Chapter Nine

Studies and Discipline

The Council of Trent, in 1563, enjoined all Bishops of the Catholic world to erect Diocesan Seminaries. It was two years before Legazpi reached Cebu. About a century and a half passed before the Spanish Crown founded the first Conciliar Seminary in the Philippines, the Manila Seminary, in 1702. This delay has been taken by many as a proof that the Spanish Royal Patronage, or rather the Spanish Church and State, were opposed to the formation of a Filipino native clergy.

However, we find in the history of centuries-old Catholic nations of Europe a similar delay in erecting Tridentine Seminaries. It does not seem strange, then, to find the same anomalous situation in a remote mission land of the Far East, as the recently evangelized Philippines was in the 17th century. Ecclesiastical history shows that owing to many diverse circumstances, opposition, and difficulties, the Conciliar Seminaries were not started at once, even in Italy, Spain or France, where very few Bishops in the 16th or 17th centuries took the trouble to carry out the Tridentine injunctions about Diocesan Seminaries. In Spain, during the 16th and 17th centuries, the few Seminaries established were hardly worthy of that name. In France, there were no Seminaries until the days of the Venerable Olier and St. Vincent de Paul in the mid-17th century. In Italy, after the first attempts of St. Carles Borromeo in the 16th century, one has to go down to the 18th century to meet another advocate of Seminaries in St. Alphonsus Liguori. In Germany, Seminaries began in the 17th century with Bartholomew Holzhauser.

In the remote Philippine colony, conditions were no better. Yet, 18 years after the Tridentine decree, the Philippine’s first Spanish Bishop, Fray Domingo Salazar, O.P. in 1581 decreed the establishment of a Seminary to prepare the indigenous natives for the Priesthood and for ecclesiastical dignities and benefices. Even if, in spite of several attempts, his dream could not crystallize until a century and a quarter later (the Manila Seminary was inaugurated on December 8, 1707), the Church and the State did what the poverty of the colony and other adverse circumstances would allow as a provisional solution. Colleges
where ecclesiastical and religious native vocations might be fostered were founded, from the beginnings of the 17th century onwards: San Jose (1601), Santo Tomas (1611), both of which were conferring University Ecclesiastical Degrees by 1630; Colegio de San Juan de Letran and Colegio de San Pedro y San Pablo (1632), both of which attained the character of true Seminaries, fostering priestly and religious vocations. While these institutions primarily favored native vocations among the youth of Spanish ancestry (creoles and mestizos), indigenous natives were not excluded.

Thus, as early as 1623, there were already Filipino native priests, who, by 1655 numbered 60. In all probability, most if not all, of them were not full-blooded Filipinos but they were known and called with strict propriety, "natives of the country," though not indigenous natives. Records show the names of 12 Filipino native Bishops in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. The first indigenous native priests (full-blooded Filipinos) were ordained, no after 1720, but a few years before 1707. Indeed, it was rather late. Admittedly, there had been some inertia and lack of foresight in realizing the need and urgency of indigenous priestly vocations. However, the lack of native priests at the time did not emanate from racial discrimination nor from a systematic policy against them.

However, a new source of scandal existed. From the establishment of the first Conciliar Seminary in Manila (1707), in Cebu (1783), in Naga (1793), and later in Vigan (1802), until the arrival of the Vincentians to manage the Seminaries, all "were very deficient." The faculty was generally recruited in a haphazard fashion, the studies were meager — Moral Theology seems to have been the main fare for the men approaching ordination — and the discipline was casual. For instance, in Manila, the Seminary in 1776 was a "republic where Cathedral choir boys, Latin students, tonsured clerics, priests who had no appointment or benefice, or who were being punished, or were retired, were all mixed together." A Memorial of the Ayuntamiento (City Council) of Manila to the King, in 1804, reported: "In the three provincial capitals which are adorned with episcopal Sees there are no seminaries in which a young man can be trained with firmness and prudence, since what are called seminaries consist only of the material edifice. They are barely taught by one or two indio clerics who speak Spanish with difficulty, a very bad Latin, and a little Larraga" (a Moral Theology handbook commonly used in the 18th and 19th centuries in the Seminaries of Spain, Mexico and South America).

Nevertheless, compare the situation of those Seminaries with that of other similar institutions elsewhere during the same period. A serious scholar and historian remarked:
I have read the Rules and Programs of Studies given in the Seminary of San Carlos (Manila) in 1771, and those given to the Seminary of Cebu in 1826, and I have at hand some forty copies of Rules of different Seminaries in the world, old and modern, and my impression is that those of the Philippines can advantageously compare with any of them.  

This is not however, to rationalize deficiencies in the Philippines by pointing to similar deficiencies elsewhere, but rather, to put things in their proper perspective. The deficiencies should be traced to the conditions of the times and places in which they existed. It was observed in 1887 that:

Before the coming of the Vincentians, the lack of prepared personnel and financial means rendered the efforts and zeal of the Bishops barren, for very few of those who studied in the Seminaries reached ordination.

Queen Isabel II of Spain made the same observation in her Royal Cedula of October 19, 1852:

The (Philippine) Conciliar Seminaries cannot duly fulfill the directives of the Holy Council of Trent for lack of professors and resources.

The Spanish Church and State had frequently expressed their interest and zeal for the formation of a Filipino indigenous clergy. The Manila Archbishops Salazar, Camacho, Cuesta, Sancho, Melitón, Martínez; the Bishops of Cebu — Rubio, Genoves, Gómez, Marañon, Jimeno; those of Nueva Caceres — Orbigo, Collantes, Concepcion, Gainza; those of Nueva Segovia — Ruiz, Blaquier, Alban, Masoliver, Miro, and Aragones; the Kings of Spain — Philip II, Charles II, Philip V, Charles III, and Queen Isabel II; exerted, time and again, efforts to train the indigenous natives for the Priesthood. But all of them were handicapped by the perennial lack of prepared personnel to direct the Seminaries, and lack of financial means to support them.

