enter this Seminary at a rather advanced age, and remain in it for just a few years. This fact prevents or hinders the attainment of the results efficaciously derived from the prescriptions of the Council of Trent. But precisely on this account, the seminarians must supply with fervent diligence what they should have acquired from their tender age.9

The tuition fee was P7 per month. The candidates for admission were to undergo an entrance test on the subjects they had studied and on their understanding about the ecclesiastical vocation. Furthermore they were to write an application for admission to the Archbishop himself, and they were to present the usual Certificates (of Baptism, Confirmation, etc.).

Each department or hall was to be under a "beadle" representing the Prefect of Discipline and responsible to him on the observance of discipline and order. Prompt obedience, silence except during recreations; personal neatness, refinement and good manners; modesty, fraternal charity, caution in the choice of reading materials, and sincerity were the virtues prominently singled out in the Rules. Seminarians were to observe an unfailing sense of clerical propriety in the streets, in the Cathedral, in their department and in their dealings with outsiders and household servants, and in their correspondence. It was not deemed appropriate for seminarians to indulge in frequent social visits or letter writing.

These regulations borrowed from the official Directories for Seminaries under the Vincentians all over the world were generally adopted in the Philippine Seminaries of the late 19th century and strictly observed until the mid-20th century. To get a closer idea of the type of clerical training imparted by the Vincentians during this epoch, it would be good to take a look at the time distribution, for instance, of the Seminary life in the Manila Seminary which more or less prevailed also with slight variations in the other Seminaries of Naga, Cebu and Jaro (and, at least, for some time, in Vigan) under the Vincentians. The Rules of the San Carlos Seminary of Manila offers the following Time Schedule:

A.M.
4:40 Rise
(Once a week, on Thursdays, rising was at 5:00)
5:00 Morning prayer. Meditation.
5:30  Holy Mass.
      Study period.
7:00  Breakfast.
      Study period.
8:45  Short visit to Blessed Sacrament. The so-called "Paso" a
      review of the day’s lesson.
9:00 — 11:00 Classes.
11:00 Spiritual Reading; Explanation of some passages of the New
      Testament. (NOTE: When these Rules were approved, only
      Moral Theology and Latin were taught in the Seminary;
      Dogma and Canon Law were taken up in Sto. Tomas Univer-
      sity. Later, Spiritual Reading and New Testament were trans­
      ferred to some early evening hour)
      “Miserere” — Brief visit to Blessed Sacrament. Recreation.

P.M.
12:30  Siesta
      (Lunch was postponed later to 12:00; and Siesta to 1:00 p.m.)
2:00  Rise
2:15  Classes (Later, Study period; classes postponed to 3:00 p.m.)
2:45  Study period (Later, Classes)
4:30  Merienda, Recreation.
5:15  Gregorian Chant. Study period.
6:15  "Paso" — review of day’s lesson.
6:30  Class (Later, Study period)
7:45  Holy Rosary, in the Chapel.
      Particular examination of conscience.
8:00  Angelus, Supper. Recreation.
9:00  Night Prayers. General Examination of conscience.
9:30  Retire.

On Saturdays, the “Salve Regina” is sung. On Thursday and
Sundays, there is a Spiritual Conference of about 30 minutes, after the
mental prayer. On Sundays a Sung Mass; and Vespers, at 3:00 p.m.
After Vespers, a class of Liturgy or Ceremonies and Plain Chant. At
5:00 p.m., a walk, or recreation for two hours. Every year the Semi­
narians do the Spiritual Exercises or Annual Retreat for eight days,
every month, there is a Recollection day.

Other details of the clerical training given in the Philippine semi­
naries under the Vincentians those days were as follows: Seminarians
received their visits on Sundays and Thursdays, from 8 to 10 o’clock in
the morning. Christmas vacations were from December 23 to January 7
and summer vacation from Friday of the Passion Week to July 1. Final
exams of each school year were held during the last days of June. Seminarians were allowed to go on vacation in the Seminary. Should they prefer to go home, they must be with their families from Easter Sunday until the Eve of Corpus Christi only. Afternoon classes were omitted from March 1 on account of the warm weather. Among the norms to be observed during vacations were "Seminarians should never go, under any pretext, . . . especially to cockfights"; an indication that such noisy entertainment was not uncommon among some clerics those days, (as it is known from the unfortunate case of the famous Fr. Jacinto Zamora whose innocent allusion to it implicated him unjustly with the plot of the Cavite uprising in 1872.)

The Seminary Directors prepared a plan of Spiritual Conferences given by the Fathers themselves. The seminarians were expected to prepare the homilies or sermons which, as an exercise for sacred preaching, they were to deliver in the Refectory during the second semester of the school year. Once a week, even during vacations, the seminarians were also called to share with the community pious thoughts, affections and resolutions they have pondered during the mental prayer. By October, the Seminary Fathers directed different groups of Diocesan Priests in their Spiritual Retreat which they asked to make in the Seminary. At times, these Retreats coincided with the Spiritual Exercises for the Ordinands, in which case the Annual Retreat of the rest of the seminarians was advanced or postponed as circumstances would demand.

Such was the tenor of Seminary life and training in those days. Notice that the Rules of the Manila Seminary were intended for Major Seminarians only and Theologians at that. The Seminarians who studied in San Marcelino for three years were: 27 during the school year '80-'81; then, during '81-'83, 17 studied Moral Theology, and 14 took Dogma; and during '82-'83, 17 took Moral, and 11 studied Dogma.

Naturally, Archbishop Payo did not leave his Seminary in the provisional quarters of San Marcelino. He constructed a new building between the new Jesuit Church of San Ignacio and the Archbishop's property in Intramuros on Arzobispo Street. When this new Seminary was inaugurated on January 22, 1883, following the expressed desire of the Prelate, four Vincentian Fathers (Fr. Manuel Orriols, Rector, Fr. Ildefonso Moral, Fr. Gabino Lopez, and Fr. Miguel Perez Anton) with three Brothers (Gregorio Perez, Fermin Cobisa, and Miguel Garcia) went to live in the Seminary, while Fr. Francisco Potellas and Fr. Jose Goicoechea remained in San Marcelino.

Once the seven Vincentians were installed in the new Seminary of Intramuros, by the middle of April, 1883, Archbishop Payo asked the
Provincial to allow Fr. Miguel Perez Anton to be his companion in his travel to Rome and Spain. The Prelate's benevolence and trust towards Fr. Perez Anton was a well deserved reward for 15 long years spent by this Vincentian in the Manila Seminary of San Carlos. Upon his return from Europe, Fr. Perez Anton was assigned as Rector of the Seminary of Naga.¹¹

On the same year 1883, Fr. Jose Lopez de Goicoechea was forced by ill health to return to Spain, after 15 years of incessant apostolic labors for the poor in the Seminaries of Cebú and Manila (eight years in Cebú, and seven years in Manila). This true Vincentian missionary deserves special memory in our annals.

**Fr. Jose Lopez de Goicoechea. A Happy Apostle of the Poor¹²**

He was born in the city of Tafalla, province of Navarra, in 1841. He studied Latin, Humanities and Philosophy in the Seminary of Pamplona and joined the Congregation of the Mission in 1863. He was ordained priest in December 1867.

In January 1868, he departed from Cadiz with six other Vincentians and sixteen Daughters of Charity for the Philippines where they arrived on March 25. It was the 5th Vincentian mission. His first assignment was the Seminary of San Carlos of Cebú, where he spent eight years teaching Latin and Humanities. But his vocation was more for the apostolic ministry than for the classroom. And so he tried to learn Cebuano. He dedicated, together with Fr. Fernando de la Canal, his leisure time to hearing confessions, not only in the church of the Seminary, but elsewhere in the city and neighboring towns.

The Superiors realized that Manila offered a greater field of action for his zeal so he was transferred in 1876 to the Archdiocesan Seminary of the capital. Once in the Central House of the Province, his first endeavour was to learn Tagalog. As soon as he could manage to speak it his main occupation was to attend to the penitents who flocked to the small chapel of the old San Ignacio building, later destroyed by the earthquake of 1880. His confessional was always surrounded with people waiting their turn. After hearing confessions, he visited the city hospitals (San Juan de Dios, and the military hospital) where his charity and abnegation led all to love him. And this was not enough. Every week he went to the colleges directed by the Sisters (the Municipal School, Santa Isabel, Hospicio de San Jose, Santa Rosa and La Concordia) to hear confessions in Tagalog.

His kindness with the poor and sick men was admirable, how tenderly he dealt with them and, when hearing confessions, how near he came to them without minding their sickness nor their miseries and
filthiness. He saw nothing but souls who needed him for their peace and consolation, and he strove to bring them back to Jesus Christ who invites all those who labor and are heavy laden. Those who were sick and in prison longed for the visits of Fr. Goicoechea.

In his talks or sermons, whether he spoke in Spanish or in Tagalog, he had the charisma to move to tears his audience, although his language was very simple and popular. He left a lasting impression upon seminarians and lay people, so that many years later they still recalled what he taught and especially how he taught it.