A Royal Decree on February 22, 1796 ordered that 3 percent of the income of parish priests be allotted for the support of Diocesan Seminaries. But it proved inadequate. The Royal Order of August 14, 1768, reiterated in the Provincial Council of Manila in 1711, resolved that “the (Seminary) professors were to be chosen from among the parish rectors” of the secular clergy. The religious Friars were barred from directing the Seminaries “unless in cases of extreme necessity, for only a shortwhile; and may be removed from the office according to the Bishop’s will.” Hence, as a rule, and by civil and canonical
legislation, the secular clergy (not the religious friars) were to be the administrators and teaching staff of the Diocesan Seminaries.

Under normal conditions, this set-up was plausible. But in a mission country like the Philippines, it created a vicious circle. The secular priests were still quite few and unprepared for the delicate task of Seminary work. Qualified personnel were found among the religious, but these were forbidden by law to take over the administration of Seminaries. The Seminaries were ineffective. Few students reached ordination, and these few were not well prepared. The unsolved problem of lack of qualified directors and professors, added to the lack of financial means rendered Seminary formation deficient. Consequently, the quantity and quality of secular priests were quite poor.

The religious friars can not be blamed for this situation, as if to suspect that they intended to give an inferior education to their future coadjutors, lest a numerous and competent Filipino clergy might eventually challenge and disturb their tenure of ecclesiastical benefices or parishes. This is a gratuitous and untenable suspicion, since they were not actually in charge of the Diocesan Seminaries, nor could, as a rule, be in them.

Religious friars were asked to lend a helping hand to the Seminary work in extreme cases. They generously responded by sending their most qualified men. For instance, in the San Carlos Seminary of Cebu, when the Dominicans were asked to act as Regents of Studies from 1852 to 1867, eminent scholars like Fray Mariano Cuartero (1852) who later became Bishop of Jaro; Fray Pedro Payo (1857), later Archbishop of Manila; Fray Francisco Rivas (1853), and finally Fray Pedro Trasobares (1863) were sent. According to the testimony of the Vincentians who took over from the Dominicans the direction of the Seminary in 1867, the program of studies offered by the Dominicans during the administration was complete in the ecclesiastical disciplines necessary for the pastoral office of any parish rector. Little importance was given in the curriculum to mathematical and physical sciences, but such was also the case, at that time, in the best Seminaries of Europe.¹¹

**Vincentian Conciliar Seminaries (Minor and Major) in the Philippines**

In Manila, the first Seminary taken over by the Vincentians, was a Major Seminary. The Colleges of Letrán, San José, Ateneo de Manila and Santo Tomás were thought to serve the purpose of a Minor Seminary, fostering priestly vocations, even in a very limited extent, among the youth in the secondary level of education. The Vincentians however longed for the day when they could have in Manila a true Minor Seminary. (Archbishop Meliton Martinez suggested it to Queen Isabel
II in 1866), as they had in Naga, Cebu, Jaro and Vigan. That has always been the mind of the Church, expressed first in the Council of Trent, and later by Popes Leo XIII, St. Pius X, Pius XI: that young aspirants to the priestly vocation, from their early age, be trained, as much as possible, in strictly Conciliar Minor Seminaries. This was preferable to Seminary Colleges which were intended mainly for lay students although they fostered priestly vocations among some of them (as in Letrán, Santo Tomás, etc.) Even College Seminaries intended mainly for seminarians, though admitting lay students (as it was done those days in Naga, Cebu, Jaro and Vigan) were far from the ideal. This was designed by the Bishops at that time to provide a solid Christian education to the youth of their dioceses, and at the same time to support financially the heavy expenses of the Seminary which the poor candidates to the priestly vocation could not afford. Admittedly, the mixed training of seminarians and lay students was not an ideal formation. Later, at the end of the first quarter of the 20th century, the Church ordered the separation of the College (or High School) from the Seminary. Their former union however contributed to an excellent academic standard of the Seminaries.

Academic Program in the Vincentian Seminaries

The Vincentians adopted in the Philippine Seminaries the same plan of studies followed at that time in the Seminaries of Europe, particularly in Spain. The Curriculum of Studies for the candidates to the priestly vocation was as follows:

1. Primary or Preparatory instruction given in a one year course.
2. Secondary Education, called Grammar or Latin, given in a 3-year course.
3. Higher Learning:
   a) a 3-year course in Philosophy and Science.
   b) a 2-year course in the professional subjects (Theology) of the priestly vocation.

The Primary or Preparatory instruction was undertaken by the Vincentians in the “Escuela del Hermano” in Cebu, or through remedial classes in the Seminary of Naga; otherwise, the Municipal School or Public Elementary School under Government auspices provided for it.

The 3-year course of Secondary Education was given in the Minor Seminary proper, which included the subjects Christian Doctrine and Latin Grammar, Translation and Analysis, Spanish, Arithmetic, History, Geography, Rhetoric and Music.
The 3-year Philosophy course included Logic, Ontology, Psychology, Ethics, Physics, Natural Sciences and Geometry. In the 2-year Theology course, special emphasis was given to Moral Theology, besides the fundamentals of Dogma, Sacred Scripture, Liturgical training, Gregorian Chant, Sacred Oratory and Pastoral Ministry.

The curriculum was gradually enriched and arranged into a 4-year course of Latin and Humanities in the Minor Seminary, a 2-year course of Philosophy and Science, followed by a 4-year course of Theology (2 for Dogma and 2 for Moral) in the Major Seminary. Canon Law was taught along with Moral Theology until 1895, when it became a separate subject.