Fr. Goicoechea was the first Vincentian to give short missions in Tagalog in closed Retreats or Spiritual Exercises for the laity in the Central House of San Marcelino. These lasted for a week from June 29, October 19 and November 30, 1879, and from February 22, 1880.

In spite of a heavy burden of apostolic work for the poor and perhaps because of it, he preserved his jovial character with the confreres, his pleasant conversation, his funny jokes and good humor. The community recreations were so happy because of him that he was really missed when some occupation kept him away. He used his leisure time making rosaries to distribute among the poor, easily getting the cooperation of seminarians for this apostolic entertainment.

He was only 40 years old when his physical constitution started to deteriorate under the burden of his many apostolic activities. Archbishop Payo, who esteemed him highly, wished to preserve his precious health for the good of souls; and to check his ardent zeal, forbade him to go to the confessional. Good Fr. Goicoechea however, found a way to continue his ministry of confessor without contravening the Prelate's order. He placed an easy chair in the parlor or reception room, and sitting there, found himself surrounded, just like in the chapel, by his dear penitents, who continued to flock around him to receive his counsel and comfort. When the Archbishop learned about it, he commented with praise: “We can do nothing with this good Father; his pleasure is in the ministry of confessions, and he will die in this apostolate . . .”

In 1882, the Philippines was struck by the cholera epidemic which in the city of Manila, from August 19 to December 12, claimed 13,377 victims. Fr. Goicoechea in his weak state became so sick that the Superiors, wishing to save his life, decided to repatriate him. With great reluctance, for he loved the Philippines dearly, and after obtaining the promise to bring him back after recovering his strength, he obeyed. On June 15, 1883, he departed for Spain. But the good and faithful laborer was nearing his life’s end, having fought the good fight. The time of his departure for the crown of righteousness was coming. He lived on in the Central House of Madrid for about six months.
During his last sickness, while in bed, he only thought of the Philippines where — as he said — many souls were waiting for him. In the midst of his sufferings, when others pitied him, he was wont to say with holy joy: “I must return to the Philippines to die there with weapons on hand.” The Lord was satisfied with his brave desire and called him to his reward on November 9, 1883, at the age of 42. He served 20 years as a Vincentian, and 15 of apostolate in the Philippines. According to eyewitnesses, he breathed his last full of joy, thinking of the Philippines, speaking of the Philippines, and praying for the Philippines.

*Students Trained and Ordained in the Manila Seminary in the Last Decades of the 19th Century*

From the beginning, the San Carlos Seminary of Manila, under the Vincentians during the Spanish regime, was — unlike the other Seminaries — a Major Seminary only. In Nueva Cáceres, Cebu, Jaro and Vigan, the ideal of training the candidates for the priestly vocation from their early adolescence, as the Council of Trent proposed, was carried out by the Vincentian Fathers with success. This same ideal they were eager to see realized in the Archdiocesan Seminary, as it is well reflected in the Exposition of Manila Archbishop Meliton Martinez to Queen Isabel II in 1866. And as the same Archbishop noted, for this ideal “there would be no serious difficulty to overcome, if only the whole Seminary building would just be left free and made available for its purpose.”

But the occupation by the military of part of the Seminary building until the earthquake of 1880, and other intervening circumstances during the next three decades, prevented the Manila Seminary from realizing such ideal until the beginning of the 20th century. Hence, during the Spanish regime, the Manila seminarians trained by the Vincentians were all Theology students who followed the customary two-year course of Dogma and two-year course of Moral in the Seminary. However, during the first three years, 1862-1865, and during the years, 1878-1879, the students went to the University of Santo Tomas for Canon Law and Dogma. The seminarians generally came from the Colleges of Letran, and Santo Tomas, where they studied Latin, Humanities and Philosophy.

Besides Dogma and Moral Theology, the students were given classes in Liturgy, Sacred Scripture, and Gregorian Chant, as accessory subjects. The Vincentian Fathers wished to introduce Canon Law in the Seminary, but they were not allowed to until 1895. This and other reforms, added two more years to the Seminary course, so that by the end of the century, the ecclesiastical studies lasted six years in the Seminary of Manila. This was recorded in the minutes of the Professors’ council meeting, dated April 24, 1894.
Towards the Goal

Special stress was given to training in Liturgical ceremonies, with two classes a week, and actual performance during the Sunday Masses and solemn Vespers sung on Sundays in the Chapel. This was a constant tradition in the Vincentian Seminaries. Exercises in sacred oratory and practice preaching were held privately in the refectory or in the chapel during summer vacations, spent in community, either in the Country House of San Marcelino, or in some neighboring town.

During those years, the number of major seminarians was, on an average, between 50 to 70. According to the official statistics of the Archbishop’s Chancery, in 1876, there were 45 seminarians, of which nine were deacons, five subdeacons, and six in Minor Orders. Professors generally numbered five. Most of the seminarians paid a moderate boarding fee of six pesos monthly, which later on was increased to ten pesos. There were three scholarships granted to deserving seminarians. Poor students were admitted free but they rendered household services to the Seminary. The Seminary itself was a self-supporting establishment, which rarely sought help from the Archdiocese. The institution owned several urban and rural estates administered by the Archdiocese. In 1805, Archbishop Zulaibar granted to the Seminary the estate of San Juan de Dinalupihan in Bataan, the rice harvested supporting the Seminary for more than one century, that is, until 1925.

Extant records of the Archdiocesan Chancery show that the number of priests ordained by the San Carlos Seminary of Manila under the Vincentians (1862-1899) during 37 years of Spanish rule were as follows: 166 priests in 13 years by Archbishop Meliton Martinez, 98 priests in 14 years by Archbishop Payo, and 57 priests in 10 years by Archbishop Nozaleda. Two more priests were ordained in 1900 and 1901.

A grand total of 321 full-blooded Filipino secular priests were thus ordained during a span of 37 years (1862-1899) in the Archdiocese of Manila alone, i.e. about nine priests per year. Of these, some 24 or 25 only, did all their ecclesiastical studies in the University of Santo Tomas. The rest, that is, almost 300 Filipino secular priests, were clerically formed by the Vincentians in the San Carlos Seminary of Manila during the last 37 years of Spanish regime — an average of eight priests per year. In the 20th century, during the same span of 37 years (1913-1950), the Vincentians in the same Manila Seminary were able to prepare 240 priests only (about 60 priests less than during the Spanish regime) or an average of 6.5 priests per year. This proves that the Royal Patronage during Spanish times was not opposed to the formation of a Filipino indigenous clergy, as it is frequently assumed.

Among the 300 priests trained by the Vincentians in the San Carlos Seminary of Manila during the Spanish regime, many were distinguished by their learning and virtue, as well as by their special gifts for the administration of ecclesiastical affairs. Those who must be remembered...
are the prebendaries and dignitaries of the Metropolitan Chapter, the many Vicar Foranes not only of neighboring districts but of far off provinces belonging to the vast territory of the Archdiocese, and the numerous modest but worthy and zealous pastors and curates who worked silently and faithfully in the parishes. No doubt, there were a good number of less edifying or even scandalous priests, who could be blamed for negligence, sloth, avarice and a relaxation of morality, but this kind of ministers are sadly found among the religious and the secular clergy everywhere. Rash generalizations and one-sided views should be avoided. Ecclesiastical virtue and discipline depend not so much on intellectual training as on spiritual formation. The latter was emphasized in the Vincentian Seminaries. Admittedly, the main concentration of the Paules was on the formation of a priestly spirit. . . In this, they achieved notable success.

Certainly, Seminary training was far from being perfect. Deficiencies of the clergy could always be traced back, indirectly and partially, to certain defects in the Seminary training received. But such shortcomings are inherent in any human enterprise. The Philippine Vincentian Seminaries in those days, as compared with other contemporary Seminaries in Europe, America or elsewhere, had little, if anything at all, to envy in point of clerical discipline.

The Rectors of San Carlos Seminary of Manila, during the first three decades, when the Provincial of the Vincentians had no proper residence yet (until 1890), were the Visitors of the Philippine Mission themselves: Fr. Gregorio Velasco (August 2, 1862 — November 13, 1874); Fr. Diego Salmeron (July 29, 1872 — November 13, 1874) and Fr. Manuel Orriols (February 22, 1875 — January 16, 1891).

The Provincial Fr. Orriols transferred his residence to the Central House of San Marcelino on January 16, 1891, remaining as Rector of the Seminary until the appointment of Fr. Serrallonga. The Rectors henceforth were: Fr. Santiago Serrallonga (1892-1894) and Fr. Rafael de la Iglesia (1894-1899), who was the last Rector under the Spanish regime, and was elected Provincial in 1902 to succeed the venerable and saintly Fr. Orriols.