State Recognition of Seminary Studies

One year after the arrival of the Vincentians in the Philippines, a significant event in the history of education in the Philippines took place: the establishment of a modern system of State regulated education by virtue of the Royal Decree of December 10, 1863. The system was introduced in the Philippines “very shortly after it was implemented in Spain and much earlier than in France.”

The general reform of the educational system under Government supervision and control included not only the State schools of Elementary education, but also the private schools of the Secondary or College educational level. The Dominican University of Santo Tomas in Manila became a State educational institution which supervised and improved secondary education.

When the Secondary Education in the Philippines was unified and reorganized by the Royal Decree of Queen Isabel II on May 20, 1865, the only Institution of Secondary Instruction considered Public or, of the State, was the College of Santo Tomas which was declared a “Colegio de Segunda Enseñanza, de Primera Clase.” It offered the 5-year course leading to Bachelor of Arts. The other Colleges for boys or girls of Secondary Education including Letrán and Ateneo were known as Private, categorized as First or Second Class, and were incorporated with Santo Tomás.

The First Class Colleges for boys offered a 5-year Course. The Second Class Colleges, also called Latinities, due to the importance given to Latin, were those which could not offer a 5-year course, confining themselves to Humanities and general culture.

The 5-year Course of First Class Colleges generally included, besides Religion, the following subjects: Latin (at least 3 years), Spanish Grammar, Greek (at least 1 year), General Geography, Geography of the Philippines and of Spain, World History, History of the Philippines and of Spain, Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry and Trigonometry,
Rhetoric and Poetics, Philosophy (at least Logic, Psychology and Ethics), Physics and Chemistry, Natural History, Biology, Botany, Physiology, Anatomy, Hygiene, Mineralogy, Geology, and another Foreign Language (French or English). Some First Class Colleges such as Santo Tomás, Leetrán (under the Dominicans) and Ateneo de Manila (under the Jesuits since 1859, and recognized as First Class College in 1865) offered in addition some course on Trades and Arts such as Drawing, Commercial Arithmetic, Accounting, Industrial and Commercial Legislation, Industrial Mechanics, Statistics, Commercial Correspondence, Commercial Geography, Surveying, and some courses in Fine Arts (piano or violin lessons, sculpture, painting, etc.). To obtain Government recognition as a First Class College, the establishment should be equipped with a Laboratory of Physics and Chemistry, a Museum of Natural History, a collection of solid figures for the study of Solid Geometry, and a sufficient number of terrestrial globes, maps and charts for the study of Descriptive Geography.

The Second Class Colleges offered academic subjects for general culture, such as Languages, Literature, History, Geography, etc., but not including natural or experimental sciences. They aimed at a classical formation in Humanities. They were allowed to issue Certificates of approved academic courses but not diplomas of academic degrees; e.g., Bachelor of Arts.

In the beginning, the Minor Seminaries established by the Vincentians in Naga (1865), Cebu (1867), Vigan (1872) and Jaro (1874) remained Second Class Colleges, due to lack of available personnel and financing to comply with all the requirements of the Government. They were approved by the Government but not recognized to issue academic degrees. The academic standards of these College-Seminaries were good and satisfactory, but not as complete as they should be. But God soon provided the means to improve them through the sectarian efforts of people who tried to secularize the schools and free them from religious influences.

In the late 80s, the so-called non sectarian (meaning non-religious or secular) type of education began to compete with Catholic Colleges through private Schools of Secondary Instruction. The youth who would have naturally enrolled in the College Seminaries was easily enticed to join the new private secular Institutes. Freemasonry in the Philippines was beginning to undermine the simple faith of the people. Its constant policy was to control the education of the youth and secularize it.

In December 1887, the Bishop of Cebú, Fray Martin Alcocer, O.F.M., sounded the first call of alarm against this impending threat. He asked the Vincentians to send more Fathers "so as to teach in the Seminary everything demanded by (First Class) Secondary Education,
and thus be able to affiliate the Seminary to the University in Manila (Santo Tomás), preventing the enrollment of the youth in the private Colleges which were about to be established in the city (Cebu), leaving thereby the Seminary without students.\(^{18}\)

The Bishops of Naga, Cebú and Jaro realized the need to face the challenge, whatever it may cost, so that eventually, they provided their Seminaries with the necessary personnel and equipment to fulfill all the requirements of the Government, obtaining finally the recognition of their Seminaries as Colleges of First Class in Secondary Instruction. The Government demanded, first, a complete curriculum of 5 years with academic subjects leading to the degree of Bachelor of Arts; second, a spacious and suitable building, well ventilated, well lighted and enough classrooms for the attending students; third, a suitable equipment of laboratories, museum, maps, etc., for effective teaching; and lastly, a guaranty that running the school will not cost the State or the Local Government extra expenses or financial support.

When the building of the Jaro Seminary was finished in 1874, it was evident that the Institution was endowed with the best school building among all the Philippine Seminaries, and perhaps among all other schools and colleges in the provinces. Hence, the Government did not hesitate in granting it recognition as a First Class College, even if it was not yet able to grant a degree of Bachelor of Arts since it had only a 4-year course of studies. Encouraged by this official step, the Bishop of Naga, Fr. Arsenio Campo, O.S.A. requested for the same official recognition to his Seminary of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary. After the customary investigations and representations, the Governor General also granted the due recognition as First Class College affiliated to the University of Santo Tomás of Manila to the College Seminary of Nueva Caceres, under the rectorate of Fr. Juan Miralda, C.M. in April 1891.