THE SEMINARY OF NUEVA CACERES

The Famous Father Antonio Santonja

The first Rector of the Seminary of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary of Naga in 1865 was the pioneer Vincentian Fr. Ildefonso Moral. Two years later, when he had to leave temporarily for Madrid to attend the Provincial Assembly of the Congregation in 1867, he recom
mended as substitute his confirere Fr. Antonio Santonja who was well acquainted with the Seminary ever since the Vincentians took over its administration in 1865. Bishop Gainza approved the idea, and Fr. Santonja acted as *ad interim* Rector for about a year. Then again in 1869, when Fr. Moral was to leave for the establishment of the new Jaro Seminary, he left Fr. Santonja as acting Superior of the Seminary of Naga. Finally, when Fr. Moral was appointed in 1872 Rector of the new Seminary of Vigan, Fr. Antonio Santonja received his Letters Patent as Rector of Naga Seminary. By that time, he had won a well-deserved fame and esteem among the people of the capital city of the Bikol region.

He was born in Oñil, Alicante, on January 16, 1835. During his youth, he studied Medicine. But later he sought admission to the Congregation of the Mission and was received as a Vincentian on October 17, 1860. He came to the Philippines with the 3rd Vincentian mission on April 12, 1865. Three out of the four new missionaries were appointed to the Seminary of Naga. They arrived in Naga on May 3, 1865.

Father Santonja was a zealous missionary with a good scientific background in physics and chemistry. In 1886 he taught in Naga Seminary the most recent techniques then of the newly invented art of photography. To meet the needs of poor patients in the vicinity, he established in the Seminary a sort of “little pharmacy” open to all. It was very popular because it was trusted and often free. The poor knew they would not be charged and the well-to-do trusted the prescriptions prepared by the careful hands of Fr. Santonja and under his direction, by other clever students, like the famous Pañganiban, the former representative Aréjola, or the well accredited pharmacist of Naga, Don Antonio Carrascoso. Disciples said of Father Santonja thus: “Looking at Father Santonja while at work, and judging from the accuracy and expertise of his procedures, he seemed to be an apothecary of long experience.”

When a masonic revolution in Spain overthrew the Monarchy to open the way for the First Spanish Republic, there was no chance to expect any financial help from the metropolis. The Seminary of Naga with its ever increasing enrollment was in dire need of expansion. The Rector, Fr. Santonja, tried diligently to obtain from the Superior Civil Government the 3% established by law for the support of the Seminary. He asked from the Government the annual quota of P600 due and regularly paid in the past since 1795. And since this was not enough to meet Seminary needs, the Bishop approved Fr. Santonja’s plan of increasing a little the tuition fee of the day scholars whose number was more than the boarding seminarians; that way, the students themselves
would help to maintain the College Seminary that was giving them virtually free education.

The number of students in those years was as follows: 521 in 1869; 502 in 1870; 554 in 1871; 611 in 1872; 494 in 1873; and 567 in 1874. With the economic help obtained from the students' tuition fees, Fr. Santonja was able to start the urgently needed construction to expand the Seminary. He acted as architect, contractor, engineer, and supervisor of the works. Some of the brightest students lent a hand in supervising the laborers.

Fr. Santonja was a tireless man of action. He planned an engineering work to bring water from the river to the Seminary building a tank and filter at the entrance of the garden at the Bishop's House. He ordered from Spain a fire extinguisher, bought a field for cultivation, and obtained an estate from the Government. He established a cooperative in the Seminary owned and administered by the students themselves for their own benefit. There they could buy all sorts of articles, books, clothes, shoes, writing supplies, even sweets and toys for the small ones. The greater part of the funds for running this cooperative was sought by the Rector himself.

"There is no family in Nueva Cáceres that is not indebted to Father Santonja. As a matter of fact it was Father Santonja who actually governed us all . . . ", such was the voice of the people in Naga even some 30 or 40 years after his departure. A pamphlet about him was published in Barcelona, under the title "Una gloria de Nueva Cáceres". It was secretly brought to the Philippines. When the good Father learned about it, he had it burned at once.

The College of Santa Isabel in Naga was his work. The Peñafrancia Shrine, the House of the Chaplain, the Hospital of Palestina for lepers, the little resort house for the seminarians on vacations in San Felipe, a school in Fr. Jorge Barlin street, the Cathedral, the Episcopal Palace, and the Rectory of the Cathedral owed to Father Santonja many of their improvements. Under his direction and encouragement, the people built in a few weeks a dike to protect the ground of the Bikol's Shrine of Our Lady against erosion. In 1880, Fr. Santonja opened a wide street called "Via Gainza," from the corner of the College, in straight line down to the Shrine of Peñafrancia. The boulevard was planned in such a way that on both sides houses were built, well separated from one another, as a preventive measure against destructive fires that so often came to devastate the whole town. He brought a public water system to the city. He built the "All soul's Dam" (Presa de las Animas): also a bridge in Tabuco; an irrigation channel from Palestina to Concepcion, etc.
But his main achievements were in his duties as Rector of the Seminary of the Most Holy Rosary, as Vicar General of the Diocese of Naga, and as a zealous priest and missionary of St. Vincent. As Seminary professor he taught Philosophy for 4 years and Moral Theology for 10 years. When appointed Ecclesiastical Governor of the Diocese, he was forced to leave his classes but not the rest of his duties in the Seminary. To fulfill them he put in a telephone — one of the earliest types, since this was in 1879 — from the Seminary to the Episcopal Palace so that from his office he could do the business of the Seminary without loss of time.

The secret of success can in some way be attributed to close and intimate friendship with the great Dominican Bishop Francisco Gainza of Naga. The humble missionary of St. Vincent and the illustrious son of St. Dominic were indeed twin souls in their greatness of mind and heart. Their union in life could be broken only by death.

On July 14, 1879 Bishop Gainza arrived in Manila in a very serious condition. He was brought in a chair to the convent of Santo Domingo. His confrere the Archbishop of Manila, Pedro Payo administered the last Sacraments to him. During his last days, Bishop Gainza was visited twice by his close friend Father Santonja. He died in the peace of the Lord on July 31.

Called by his Provincial, Father Santonja came to Manila for the third time on August 2. Archbishop Payo to whom belonged the government of the suffragan diocese of Naga, following the request of the deceased Prelate, appointed Father Santonja as Ecclesiastical Governor of the Diocese.

Fr. Santonja returned at once to Naga on August 4. Many prayers and suffrages were offered for the beloved Bishop Gainza in the whole diocese, especially by the 200 seminarians and more than 600 day scholars of the College Seminary. Father Santonja governed the Diocese for more than a year and a half.

But the loss of his dearest friend was a severe blow to Father Santonja. His health began to decline so that by the beginning of 1882, the Seminary doctor, as well as his own confreres, deemed it necessary to send him back to Spain. However, the scarcity of personnel in the Philippine Province demanded some delay. The following year, the Spanish Visitor, Fr. Maller, needed somebody to be sent as Rector of the Seminary of Havana, Cuba. Thus, Fr. Santonja was allowed to leave the Philippines on February 1, 1884. He died in Madrid some years later, on December 31, 1887, at the age of 52. He was a Vincentian for 27 years, 19 of which he spent in Naga (1865-1884). The memory of those two decades spent zealously for the spiritual and material good of
the Seminary, the city and the diocese of Nueva Caceres could not be forgotten easily. During his term as Rector of the Seminary, the average number of students was 636 every year.

**Further Progress After Fr. Santonja**

When Fr. Santonja left the Naga Seminary, Fr. Miguel Perez Anton became his successor in 1884. The Bishop of the Diocese at that time was the Augustinian, Most Rev. Casimiro Herrero. When Bishop Herrero died on November 12, 1886, the Archbishop of Manila appointed the Seminary Rector, Fr. Miguel Perez, as Vicar General of the Diocese, thus acknowledging the well-deserved fame he had acquired in Manila as a theologian and a canonist. Some years later, in 1892, Fr. Perez was appointed Rector of Jaro, while the former Jaro Rector, Fr. Juan Miralda, was assigned Rector of Naga. During all these years, new construction works were undertaken in the Seminary to enlarge the building and improve it, in view of the ever increasing number of students and the raising of the Seminary to the standards of a recognized College of Secondary Education.

**THE SEMINARY OF CEBU**

When the Vincentians took over the San Carlos Seminary of Cebu, they found that its building was no other than the ancient but strong house of the centuries old San Ildefonso College founded by the Jesuits on August 21, 1595, and abandoned when they were banished from the Spanish dominions in 1768. When Bishop Mateo Joaquin de Arevalo asked the King of Spain on October 25, 1777, for a building for his diocesan Seminary, the King granted him on October 29, 1779, the old Jesuit residence of San Ildefonso. This was still the Seminary building upon the arrival of the Vincentians on January 23, 1867.

In that same year, at the request of the people of Cebu, and with full approval of the ecclesiastical and civil authorities, the Vincentians opened the Seminary classes to extern students or day scholars. The first Rector, Fr. Jose Casarramona, who had previously prepared the Rules for the Manila Seminary, made a new revision of those Rules, adding the necessary provisions for the discipline of day scholars. When he left the Cebu Seminary in 1870, his successor, Fr. Antonio Farré, found it had already taken root. The number of seminarians during the first four years was a little higher than when there were no externs. In the years 1868, 1869, 1870 and 1871, there were respectively 58, 48, 60, and 80 students. The priests ordained during those years including 1867 were respectively 1, 2, 3, 3, and 2. Quite few but such
was the normal number in the various Philippine dioceses in those days. With the arrival of the Vincentians, there appeared signs of slow but sure improvement in Seminary affairs.

One of the main obstacles in those first years of Vincentian administration was the lack of sufficient rooms in the old San Ildefonso building to accommodate the ever increasing number of students. The new Rector, Fr. Farré, proposed enlarging the building by constructing a big study hall for some 130 or 140 students, as well as an ample dormitory for the seminarians. The plan was perfectly accomplished with the full approval of the Bishop. Besides the study hall and the dormitory above it, a dining room large enough to accommodate 200 guests was built on the ground floor, with kitchen, pantry, Faculty refectory, and classrooms as well.

Fr. Farré, gentler than his predecessor, continued to preserve the wise discipline introduced by Fr. Casarramona. He was the leader in regularity and observance and, true father as he was, took pains in attending the welfare of every student. This gained him the esteem and affection of all.

**Fr. Antonio Farré, an Illustrious Vincentian in Cebu**

Father Antonio Farré, a native of Lérida, Spain, was born on May 30, 1838. Admitted in the Congregation of the Mission in 1858, he was ordained in 1864. After his first assignment in La Habana, Cuba, he was sent to the Philippines with the 4th mission, arriving in Manila on August 31, 1866. He worked in the San Carlos Seminary of Manila for more than four years. In 1867, the year after his arrival, he was appointed acting Rector of the Seminary, at the young age of 29, an obvious proof of the trust his Superiors had in his competence. Then in, 1870, he was sent to Cebu to take the place of its Rector Fr. Casarramona. There he stayed for 10 years until 1879.

During his rectorate, (1870-1879), the average number of students, including those of the Elementary School of Brother del Rio, was 267 every year. Indeed, Fr. Farré worked strenuously in the improvement of the Seminary.

But Seminary life does not depend only on the material, nor even on academic and disciplinary factors. There are other more important aspects that contribute to and affect the formation of the young aspirants to the priesthood. Fr. Farré attended first to a due repair and decoration of the church annexed to the Seminary. With that came the promotion of public worship and devotion even among the lay people who attended the church services. The Apostleship of Prayer was established there in 1875 and, although of private character, it
counted a total of 10,280 registered associates from August 6, 1875 to February 10, 1889. Liturgical solemnities were frequently and properly carried out in the church. Thus through their service at the altar, the seminarians were trained in church ceremonies and their life of piety fostered.

The energy and steadfastness of character of the Rector were openly manifested in 1875 when the schismatic priest Alcalá Zamora, appointed by the Republican Spanish Government, without any intervention of the Holy See, for the Bishopric of Cebu, was to take possession of the Diocese. Fr. Antonio Farré got ready to leave the Seminary with his whole community as soon as the intruder set foot in Cebu. He incited the Catholic people to show open hostility to the abusive interference of the State in the affairs of the exclusive competence of the Church. God’s providence however saw to it that matters would not reach extreme confrontation. Sudden death overtook the intruder priest just before his ship to Cebu was to weigh anchor.

On the other hand, Fr. Farré gave his full support to the charitable works of his confrere Fr. La Canal, especially in the establishment of the House of Charity or Little Hospital of St. Joseph in 1877, from which were derived the College of the Immaculate Conception in 1880, and the Succour House in 1889. Unfortunately, Fr. Farré was not able to see these last apostolic fruits of his zeal because a severe trial forced him to leave permanently, in 1879, the field of his missionary endeavours in the Philippines.

The Vincentian Fathers, not satisfied with Seminary duties alone, and without neglecting these, gave also Spiritual Exercises to the clergy every year whenever they were called for this ministry as befits their vocation. At first, they directed them in the Seminary itself; then, two Vincentians would go to different places strategically located, where priests might be gathered more easily; and later, in a country house acquired in 1880 at Mabolo, three kilometers from Cebu City, in an excellent location for vacations and for recollected retreats. Bishop Romualdo Jimeno, O.P., made his Retreats every year in the Seminary, from November 27 to December 7.

The Fathers did not confine themselves to the clergy of Cebu. They extended their services to other Visayan islands, giving retreats and rendering other priestly services to the clergy and the people of those regions. In one of those journeys, in 1879, the Rector, Fr. Antonio Farré sailed from Cebu to Leyte in a small boat. Caught in a typhoon, the boat capsized near Palompong. Some passengers perished but others — among them, Fr. Farré — were able to swim to shore. The terrible shock of this misfortune upset Fr. Farré, so deeply that his mental health was impaired. His psychic ailment prompted the
Superiors to call him to Manila and send him back to Spain for recovery. In Spain, he thankfully recovered. Having overcome his mental crisis, he was appointed Superior of the Andújar community in Andalucía, where he stayed for some 10 years until 1891 when he was called to become a Councillor to the Provincial and one of the Assistants to the Superior of the Madrid residence. However, in 1902, his mental illness recurred once more. Two years later, he died in the peace of the Lord in Leganés, Madrid, on January 8, 1904 at the age of 66, with 46 years as a Vincentian, 14 of which he spent in the Philippines.

**Brother Antonio del Rio, and His “Escuela del Hermano”, Forerunner of Future Vincentian Schools**

The Vincentian Fathers came to the Philippines mainly, though not exclusively, to raise the standards of Seminary education and to help in the formation of an adequate secular native clergy in the country. The Seminary of Manila was exclusively for clerics while the College Seminaries of Naga and Cebu were open not only to seminarrians aspiring to the priesthood, but also to lay students, either boarding interns or day scholars in the secondary or High School level. The idea was that, besides educating the future priests, the youth of those regions might receive an academic and Christian training beyond the elementary education provided by the public or private schools.

In Manila, the great and ancient institutions of Santo Tomás, San José and San Juan de Letrán already provided this need. But in other dioceses, the Bishops needed not only well prepared and zealous priests but also a well educated and deeply Catholic laity. They saw no better solution to the problem than to make the Minor Seminary become at the same time a College, or rather a High School open to the youth who were eager for a higher education but could not afford the luxury of going to Manila. Thus the Vincentians, first in Naga, then in Cebú, and later in Jaro, and for a short time in Vigan, devoted themselves not only to the clerical formation of the seminarrians, but also to the Christian education of the Filipino youth of those regions. Those diocesan Seminaries were, in reality, College Seminaries, that is, Seminaries that were at the same time Colleges differently from the Seminary Colleges of Letrán, San José and Santo Tomás. These were Colleges which fostered priestly vocations as in the Seminaries.

The first Vincentian effort towards the apostolate of Catholic Schools, besides Seminaries, sprang from a humble Brother Coadjutor who became the forerunner of this apostolate that was to be undertaken by the Vincentian Fathers later in the mid-20th century.
Less than half a year after the arrival of the Vincentians in Cebú, on May 15, 1867, Bishop Jimeno decided to open the Seminary classes to all the youth of the region even to those not aspiring for the priestly vocation. But not satisfied with this, the good Pastor thought also of the many other small children in the primary grades. There was already in the city a Primary Public School. But, was that enough for a city like Cebú, of 13,000 souls at that time? Hence, the Bishop asked the Government for permission to open in the Seminary compound another recognized Primary School entrusted to the Vincentians who were also in charge of the Seminary. Governor General Rafael Izquierdo granted the request on August 5, 1871, for the School of Primary Instruction which was already in operation one year before. Before obtaining any official recognition, the so called “Brother’s School” ("La Escuela del Hermano") gave instructions to some 100 children during the school year 1870-1871. The need for such a school was obvious and the Government could not but approve the Vincentian request. The initiative was taken by a lay Brother who quietly established that school.

Brother Antonio del Río Comitre, was born in Junquera, Málaga, Spain, on May 28, 1838, and admitted to the Congregation of the Mission on October 12, 1862. Two years later, after saying his vows as missionary of St. Vincent, he was sent at once to the Philippines with the 3rd Vicentian mission. Upon arriving in Manila on April 12, 1865, he was immediately assigned to the Seminary of Naga as Procurator of the new establishment and worked in that office for four years.

In the opinion of the Spanish Visitor Fr. Sanz, “Brother Antonio Comitre was a saintly, trustworthy and well educated religious whose services could be used with all guarantee of excellence.” In 1870, he was transferred to the Seminary of Cebú. There he took over the primary instruction of children to prepare them for higher education in the Seminary. In the first year (1870-1871), the number of children under his charge was 100. A famous journalist of Manila (the famous writer and orator, Don Manuel Rávago) who happened to be one of the pupils of Bro. del Río, recalled with fruition: “Brother Antonio del Río was an expert pedagogue, a keen and exemplary religious, so patient with his charges, so excellent a friend, that I entertained always a most special fondness and veneration for him, an esteem that has not been diminished with the passing of the years.”