Almost at the same time, the Bishop of Cebú, Fray Martin Alcocer, O.F.M., submitted an official request for recognition to the Conciliar Seminary of San Carlos of Cebú. This was granted in 1891, although the Decree for granting the academic degree of Bachelor of Arts was only issued on April 3, 1893, completing the 5-year course requirement. The procedure for this affiliation was as follows: once the 5-year course was accomplished and the students passed the ordinary and extraordinary examinations in the Seminary, they were entitled to obtain from the Dominicans in Manila the academic degree of Bachelor of Arts. The results or marks obtained in the Seminary examinations were sent to Manila, and okayed and signed by the Rector and Secretary of the University. At the beginning of each school year, the Seminary was supposed to send to Manila the list of Professors and schedule of academic subjects in the various years. At times, some Dominican
Fathers went down to the Provinces and took part in the examinations given by the Vincentian Fathers to the candidates for obtaining a degree.

The Seminary of St. Vincent Ferrer of Jaro was the first to be recognized as a First Class College, even ahead of the Seminary of Naga, although at first without a faculty for granting academic degrees. In 1895, when the 5-year course requirement was completed, it obtained also due affiliation with the University of Santo Tomas for the granting of the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

The Vincentian Diocesan Seminaries of Naga, Cebu and Jaro thus came under the supervision of the University of Santo Tomas, in giving Secondary Education but as Colleges only, not as Seminaries especially in the Major Department of Theology.

Course of Studies in the Vincentian Seminaries

To get a closer view of the particular subjects taken in the curricula of the various academic levels in the Vincentian College Seminaries, the following facts are pertinent:

The Curriculum of First Class Colleges of Secondary Instruction

The standard curriculum leading to the degree of Bachelor of Arts was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIRST YEAR</th>
<th>SECOND YEAR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spanish I</td>
<td>Spanish Grammar II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin I</td>
<td>Latin Grammar II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Doctrine</td>
<td>General Geography</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sacred History (Bible)</td>
<td>Geography of the Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Geography of Spain</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Christian Ethics I</td>
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<tr>
<th>THIRD YEAR</th>
<th>FOURTH YEAR</th>
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<td>Latin Analysis and Translation</td>
<td>Spanish Composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements of Greek</td>
<td>Spanish Rhetoric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of the Philippines</td>
<td>Poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Spain</td>
<td>Geometry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>Trigonometry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Ethics II</td>
<td>Social Ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>French/English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIFTH YEAR

Logic
Psychology
Moral Philosophy
Physics
Chemistry
Natural History (Botany, Zoology, Mineralogy, Geology, Hygiene, etc.)

This was the curriculum followed with slight variations by the First Class Colleges of Manila, Letran and Ateneo Municipal de Manila, as well as by the College Seminaries of Naga, Cebu and Jaro. Efforts were made both by the Bishops and by the Vincentian administrators of the Seminaries to raise the standards of the College Seminaries according to the regulations of the Government. The Seminary of Naga for instance, bought from Paris a magnificent Physics Laboratory and a Natural History Collection for the Museum. It also acquired a Library of more than 2,000 volumes.

The enrollment of students swelled from year to year, so that the Seminary Colleges had no reason to envy the Manila Colleges in this respect. In Naga, during its first year of Government recognition in 1891, the Major Seminarians numbered 190 while the “Colegiales” or College students were 901; that is, a total of 1,091. This was because at that time the Seminary was “the only Center of Secondary Instruction in the Bikol region, until the College of Guinobatan was opened in 1894.”

From 1867 to 1891, the College Seminary of Cebú was already the main Center of learning for the youth of Cebú. With Government recognition obtained in 1891-1893, the youth of neighboring islands enrolled also. As soon as it was known that the College of the Seminary was already affiliated with the University of Santo Tomas, students from Bohol, Leyte, Samar, Mindanao, Negros Oriental and even Caroline Islands flocked to the Seminary. The records in the Archives of the Cebú Seminary registered a notable increase of students (“Colegiales”) in the College during the school year 1895-1896 with 80 seminarians and 862 “Colegiales.” The first batch of graduates from the College Seminary of Cebú to go to Manila for the Final Exams at the University of Santo Tomas before receiving the degree of Bachelor of Arts were, among others, great men such as Sergio Osmeña, Mariano Javier, Dionisio Jakosalem, Cayetano Sosing, etc.
Likewise, for many years, the College Seminary of Jaro served as the Alma Mater of the youth of Panay. Especially from 1891 to 1897, the Institution enjoyed a flourishing life. The Seminary enrollment for 20 years from 1871 to 1891 was 100-150 interns, 200-300 externs and among the interns were some 40 to 60 seminarians. Furthermore, another Preparatory School for externs intending to pursue the higher studies of the Seminary had an enrollment of 100-130 students. For the direction and administration of the Seminary, there were some six or seven Vincentians, plus some ordained clerics for the Preparatory School. When the recognition was obtained in 1891, the Bisayan youth of neighboring regions, eager for instruction, came to fill the Seminary premises with an average of 200 interns and some 600-700 extern students, according to reliable testimonies of ocular witnesses. Unfortunately, all the records of the Seminary were burned and lost in the terrible conflagration of October 6, 1906.26

Course of Studies in the Vincentian Major Seminaries

The Major Seminary Department (Philosophy and Theology) managed by the Vincentian Fathers was independent from State supervision. The Vincentians followed in the Major Seminaries entrusted to them the same course of studies they found in the Seminaries of Spain where most of them were formed, including those of France where some of them were forced to go due to the revolutions of 1835 and 1868 in Spain. Naturally, owing to limited personnel and resources, they were forced to make occasional adaptations, according to the conditions in which they had to work. But the general pattern of the Program of Studies in the Philippine Vincentian Seminaries was, as already mentioned above:27

Philosophy and Science: 3 years (College Education)
Theology: Dogma and Moral: 2-3 years (Professional Education)

The Major Seminary included the last 2 years of College (Metaphysics, Theodicy and Science), while the first year of College (Logic, Psychology and Ethics) belonged to the Minor Seminary equivalent to the present 4-year High School Course.

In Manila, however, where there was no Minor Seminary but only the Theology Department, the Course of Studies was, for some time, two years of Dogmatic Theology and two years of Moral Theology, which later were increased to two years more, so that, all in all, the ecclesiastical studies lasted six years.

The Program of Studies included the following subjects: Fundamental Theology and Dogma (first 2-3 years); Moral Theology with
Canon Law (last 2 years). Canon Law was taught in Manila as a separate subject since 1895. Sacred Scripture, Hermeneutics and New Testament (2 years); Church History and Patrology (2 years); Pastoral Theology (last 2 years); Sacred Oratory, Plain Chant and Liturgy (4 or 5 years).

The number of years in the Theology Department, at the start of the Seminaries under the Vincentians, was generally one or two years of Theology because of lack of personnel. As more Professors arrived, the Course was increased to two or three years. In Manila, it became four years; and by the end of the century it reached six years, as reported in the Minutes of the Professors' Council of April 24, 1894. This 6-years Theology course was simply impossible to do in the other Dioceses where the Seminary Staff of five or six Professors was in charge of both Minor and Major Seminaries with their 6-year College Department including the School of Theology.

Obviously, with such a plan of studies, there could not be much room for scholarly theological disquisitions nor for a multiplicity of subjects as demanded in modern Seminaries. But what was lacking in amplitude was made up for in intensity, concentration on essentials, and seriousness of application. Academic disputations were periodically held in public as an exercise for the defense of truth and the detection of sophistry. But the main thrust of the Seminary training was directed to the formation of capable and zealous pastors of souls.

The Vincentian Seminaries during the last decades of the Spanish regime were indeed far from being perfect. But certainly they were the best that the circumstances of the times allowed. The most serious defect in them — the Manila Seminary excepted — was the mixed training of seminarians with lay students in the College Department. Somebody called it, in strong terms, "an adulteration of the Tridentine Institute":

The College, like a parasite, sapped the life of the Seminary, for no sooner was it opened to the externs than they flocked to it, and as the College grew, the Seminary decreased, so much so that the Institution came to be called a College-Seminary, or plainly, College of the Seminary.28

Those responsible for this innovation were not the Vincentians, but the Bishops who were forced by the circumstances.

The 19th century is sometimes called the Age of the Light, because a thirst for education took hold of the people. This happened in the Philippines just after the famous Educational Decree of 1863, when every town, regardless of the number of inhabitants, was required to maintain two Primary Public Schools, one for boys and one for girls.
This educational provision aroused the desire for more education from among the people. Most of the students were not able to go to Manila to continue or further their studies, and there were no centers of learning in the provinces beyond the Primary Instruction. As a consequence, the local authorities requested the Bishops to open the Seminaries to the youth of the localities.

Another reason for opening the Seminaries to the externs was the financial help that the College might render to the Seminary. As it has been seen in the course of this study, the lack of money was one of the main reasons why the seminaries did not progress. Hoping therefore to find the solution to the financial problem, the Bishops willingly acted on the petition.

When the Vincentians took over the Seminary of Nueva Ceceres in 1865, the institution was already a mixed school, known as a College Seminary. As a matter of fact, when the conflagration of 1860 reduced to ashes the city of Naga including its Cathedral and Seminary, there were in the latter, 41 seminarians and 466 lay students or “colegiales.”

In Cebú, only a half a year after the Vincentians took over the Diocesan Seminary, Bishop Jimeno, at the request of the people and with the approval of his Counsellors on May 15, 1867, announced the opening of the Seminary classes to young people who were unwilling to take the sacerdotal career, but eager to acquire a higher education.

In Jaro, while the Seminary building was under construction from November 10, 1869 to November 1874, the Seminary students were those aspiring for a priestly vocation. But with the new magnificent building capable of holding some two hundred interns, with the ever increasing number of students and with more Fathers joining the Faculty, some classes of a First Class Colleges status were taken up. With Government recognition, lay students began to be admitted in 1874.

In Vigan, Bishop Aragones wished to have likewise a College-Seminary, and thus it was written in the Seminary Statutes. But, although the students were supposed to be seminarians aspiring to a priestly vocation, only 62 were interns or boarding students, and the rest 285 externs or day scholars or “colegiales”, in the school year 1872-1873.

Administration, Methods of Teaching, Textbooks

The Vincentians assigned to the Philippine Seminaries during the last four decades of the 19th century were well chosen and exemplary missionaries, as was often stated by the Spanish Provincials, Sanz and
Maller. They might not have been endowed with academic degrees but generally they finished their ecclesiastical studies with distinguished honors from the Seminaries of Spain or France. Above all, they were eminent in priestly virtue and apostolic zeal.