The good Brother del Río directed the popularly called “Escuela del Hermano” for 17 years with an average of 100 children receiving elementary education every year. Many illustrious figures appointed later to the highest posts in the Church and in the State were counted among his pupils. In 1887, Brother del Río was called to Manila to serve at the San Carlos Seminary, where he stayed until its closing.
during the revolution in 1899. Then he returned to Madrid where for five years he served as porter and assistant to the provincial procurator. There he died peacefully in the Lord on March 6, 1904, at the age of 66; 42 years as a Vincentian.

After he left Cebu, the “Escuela del Hermano.” continued its work of education for many years. But never again did it attain greater fame than during the years of the good Brother Antonio del Río Comitré.

Fr. Fernando de la Canal and the “Casa de Caridad” (Charity House)\textsuperscript{16}

On the night of July 1, 1877, at about 9 o’clock, a poor dying man seeking relief collapsed at the door of the Seminary of Cebu. As soon as they were told about it, the Rector, Fr. Farre, and the Spiritual Director, Fr. Fernando La Canal, went down. Even before reaching the entrance hall, they sense the foul smell of the unhappy old man, abandoned perhaps by his own folk at the doorstep of the Seminary. They went to him and found out that he was a poor Tagalog, formerly a blacksmith, who had been going around begging for alms, because of a horrible disease. In spite of his nauseating condition, they put him to bed inside the Seminary entrance hall, took away his dirty rags, cleansed him, dressed his putrid wounds, brought him to one of the classrooms and gave him something to eat and drink. Thus, was he relieved a little and found some rest that night.

Fr. Farre went the next day to Bishop Romero de Madridejos, O.F.M., to explain what happened on that memorable night and to suggest the establishment of a hospital or an asylum, to attend to the many unfortunate people found daily in any city as populous as Cebu. “What shall we do?” the Bishop asked. Then the Rector reminded him about a certain little house intended by his predecessor, Bishop Jimeno, for poor sick women, a charitable work that due to lack of funds had to be closed after the Bishop’s death. The house was left to the Seminary as a legacy to a pious work.

“Alright,” replied the good Franciscan Bishop, “let that house be reopened to receive the indigents most in need. For my part, I will contribute P40 every month for the support of that house and its patients.”

The first problem was to look for someone who will take charge of and watch over the patients. Fr. Farré entrusted at first the work to a pious married woman, by the name of Baldomera, and some other ladies. The poor Tagalog blacksmith was transferred at once to the little house; but in spite of the care and attention given him, a few days later, after receiving the Last Sacraments, he died peacefully in the “Casa de Caridad” (House of Charity), as the people began to call it.
After some three months, misunderstandings and conflicts between the good ladies threatened to bring their pious work to an end. Each one was going her way, leaving the Superior alone, without helpers to carry on the charitable work. Thus, Fr. Farré persuaded the zealous Fr. De La Canal, Spiritual Director of the Seminary, to look after his work of charity so as to save it from extinction.

Fr. Fernando de la Canal was a well-known and assiduous Confessor of many people in Cebu. Many pious souls frequented his confessional for guidance and direction in their spiritual lives. After fervently commending to the Lord this apostolic enterprise, Fr. La Canal decided to invite three young ladies of the barrio of San Nicolas, Apolina Lasala, Rafaela Echevarria, and Julia Avellana, whose solid piety and zeal he knew very well. The three of them accepted the challenge joyfully, and unhesitatingly took charge of the “Charity House” on October 24, 1877. The establishment became known later as St. Joseph Hospital.

At first, they found it hard to overcome serious difficulties. The experience of the first dying patient caused them such a deep and sad impression that if it were not for the presence and encouragement of Fr. De La Canal, they would have abandoned their apostolate.

After 11 months of generous service, the good Father thought it was time to organize them into a distinct religious community with full approval of the Bishop, Fr. La Canal gave them a religious habit, and the title of “Hermanitas de la Madre de Dios” (Little Sisters of the Mother of God), or of the “Casa de Caridad” (Charity House) as they were popularly called. Apolonia Lasala was unanimously chosen as the Superioress of the community. With the official recognition of the new Institute, their fervor and eagerness to serve the poor patients was enkindled and became an even more generous.

Fr. Fernando de la Canal and the College of the Immaculate Conception and the Catholic Primary School of St. Vincent de Paul in Cebu

Even before the establishment of the Charity House, Fr. De la Canal had long been thinking about the imperative need for a Catholic educational institution for young ladies in those regions. In Manila, Naga and Jaro, the Daughters of Charity were already doing an immense good in several Colleges they were running. In Manila: the Municipal School (1864), Sta. Isabel (1864), Sta. Rosa (1866), and La Concordia (1868); in Naga, Sta. Isabel (1868); and in Jaro, San Jose (1872). But in Cebu, there was none.

Finally, a chance was presented to him when on March 6, 1880, two poor but well educated girls from the Manila Colleges came to join
the small community of the Little Sisters of the Mother of God in the Charity House. These two girls were well prepared for the educational apostolate and as soon as they heard the proposition of Fr. De La Canal, they enthusiastically accepted.

Thus, after obtaining the necessary permissions from Bishop Romero de Madridejos y del Rosario, O.F.M. and from the Civil Government, the Little Sisters of Cebu opened on May 31, 1880 the Colegio de la Inmaculada Concepcion and, annexed to it, the Municipal School or public school for the primary instruction of girls, which was to be entirely free for the poor of the province or the region around it. This Municipal School, after seven years of constant progress under the Little Sisters, was finally substituted by the Primary Catholic School of St. Vincent de Paul, which was transferred to another house in the same compound of the College of the Immaculate Conception.

Thus, the educational endeavour of the Vincentians in favor of the Filipino youth in general, for both sexes and at all levels, was splendidly shown, through the zeal of Father De La Canal and Brother del Rio, more complete and all embracing in Cebu than in any other region of the Philippines.

Thenceforth, the apostolate of the Little Sisters of the Mother of God was triplicated in the Charity House, in the College and in the School, under the wise and prudent guidance of the pious founder, De La Canal. This missionary, following the example of St. Vincent de Paul, did not hurry in preparing the Rules or Constitutions of the new religious community. It was only on May 2, 1888, that Bishop Martin Alcocer, O.F.M., of Cebu, approved the Rules and Constitutions enriching their observance with some grant of indulgences.

Fr. De La Canal was happy to see his foundation well established and flourishing. But he foresaw that it will not perhaps last long after he disappeared from the scene, unless someone would carry on his work, or better, unless the work was given a more solid ground where it could thrive safely and be preserved from possible dangers of extinction. The zealous Vincentian was feeling that his end was near. So he wrote to the Major Superiors and to Fr. Maller, the Spanish Visitor of Spain proposing the fusion of the Little Sisters of Cebu with the Company of the Daughters of Charity. He failed, however, to obtain right away a positive answer.

On July 14, 1892, Fr. De La Canal happily celebrated the Silver Jubilee of his Priestly Ordination. The most distinguished personalities of the city of Cebu, and above all, the Little Sisters of the Mother of God, with their protegees, did their best to honor and rejoice with him, praising and giving thanks to the Lord for so many graces bestowed upon the venerable missionary, founder of so many apostolic works.

Soon afterwards, the Director General of the Spanish Daughters
of Charity, Fr. Eladio Arnaiz, Provincial Visitor of the Vincentians in Spain, was sent by Fr. General as his Commissary to visit the houses of the double Family of St. Vincent in the Philippines, Fr. De La Canal did not lose this chance to broach once more his idea of merging the Little Sisters of Cebu with the Daughters of Charity, specially since his death was fast approaching. Although only 52 years old, he was exhausted and worn out under the burden of his apostolic works, especially his assiduous and incessant long hours in the confessional. By the end of 1893, he fell seriously sick and by medical advice, he was transferred to Manila where he arrived in a very weak condition on Christmas day of 1893. He was sent with his confrere, Fr. Godofredo Peces as companion to rest for a while in Sibul, Bulacán subjected to the medicinal waters of the thermal spring. This was during the months of January and February, 1894.

The General's Commissary, Fr. Eladio Arnaiz, left the Philippines for Spain on March 22, bringing along with him Fr. De La Canal's proposal regarding the future of the Little Sisters. The canonical question of the proposal demanded further study before reaching a final decision to be approved by Rome. There was however a ray of light and a guaranty left to the dying founder. He had a confrere in Cebu, Fr. Pedro Juliá, who knew well and took deep interest in Fr. De La Canal's works, especially the Little Sisters and their establishments. He arrived in Cebu in 1879. From 1889, he was Rector of the Seminary. All the time, he had been a close friend and generous collaborator of Fr. De La Canal, as well as a great admirer of the Little Sisters of the Charity House. He certainly wanted the good Sisters to keep on with their work and eventually be merged or fused with the Daughters of Charity.