Those appointed to be Rectors of the Diocesan Seminaries, were specially selected from among the most qualified in administration. They were.\(^{32}\)

### San Carlos Seminary of the Archdiocese of Manila

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Rectors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1862-1870</td>
<td>Very Rev. Gregorio Velasco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-1874</td>
<td>Very Rev. Diego Salmeron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875-1890</td>
<td>Very Rev. Manuel Orriols</td>
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<tr>
<td>1890-1894</td>
<td>Very Rev. Santiago Serrallonga</td>
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<td>1894-1899</td>
<td>Very Rev. Rafael de la Iglesia</td>
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### Santisimo Rosario Seminary of the Diocese of Nueva Caceres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Rectors</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1865-1868</td>
<td>Very Rev. Ildefonso Moral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868-1884</td>
<td>Very Rev. Antonio Santonja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884-1891</td>
<td>Very Rev. Miguel Perez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891-1897</td>
<td>Very Rev. Juan Miralda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897-1904</td>
<td>Very Rev. Juan Santandreu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### San Carlos Seminary of the Diocese of Cebu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Rectors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1867-1870</td>
<td>Very Rev. José Casarramona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-1880</td>
<td>Very Rev. Antonio Farré</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-1889</td>
<td>Very Rev. Francisco Jarero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889-1908</td>
<td>Very Rev. Pedro Juliá</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### San Vicente Ferrer Seminary of the Diocese of Jaro

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1869-1872</td>
<td>Very Rev. Ildefonso Moral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872-1875</td>
<td>Very Rev. Aniceto Gonzalez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875-1878</td>
<td>Very Rev. Ildefonso Moral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878-1884</td>
<td>Very Rev. Santiago Serrallonga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884-1892</td>
<td>Very Rev. Juan Miralda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892-1894</td>
<td>Very Rev. Miguel Perez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894-1903</td>
<td>Very Rev. Domingo Viera</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Purisima Concepcion Seminary of Vigan

1872-1876 — Very Rev. Ildefonso Moral

Following a long standing Vincentian tradition received from the holy Founder himself, the Vincentian always maintained the method of teaching through lectures based on some standard approved textbook, avoiding in the classroom the practice of dissertation on personal research or dictating to the students notes about scholarly investigations.

The textbooks then in use were the Treatises of Gounet for Dogmatic Theology, Lárraga for Moral Theology, and Goudin for Philosophy. These were not certainly exhaustive works for scholars and researchers, but practical, orthodox and comprehensive handbooks of great value for busy pastors and evangelical ministers.

**Ecclesiastical Training and Clerical Discipline in the Philippine Vincentian Seminaries**

From a Manuscript written in 1886 by Fr. Manuel Burgos, C.M. for the seminarians and boarding lay students (“colegiales internos”) of the Seminary of Nueva Caceres (Naga) we gather the regulations and directives observed in the Philippine Seminaries according to Vincentian traditions, during the period (1862-1899).

Chapter I of these Seminary Rules was entitled “General duties of boarding students of the Seminary College.” It declares that:

a) Above all the students should be persuaded to keep always in mind that the purpose they should aim at upon entering this Seminary-College is: to learn science and virtue, remembering that science does not avail or profit anything without charity and love of God.

b) And inasmuch as the exercises of piety which are in use in this Institution are the most proper and conducive means to foster charity and love of God and to attain Christian perfection, everybody should highly appreciate and esteem the practice of these acts of piety, and should strive to learn well the way to perform them, making use of the means at hand to perform with a great spirit of faith and with the greatest perfection and devotion they may muster.

c) Anyone newly admitted in this Seminary-College, during the first month after his entrance, will make a good general Confession, and will choose a regular fixed Confessor — whom everybody is supposed to have — who shall be also the
Studies and Discipline

Director of his conscience. They should go to him at least once a month. Those who are clerics must go more frequently. They should have recourse to him with great confidence to consult and ask for advice regarding their doubts, and to be instructed on how to behave at all times. . . . It is suitable then to be very plain and sincere with him, revealing with utmost frankness all the secrets of their conscience, so that he may guide them safely and prudently on the way of perfection and of their own vocation.”

Science and Virtue, the Purpose of all Seminary Training.

This has been the constant doctrine of the Church, following Scriptures: Hos. 4, 6; Mal. 2.7; 1 Tim, 4, 6-8; 6-11; 2 Tim. 1, 6-7; 13-14; 2, 4.15.21-26; 3, 10-16; Tit. 1, 7-9; etc.; St. Pius X, HÆRENT ANIMO, August 4, 1908; Pius XI, AD CATHOLICI SACERDOTII, December 20, 1935; Pius XII, MENTI NOSTRÆ, September 23, 1950; John XXIII, SACERDOTII NOSTRI PRIMORDIA, August 1, 1959; Paul VI, SUMMI DEI VERBUM, November 4, 1963; and Vatican II, OPTATAM TOTIUS, October 28, 1965, nn. 3; 8-10; 13-16.

Means to attain Christian perfection: Exercises of piety

Vatican II, OPTATAM TOTIUS, n. 8 declares: “Let the seminarians practice those exercises of piety recommended by the venerable usage of the Church, though care must be taken that spiritual formation does not consist in these alone, nor merely to develop religious sentiment. Seminarians should learn to live according to the Gospel and to grow in faith, hope, and charity. By exercising these virtues, they will develop the spirit of prayer, secure strength and protection for their vocation, promote the vitality of the other virtues, and grow in the desire to win all men to Christ.”

The first clause of this declaration was stressed in the Seminary Rules of the Vincentians in the Philippines in the last century. The Conciliar caution, however, against a merely exterior and superficial performance of the exercises of piety, and against a routinary and unsubstantial devotion, is not found in the Seminary Rules; although obviously they implied it when they encouraged the seminarians “to perform the exercises of piety with a great spirit of faith and with the greatest perfection and devotion they may muster.”

The warning given by Vatican II in 1965 was based on sad experiences of priests who happened to be ordained without realizing that they had no vocation, because of lack of personal spiritual direction in the Seminary. Even for most of the first half of our 20th century, our
Philippine Seminaries were not entirely satisfactory in stressing properly the absolute need of individual spiritual direction to avoid lamentable mistakes in the choice of a priestly vocation.

The need and importance of spiritual direction for seminarians.

The Vincentian Seminary Rules of the last century, following a distinctive sound tradition derived from the origin of the Congregation of the Mission recommended the newly admitted seminarians to make a General Confession upon starting their ecclesiastical course of studies. And at the same time recommended them to choose from among the Seminary Fathers — except the Rector — a fixed Confessor to whom they should regularly go, at least once a month, for the spiritual direction of their conscience.

In those days, and even for a great part of the first half of our 20th century, most of our diocesan Seminaries did not appoint any particular priest to the office of Spiritual Director of the Seminary. Such practice came after the promulgation of the Code of Canon Law by Benedict XV in 1917. Before, the usual practice was to consider all the Seminary Professors in charge also of helping, attending and directing the seminarians who went to them either for Confession or for spiritual consultation and guidance. In most cases spiritual direction was probably given only with occasion of the Sacrament of Penance. That is why it was insisted that each seminarian should choose a fixed confessor because otherwise he could not be safely and prudently guided, specially, with respect to his vocation.

At first sight, this arrangement might have seemed satisfactory. However, it was not so in reality. The spiritual direction of a seminarian is not limited to matters related to the sacramental forum. For the discernment of a priestly vocation, the Spiritual Director must be aware also of many other character traits, noble dispositions, acquired virtues, innate weaknesses, struggles and victories over temptations, etc., which could be known only in confidential talks and interior communications, outside the confessional. Seminarians’ Confessors must certainly be spiritual directors also regarding matters proper of the Sacrament they administer. But these are not all. There are many other factors to be taken into account for the personally complete spiritual direction of a seminarian regarding his priestly vocation. Such complete and thorough guidance can be offered only by a truly qualified Spiritual Director to whom each seminarian regularly and periodically reveals not only the state of his conscience but also the inclinations and dispositions of his character and personality, his negative as well as his positive qualities.
Otherwise, the spiritual direction of seminarians may become rather superficial and far from what the Church in Vatican II, OPTATUM TOTIUS, nn. 3 and 8, expects:

“3. In Minor Seminaries, founded to nurture the seeds of a vocation, students should be prepared to follow Christ the Redeemer with a generous and pure heart. The means should be a special religious formation which gives first place to spiritual direction.

“8. Especially with the help of the Spiritual Director, such formation will help seminarians learn to live in familiar and constant companionship with the Father through Jesus Christ His Son, in the Holy Spirit...”

This spiritual direction cannot be given in the confessional only, as the old system implied. But Seminary Directors of old should not be blamed for not having followed a way that became well defined by the Church only half-a century later. Even the ideas about the real nature of a priestly vocation and its discernment were not so clear in the 19th century, as they are now after the decision of St. Pius X in 1912 on the controversy about Lahitton’s opinion, and the pontifical documents of Pius XI, AD CATHOLICI SACERDOTII IN 1935, of Pius XII, SEDES SAPIENTIAE, in 1956 and of Paul VI, SUMMI DEI VERBUM In 1963. Hence, precision could not be demanded from the Seminary Directors of the last century the way it may be expected today regarding the spiritual formation and guidance of candidates to the priestly vocation.

Perhaps, these understandable deficiencies in the spiritual direction and formation of seminarians of yesterday might have been the cause, partially at least, of the alleged instances of less edifying priests who were greedy, avaricious, of mediocre moral stature, without zeal for souls, domineering, slothful, negligent in their duties, and lax in their morals. Even rejecting groundless generalizations, and admitting the sad fact that a number of priests were unfaithful to their vocation, their unsaintly conduct can not possibly be traced to an over emphasis on spirituality in the Seminary training, which created — it is said — a “seminary spirituality,” that is, a spirituality proper of a monk, and not of a diocesan priest. The lamented failures did not originate from misanthropy or separation from the world, but rather from worldliness, which derived, in all probability, from lack of a true priestly vocation, and ultimately, perhaps from some deficiency in the spiritual direction provided by the Seminary.
The spiritual direction of Seminaries of old was not personally complete, that is, for each individual seminarian both in the sacramental and non-sacramental forum. Furthermore, it was specifically clerical, at least when offered to both seminarians and lay students together, in common, because then the norms and directives given were aimed at Christian perfection in general, and not to the priestly vocation in particular. The Seminary Directors were in charge of seminarians and lay students living together. Thus, while the lay students were provided with a clerical training not really necessary for them, the seminarians were given less attention with regard to the spiritual formation demanded by their vocation. This was one of the regrettable consequences of a mixed training in a College-Seminary.

On the other hand, it was very good to let all the priests of the Seminary Staff be concerned with the guidance and spiritual direction of their charges, instead of limiting their work to the classroom and academic formation of the seminarians, as it might often be the case in an ordinary College or University. In the Vincentian Seminaries of those days, all the Fathers were considered, Seminary Directors entrusted with the task to guide the seminarians, not only in their studies, but also in their spiritual formation and priestly vocation. However, this condition should not preclude the assignment of someone in particular to assume officially the duties of a Spiritual Director of all the seminarians in general, aside from exceptional cases approved by the Rector.

Chapter I of the Vincentian Seminary Rules of 1886, explaining the virtues and line of conduct to be observed by the seminarians and boarding students continues as follows:

“d) They should strive to acquire and practice the virtues becoming of a good boarding student and seminarian, such as among others, the following: 1) great docility to be guided by their superiors; 2) prompt obedience to them; 3) great humility to sacrifice their self love to the good of others; 4) great charity to render them affable and benevolent to all their companions; 5) the mortification necessary to fulfill their religious, social and scholastic duties; and 6) an earnest application and great desire for their own spiritual and moral perfection.

“e) All, then, should be exact in the fulfillment of their religious, scholastic and social duties. They should be moderate and prudent in their speaking, grave in their demeanor, clean without affectation in their dressing; polite and graceful, patient and charitable with all kind of persons, keeping always and everywhere such exterior behaviour as to edify all
who might see them, by the good example of their modesty, delicacy, and Christian urbanity.