On March 24, 1894, Fr. Pedro Juliá, Rector of Cebu and intimate friend of Fr. De La Canal, arrived in Manila, to console and comfort the dying founder. With this consolation and pledge of God's providence upon his apostolic works, Fr. Fernando de la Canal peacefully breathed his last in the peace of Christ on March 31, 1894, in the Vincentian House of San Marcelino, Manila, after receiving the Last Sacraments with edifying piety. He was buried in the Catholic Cemetery of Paco, Manila, but some years later, his mortal remains were transferred to the church of the San Carlos Seminary of Cebu, at the entrance of the little chapel of the Santo Cristo, besides the confessional, where he had sanctified thousands of souls during his twenty-four years of priestly ministry in Cebu.18

Fr. Fernando De la Canal was born on December 10, 1841, in Pomar de Valdivia, Palencia, diocese of Burgos. As a boy, he was a shepherd who watched over the flocks of his parents. In 1858, he went to Reinosilla, a town of the province of Santander, to study Humanities
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and Latin with the parish priest of the village. Then he entered the Seminary of Burgos and after finishing his ecclesiastical studies with excellent class standing, he was ordained priest in 1867 in Calahorra. His first pastoral field was in Reinosilla where he had studied Humanities with his uncle, Fr. Pedro De La Canal, whom he succeeded as parish priest.

Since his Seminary days, Fr. De La Canal felt himself attracted to the religious life. When faced with the heavy responsibility of the pastoral care of souls, he was finally confirmed in the religious vocation. Generously and unhesitatingly, he bade farewell to his parents and brothers in June 1868, and went to Madrid to join the ranks of the missionaries of St. Vincent de Paul. When the Superior Fr. Aquilino Valdivielso (who was later to be appointed first Provincial Visitor of the Philippine Vincentian mission) asked him, “What are you looking for?” He replied firmly, “To gain souls for Christ in the farthest regions of the world.”

Some months after Fr. De La Canal began his novitiate, in 1868 the Spanish revolution broke out. Providently, the Superiors were able to prevent the dispersion of the novices by gathering them in France near the cradle of the Congregation of the mission.

On August 27, 1869, Fr. De La Canal together with other companions knelt before the General, Fr. Etienne, to receive a blessing before parting “to gain souls for Christ in the far regions” of the Philippines. Leaving Marseilles on September 2, the 6th Vincentian mission arrived in Manila on October 26, 1869. Soon after, he was assigned to the Seminary of San Carlos, Cebú. Eager to work, not only in the formation of seminarians, but also in the evangelization of the country folk, he was sent to the town of Argao to learn the dialect. In three months, he knew enough to start the apostolic ministry. During the Lenten season of 1870, he was appointed ordinary confessor of the people in the public church attached to the Seminary, as well as Spiritual Director of the young aspirants to the priestly vocation. Soon the residents of Cebú realized the treasure they would enjoy under the spiritual guidance of Fr. De La Canal. Endless lines were formed around his confessional every day. The Rector had to relieve him from all his classes to give him time for such fruitful ministry.

In 1877, he was entrusted with a new field opened to his zeal: the Charity House, with the Little Sisters of the Mother of God; then in 1880 the College of the Immaculada Concepcion, and the Catholic School of San Vicente de Paul. Finally, the good Lord called the faithful servant and tireless laborer to the well-deserved reward of his apostolate: “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth; blessed indeed — says the Spirit — that they may rest from their
labours, for their deeds follows them!” (Apoc. 14, 13). He had been a zealous missionary of St. Vincent during 26 years, 24 of which he spent in Cebú.

Less than a year later, by January 1895, the longed for fusion of the Little Sisters with the Daughters of Charity was finally decided. In the absence of Fr. Pedro Juliá, who took the work of Fr. De La Canal and who was then absent in Spain, the Superior of Cebú, Fr. Narciso Vilá, planned to send the Little Sisters to Manila for the formal integration of their community to the family of St. Vincent. But instead, it was the Vincentian Visitor, Fr. Manuel Orriols and the Vice-Visitatrix of the Daughters of Charity, Sor Tiburcia Ayanz, with five other Sisters, who went personally to Cebú, as if to show their great joy in welcoming the Little Sisters founded by Fr. De La Canal into the Company founded by St. Vincent de Paul. The Daughters of Charity arrived in Cebú on January 28, 1895 and were solemnly received by the ecclesiastical and civil authorities, the nobility of the city and the College students in full attendance. The good Little Sisters were so happy and so eager to put on the habit brought from Manila that, by a funny mistake, they rang the morning bell that day at 3 o’clock instead of at the usual 4 o’clock time for rising. The new Daughters of Charity made their promise of obedience to the Visitatrix, and joyfully received the new Sister Servant (or Superior) assigned to them. With such simple ceremonies the incorporation of Fr. De La Canal’s Institute into the Vincentian family was formally made on January 29, 1895.

The new Daughters of Charity continued the services rendered by the former Little Sisters in the House of Charity which was then called St. Joseph Hospital. In 1916, twenty years later, because other official establishments then rendered it unnecessary, it was closed.

The Daughters of Charity who went to join the Little Sisters were Sor Teresa Miguel, Sor Maria Maestu, Sor Bernardina Aramburu, and Sor Petra Perez, who was appointed Superiores of the new community. The Sisters who rendered their services in the Charity House or St. Joseph Hospital were: Sor Rafaela Echevarria, Sor Clara, Sor Hilaria, Sor Rita Fernandez, Sor Feliciana Bracamonte, Sor Concepcion Codinach, Sor Maria Maestu, Sor Julia Avellana, Sor Ventura Casanovas, Sor Concepcion Altuna, Sor Margarita Berruezo, Sor Josefa Garrigos, Sor Juliana Herran, Sor Valentina Garcia, Sor Carmen Bueno, Sor Ana Ramis, and Sor Catalina Coll, Chaplains of the Hospital were Fr. Fernando De la Canal, Msgr. Juan Gorordo, Fr. Eleuterio Villamor and Fr. Nicomedes Escribano.

The Union of the Little Sisters with the Daughters of Charity marked a new era for the College of the Immaculate Conception. Before that time it could not be elevated to high standards because of
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scarcity of personnel and means. The Daughters of Charity began a thorough reorganization of the College in its physical, academic and religious aspects. The Primary Catholic Schools of St. Vincent de Paul continued also its splendid work in favor of the little girls.

Another charitable institution derived from the Vincentian family in Cebu was an Asylum founded by the Daughters of Charity in 1896 first known as St. Vincent de Paul, then later as St. Joseph. Its purpose was to gather and shelter the poor girls who lost their parents during the cholera epidemic of 1882, or other indigent and abandoned girls who were in danger for lack of means for a decent livelihood. This work was undertaken under the initiative and encouragement of Fr. Pedro Juliá, the collaborator and successor of Fr. De la Canal. About 60 girls were protected in the Asylum. They were supported by a printing press where the girls worked efficiently. With their earnings, they sustained their own Asylum. This printing press was established by Fr. Pedro Juliá for the publication of Catholic literature, especially the periodical Ang Camatuoran (The Truth), which for eleven years (1901-1912) fought a good fight against sectarian papers hostile to the Church.

Worthy of mention is still another establishment of charity, the "Casa de Socorro" (Succour House), the first of its kind founded in the Philippines in August, 1887. In the beginning, it was supported by the incomes from subscriptions. But this source of income later reduced to practically nothing, the Prelate of the Diocese took charge of its maintenance and entrusted it to the voluntary and free services of the Little Sisters of Fr. De la Canal up to beginning of the 20th century.

Third Rector of the Cebu Seminary, Fr. Francisco Jarero (1879-1888)

The third Rector of the Cebu Seminary was Fr. Francisco Jarero (1879-1888). Born in Zamora in 1845, he joined the Congregation of the Mission in 1868. Upon finishing his novitiate, he was sent at once to the Philippines, hastened by the revolution in Spain. Together with other scholastics, he arrived in the Philippines on November 1, 1870. Here, he finished his ecclesiastical studies, and was ordained priest in 1874. In that same year, he was assigned to the San Carlos Seminary of Cebu where he taught Philosophy and became Procurator of the community until 1879.

So well did he perform his duties as a prudent, pious and learned missionary that when the Rector, Fr. Farré, got sick in 1879, he was assigned to take his place at the young age of 34. For nine years, he directed the Seminary with great success by maintaining discipline and ecclesiastical spirit among the seminarians. Most Rev. Juan Gorordo, one of the first Filipino Bishops at the beginning of the
century (appointed 1909) always professed a deep friendship for the Vincentian Fathers. He was one of Fr. Jarero’s beloved pupils who, in turn, looked on him as a true father. During his rectorate, Fr. Jarero taught Dogmatic Theology and his preaching was distinguished both by its solid doctrine and elegant though simple form. In 1889, he was transferred to Manila, and after three years, he was sent back to Spain. After working in the houses of Avila and Tardajos (Burgos), he died in Madrid on April 12, 1918 at the age of 67, 44 years as a Vincentian, 22 of which (1870-1882) he spent in the Philippines.

The Vincentian Engineer of Cebú, Fr. Pedro Juliá

To succeed Fr. Jarero, in 1889, Fr. Pedro Juliá was assigned to the rectorate of the Cebú Seminary. This famous Vincentian well known by all the people of Cebú was born on November 20, 1849, in Porreras, province of Mallorca. There he studied Humanities and then joined the Congregation of the Mission in 1866. When he finished the novitiate, in 1868, the Spanish revolution broke out and he was forced to pursue his ecclesiastical studies amidst the turmoil of those difficult times. He was ordained priest in 1873. Two years later, he was appointed to the Philippine mission. He arrived in Manila on February 21, 1875. His first assignment was to teach Liturgy in the Manila Seminary and to be Procurator of the Community. During the four years he stayed in the Seminary of San Carlos of Manila, he showed his skill as a builder. He introduced various improvements specially in the Seminary chapel, which was destroyed during the earthquake of 1880. Impelled by his apostolic zeal and eager to evangelize also the poor country folk, he studied the Tagalog dialect and then spent long, endless hours in the confessional of the Seminary chapel attending to the people who flocked around, coming not only from Manila but also from the neighboring towns. And as if this were not enough, he extended his ministry to the hospitals and other charitable institutions of the city. With his jovial, open, and sincere character, he soon gained the sympathy of the seminarians and a happy and well-deserved fame among the clergy of the Archdiocese during the four short years he stayed in Manila.

In 1879, he was assigned to the Seminary of Cebu where he taught Moral Theology and again became Procurator of the community. Soon his enterprise was noticed in the changes he made in the old Seminary building. And once more, he studied and learned the new dialect of the region, Bisaya Cebuano, and thus he was able to do plenty of good to the faithful of the city and other towns of the province.
Fr. PEDRO JULIA, C.M. (1849-1909), Vincentian Engineer and zealous Rector of the Cebu Seminary, founder of the Asilo de San Vicente de Paul for poor orphan girls in 1890, and publisher of the Catholic periodical ANG CAMATU-ORAN.

Fr. FERNANDO DE LA CANAL, C.M. (1841-1894), Spiritual Director of the Cebu Seminary, founded the religious community of "Hermanitas de la Madre de Dios" to take care of the Casa de Caridad established in 1877, and then of the Colegio de la Inmaculada Conception and the Escuela de San Vicente de Paul in 1880.
The HERMANITAS DE LA MADRE DE DIOS, founded by Fr. Fernando de la Canal in Cebú with the approval of Bishop Romero de Madridejos, O.F.M., on October 24, 1877. Historical photo of more than a century ago. *Seated (l. to r.): Pioneer Sisters, Julia Abellana, Apolonia Lasala, and Clara Echevarría; then Srs. Irastorza and Sebastiana.*

*Standing (l. to r.): Srs. Gabriela, Cirila, Feliciana, P. Giz, and Dominga.*
In 1889, he was appointed Rector of the Seminary to substitute for Fr. Jarero. His first enterprise was to build a third floor, 55 meters long by 16 meters wide and 5 meters high, to provide a spacious dormitory, accommodating 100 beds for the students. This work was undertaken when the Bishop planned to have the Seminary officially recognized as a College of secondary education (High School) by the Government, as will be seen later. The construction was done with wood of first class, at the cost of P15,000. The work began in March 1889, and was completed in November of the same year. It was so solid and strong that even the violent typhoon of 1912 did not move a single sheet of zinc on the roof.

Some years later, Fr. Juliá undertook another work which was more impressive and grandiose, a colossal work “worthy of the Romans,” in the phrase of Bishop Pablo Singzon de la Anunciacion, first Filipino Bishop of Calbayog (1910). The Seminary compound was some 20 meters only from the shallow beach so that the high tide pushed the “bangkas” or small boats to the very walls of the Seminary. This was a serious inconvenience because not everything happening on the beach was edifying. Fr. Juliá had the idea of pushing back the sea and enrich the Seminary with ground reclaimed from the sea. A decisive step towards the realization of this project was made when permission was obtained from Governor General Joaquin Despujols to grant to the Seminary the adjacent seashore belonging to the State, in exchange for part of the Mandawe estate of the Seminary, which the Government desired for an agronomical station in Cebú. Thus, Fr. Juliá's reclamation project started in the beginning of 1892. A group of laborers was organized and directed by Fr. Juliá himself. Some brought rocks and stones from the nearby island of Mactán. Others worked at digging the soil needed for the reclamation, while others filled the area to be reclaimed. It took four years to finish this gigantic work, estimated at P2 per square meter. When the job was finished in 1896, the reclaimed area was 26,613 sq. m. costing only P30,000. With the reclamation added to the 13,387 sq. m. of the Seminary property, the total was 40,000 square meters.

An interesting detail of this project was the construction of an immense swimming pool for the exclusive use of Seminary students, since the whole reclamation was enclosed all around by a stone wall. The pool, 120 m. long, by 90 m. wide, and 2 or 3 m. deep, was supplied with water coming directly through waterways from the sea during the high tide. All this magnificent, colossal work was done without machines of any kind but only by the strength of the arms and the patient, perseverance of the one who planned it.

Fr. Juliá did not stop here. The Seminary had been enriched
already with grounds that were more than enough for all its needs. They must not remain unproductive. Due to the proximity of the Cebu harbor, Fr. Juliá thought of building several large warehouses or store-rooms (*almacenes, bodegas, camarines*), one at least made of cement, and the rest of stone. He spent in this project some ₱45,000.00, but it was a good investment. Commercial houses and firms of the city eagerly looked to these warehouses for storage of their merchandise and gladly paid to the Seminary a total of ₱1,000 as monthly rental. Fr. Juliá constructed also on the Seminary grounds a brick kiln with the plan of helping Bishop Martin Alcocer, O.F.M., for the construction of the cathedral, although this was stopped in the beginning because of the Philippine revolution that broke out at the end of the century.

The old Seminary church also became the object of Fr. Julia’s enterprising spirit. He renewed its flooring and roof, cemented its walls, and provided it with a large organ. All in all, these improvements cost ₱15,000. The total amount of expenses for the improvement of the whole Seminary may well be estimated at ₱120,000 all of which were backed at and received the full approval of Bishop Martin Alcocer and his successor Bishop Thomas Hendrick.

But Fr. Juliá more than an engineer and constructor, was a Vincentian missionary; his enterprises aimed at nothing but the evangelization of the poor. Before becoming Seminary Rector and after obtaining that post, he seconded and supported Fr. De la Canal in his charitable works for the suffering poor. From the hands of the dying Fr. De la Canal he took over the care of the Charity House, the Little Sisters of the Mother of God, the College of the Immaculate Conception and the School of St. Vincent. And in 1896, he added to these the Asylum of St. Vincent (later, St. Joseph) for some 60 orphan girls, and the annexed Printing Press of St. Joseph, which supported the Asylum. Then, in the beginning of the 20th century, he founded the bilingual Catholic periodical *ANG CAMATUORAN* (The Truth) to defend courageously the Catholic faith against the sectarian attacks spread among the people during the early years of the new regime (1901-1912). Over and above his apostolic works, Fr. Juliá never ceased to help and succor with abundant aims the indigent poor as far as his resources would allow.

In 1908, he was elected Delegate of the Philippine Province to the Provincial Assembly in Spain. After accomplishing this mission, the Superiors decided to assign him to the Spanish Province. Though ready to obey, he asked for and was granted permission to return for a while to the Philippines to finalize some unfinished business. But the Lord’s designs were different. Exhausted by so much work, travel and the
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burden of his apostolate, he fell seriously ill. He was transferred to Manila for recovery. It was there where he died peacefully on January 29, 1909 in the Central House of San Marcelino. He was 60 years of age, 43 years a Vincentian. He spent 34 years working in the Philippines, mostly in Cebú where for long years his name was mentioned as a blessing.

THE SEMINARY OF JARO

In the beginning, the Fathers and the seminarians stayed with Bishop Cuartero in a rented house while the Seminary building was under construction. A review of those days reveal: “The Jaro Seminary of St. Vincent Ferrer, the pride of the Diocese and the best among the Philippine Seminaries, was due to the zeal of its Director, Fr. Aniceto Gonzalez who, in union with the Bishop, acted as supervisor of work, rain or sunshine. The Prelate is deeply indebted to him.”

During the recreation hours, in 1871-1875, the Vincentians with the seminarians and the Bishop himself worked as manual laborers in the construction. They transferred the bricks in “bangkás” (light boats) along the tributary creek beside the Seminary. They formed a chain from the creek to the building to carry bricks, sand and other construction materials to the site. The Bishop himself was seen among the rest in the row of laborers.

Fr. Ildefonso Moral, who was acting Superior of the community, since officially he was still Rector of Naga, received his appointment as Rector of Jaro by the end of March, 1871. Soon after, at the beginning of January 1872, he was assigned to start a new foundation, the Seminary of Vigan. In April 1872, Fr. Aniceto Gonzalez became the Rector of Jaro. Fr. Moral was later chosen to attend the General Assembly of the Congregation in Paris in 1874. He returned to Manila on February 21, 1875. But instead of going back to Vigan, he was assigned once more to be Rector of Jaro in April of that year. Fr. Aniceto Gonzalez, due to some misunderstanding with the Superiors, decided to leave the Congregation. Fr. Moral took over the rectorate provisionally.

Seminary life continued there prosperously and vigorously as in the Seminaries of Nueva Cáceres and Cebú. A Register (Estado de Almas) of the year 1875 reported that there were more than 100 seminarians in Jaro, including the minors in Latin and the majors in Philosophy and Theology. Fr. Joaquin Jaume introduced something special in this Seminary: a Music Department, with an excellent Choir and a famous orchestra which remained a tradition in that Seminary until late in the 20th century.
It is said that the first priest ordained in Jaro was Fr. Basilio Albar, in 1873. Also, from those early days were Fr. Silvestre Apura, Fr. Mamerto Zabala and Fr. Tomas Navarrete who came from Cebú to Jaro when the new Diocese was erected.

After three years, the Rector ad interim of Jaro, Fr. Moral, returned to Manila in July, 1878. Fr. Santiago Serrallonga arrived from Naga to take over the rectorate of Jaro. His valuable and praiseworthy service for 13 years in Naga, 5 years in Jaro, and 17 years till his death in Manila, deserve special mention.

The zealous Rector of Jaro, Fr. Santiago Serrallonga

Fr. Santiago Serrallonga was born in Garriga, Barcelona in 1834. His parents were poor laborers but of very solid faith and piety. He was endowed by nature with a simplicity and childlike candidness that characterized his whole life. He studied Latin and Humanities as a working, self-supporting student in the Seminary of Tarragona, and later, Philosophy and Theology in the famous Seminary of Vich as an extern seminarian who had to look for his own means, even to the extent of begging alms, so as not to be a burden to his poor parents. During his Seminary years, he worked in a pharmacy and taught Physical Sciences in the Seminary where he pursued ecclesiastical studies. For long, he was inclined to the religious vocation but did not know yet what community to join. By chance, he met a Vincentian Father who was giving a Retreat to the Daughters of Charity in Vich, and thus he found the Congregation that met his noble desires. Before receiving the Holy Orders, he joined the Congregation of the Mission in 1861 at the age of 27.

After the novitiate, he received the Holy Orders in 1863. Fr. Serrallonga heard about the new mission of the Vincentians in the Philippines and how the Bishops of that country were earnestly asking for some missionaries to take over their Seminaries. He generously offered himself, and with three other confreres he departed from Cadiz in December 1864. After a long, difficult journey of five months passing around the Cape of Good Hope, he arrived in Manila on April 12, 1865. It was the 3rd Vincentian mission and they were sent purposely to go to the Seminary of Naga, at the request of Bishop Gainza.

Under Fr. Ildefonso Moral as Rector and with Fr. Santonja and Brother del Rio as companions, Fr. Serrallonga was assigned at once to work in the Seminary of the Most Holy Rosary, in Naga. He remained there for 13 years, teaching Latin, Philosophy and Theology. He studied at the same time the Bikol dialect and got to master it, so
that as far as his classes allowed it, he was able to alternate the Seminary duties with the apostolic ministry in the confessional and the pulpit of the church in the city and neighboring towns. Bishop Gainza brought him along several times on pastoral visits, to prepare and instruct the people. The good Bishop admired the tireless zeal of Fr. Serrallonga, and his amiable and sincere character; he testified to this in letters written to the Provincial Visitor.

In 1878, Fr. Santiago Serrallonga was appointed Rector of the Seminary of St. Vincent Ferrer in Jaro, to succeed to Fr. Ildefonso Moral who was called back to Manila. There he worked with zeal and abnegation in the fulfillment of his heavy responsibility as Rector and professor of Moral Theology. "Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead" (Ph. 3:13), he started to learn the Bisayan dialect of Iloilo, and thus was able to extend his zeal beyond the Seminary walls to countless souls from Jaro and neighboring towns who were attracted by his well known simplicity and kindness.

When the cholera epidemic of 1882 broke out in the Philippines, Iloilo was perhaps one of the provinces most seriously affected. Three Vincentian Fathers of the Seminary who knew the dialect displayed courageously their zeal among the cholera stricken patients in Jaro and in the neighboring towns, attending them corporally and spiritually, until one of them, the young Fr. Julian Illera, after 20 days of strenuous work, died a victim of his charity on August 20, 1882. Fr. Santiago Serrallonga was not intimidated but rather encouraged by a holy envy for the heroic death of his own subject. He redoubled his activity among the sick with infectious malady, so that hundreds of them breathed their last in his arms, after receiving the supreme consolation of the Last Sacraments.

Naturally, as a result of so much toil, Fr. Serrallonga's health was seriously impaired. The Superiors decided to transfer him to Manila. Thus, Fr. Serrallonga was forced to leave Jaro by the middle of December, 1883. After six months of rest in Manila he was assigned to the San Carlos Seminary of Manila on June 7, 1884, where he taught Moral Theology, and was appointed Provincial Procurator. Then in 1891, he was nominated Rector of the Manila Seminary. But the remained as Rector for 3 years only. Then he was transferred to the House of San Marcelino, still with the office of Provincial Procurator, and became Director of several Houses of the Daughters of Charity until 1898 when he could no longer undertake any serious work. Three years later, he died in Manila, in the peace of the Lord on December 18, 1901, at the age of 67, with 40 years of service in the Congregation, and 37 years spent in the Philippines.
Vincentians During The Spanish Regime

Vicissitudes After Fr. Serrallonga

When Fr. Serrallonga left Jaro on account of his failing health, Fr. Juan Miralda who had been working there for 15 years, was appointed new Rector of the Seminary. Later, the zealous and indefatigable Bishop of Jaro, Fray Mariano Cuartero y Medina, O.P., passed away to his eternal reward on July 16, 1884. To him, the new Diocese owed its magnificent Cathedral with its impressive tower and clock, as well as the spacious Conciliar Seminary, the Episcopal Palace, a House for the Clergy, a beautiful Catholic Cemetery, and a College for girls entrusted to the Daughters of Charity — the College of San Jose — inaugurated on May 1, 1872. The zealous Bishop "visited all the parishes of his vast diocese, preached in all its islands and churches, and still found time to write in the Bisayan dialect an encyclopedia in three volumes of more than 500 pages each, that was a Vade Mecum or Magtotoon Sa Balay, besides a Bisayan Grammar and Dictionary. How could he accomplish all these marvels? By spending every day 10 reales for his frugal meals and that of his household; by asking for alms and working himself as a manual laborer as long as his pastoral duties allowed it." Such was the report of the Madrid paper, La Cruz, at that time.

It is said that the Spanish Government intended to acknowledge the merits of this famous native of Aragon by granting him the decoration of the Great Cross of Isabel La Católica. But the good Bishop did not have enough money to pay for the Medal, and the reward was not given: "he preferred to give some coins to the poor than to boast of any sort of decorations invented by men." His relations with the Vincentians of his Seminary of St. Vincent Ferrer were always the most cordial and sincere.

His successor, Most Rev. Leandro Arrue Agudo of St. Nicholas of Tolentino, O.R.S.A., from Calatayud, Zaragoza, took over the Jaro diocese on November 13, 1885. By that time the number of students attending classes in the Seminary was increasing swiftly. Recall that during the provisional rectorate of Fr. Ildefonso Moral (1875-1878), the Seminary, upon the request of the people opened its classes to day scholars or extern students who were not seminarians, like in Nueva Cáceres and Cebú. Hence with the increasing number of students, the need was felt to undertake new additions to the Seminary building to double its size.

The total cost of the construction work, including both the original and the new additions, rose to P250,000, large amount indeed for those times. The Jaro Seminary possessed the best building among the Philippine Seminaries. But the expenses involved became
perhaps the cause of some misunderstandings with the successor of Bishop Cuartero. The relations of the Fathers with Bishop Arrue were so strained, that the Provincial Council in Manila decided to transfer the Rector of Jaro, Fr. Miralda, to Naga, and to send the Rector of Naga, Fr. Miguel Perez Anton, to Jaro as Rector of the Seminary and Vicar General of the Diocese. This exchange took place in November, 1891. Apparently the whole trouble was a slight misunderstanding, since later Bishop Arrue himself asked for the return of Fr. Juan Miralda to Jaro. However, due to difficult circumstances it was impossible to satisfy the Bishop’s desire, and the Rector assigned in 1894 and accepted by Bishop Arrue was Fr. Domingo Viera who had been working in the Jaro Seminary for ten years already.