"f) They should avoid with great care any action against charity and strive to be in good terms with everybody but without showing any special intimacy or particular friendship with anyone, since that may be the occasion of many offenses to God. They should behave respectfully and confidently with each other and never give way to insults or mockery, either calling one another with nicknames, or biting jests, or any other deeds that might offend or discredit their companions. . .

"g) They should have a great horror for the vice of immodesty, and should try to avoid with utmost vigilance anything that might stain the angelical virtue of purity. . . Hence they must never allow jokes or games that directly or indirectly are opposed to modesty. Anyone who speaks indecent words, or tells dirty stories, or writes love letters or sings worldly songs, or do any other immodest action will be punished with all severity, even with expulsion from this institution, according to the seriousness of the offense. In the same way those who learn of these faults in any of their companions but who do not fulfill the strict duty of reporting it at once to the Rector or the Vice-Rector of the Seminary will be duly punished.

"h) They shall attend punctually all community acts, observe order, silence, gravity, modesty and composure always. In case they arrive after the act has begun, they should explain their delay to the person who is presiding. Whenever they may be hindered by any reasonable cause to attend the act, they should inform the major of the respective hall about it. The major should report the matter to the Vice-Rector, according to the prescribed way.

"i) They should always keep the seating arrangement assigned to them in the chapel, classroom, refectory, study hall, in the Cathedral, processions, and other acts. . .

"j) They should be very earnest about cleanliness, remembering that exterior cleanliness, when free from vanity, is frequently the sign of interior purity; and that, at least, it is proper of civilized people, of good refinements and social behavior. . .

"k) All should observe due silence in the halls, refectory, and corridors; and they should talk only during recreation time and in the place assigned for it. But even during recreation, they should always avoid whistling and shouting or making obstreperous noises, or any other kind of tumult or uproar improper of well-mannered people. They are strictly forbidden
to talk with the priests confined in the Seminary. Breaking this prohibition is to be considered a serious fault, worthy of public and exemplary punishment.

"l) Everybody should be diligent and assiduous in the study of classroom subjects, striving to avail well of their time, and not to be carried away by laziness...

And so that they may not fruitlessly lose their time, and so that their parents may not have to make useless sacrifices, let them know that anyone who would fail during two consecutive years, without any legitimate cause of sickness but only for their indolence, neglect, inaptitude or any other defect, will be dismissed from this Institution. This ruling shall not preclude that any other boarding student or seminarian could and should be dismissed even before that term of time, as soon as it is evidently known that he is truly unfit, or that he deserves to be dismissed on account of his indolence or lax conduct.

"m) Nobody shall keep money in his possession, but shall rather deposit it in the cash-box or safe of Fr. Inspector, to whom they will go to ask whatever they need for incidental expenses. But even for such eventual expenses they should not retain any quantity greater than one peso, for more than two days after receiving it...

"n) They are also forbidden to entertain any communication with externs, without permission of the Rector or Vice-Rector, so that no one should talk with them outside the allotted time. And no one shall either send, or receive, or deliver any letter without handing it over first to Fr. Inspector, to get his approval. In the classroom, the seminarians and boarding students shall be placed together, with due separation from the externs, and they shall be accompanied by the respective professors upon entering and going out of the classroom...

"o) They should write to their parents and family or benefactors with enough frequency, but taking care in polishing their language, penmanship and orthography, as well as in neatness and other good forms demanded by usual practice in good letter writing. For this purpose, they should have a little notebook where they should jot down the corrections made on their letters, so as to train themselves easily...

"p) ...As long as they are within the Seminary they shall always speak in Spanish, striving to improve in it with daily exercise, and paying attention to the remarks given them in this respect."
In Chapter II, the Vincentian Seminary Rules dwell “on the various exercises of piety and the practical way to perform them”: first the morning prayers; then the Holy Mass; then, an exhortation to frequent Communion, and some pieces of advice on how to make the mental prayer which was demanded from the students of Philosophy and Theology. The devout exercises of spiritual talks and a public repetition of the good thoughts entertained during the mental prayer, are also explained. And finally, the monthly recollection day is recommended.

Surely, there is no exaggeration or over emphasis in the pious exercises demanded. They are the usual practices of any good Christian interested in his spiritual perfection. They seem to be borrowed from such standard works as St. Francis de Sales’ “Devout Life”, intended for all pious souls living in the world. We do not think that such spiritual and religious training given to the seminarians, under the Vincentians might have been “of a type which the secular priest could not possibly carry out once he was in a parish with all the demands of a zealous parish ministry.” In general, the spiritual and religious training imparted in those Vincentian Seminaries of the 19th century followed the very same lines marked out by the Church Magisterium in the past and at present. Still, it was not perfect and it had deficiencies. But the deficiencies were not in what was being done, but rather in what should have been added, as we know now.

Other details of Seminary life and discipline can be found in the Statutes of the Conciliar Seminaries officially promulgated by the respective Bishops. The following are some important provisions found in the “Estatutos del Seminario Conciliar de Nueva Caceres,” made by the Most Reverend Fray Francisco Gainza, O.P., promulgated in Naga, on the inauguration of the College-Seminary, May 9, 1865. These Statutes, with some slight variations, give us the pattern of what was observed in the rest of the College-Seminaries under the Vincentians.

“The Seminary shall depend exclusively on the Diocesan Bishop alone — in his absence or sede vacante from the Ecclesiastical Governor of the Diocese — who will exercise the overall supervision of the institution according to the Council of Trent and and the laws of the country, and taking into account the rights or privileges of the Royal Patronage.” (Ch.I, Art. 4)

“However, the internal and economic government of the Seminary will be entrusted to the Fathers of the Congregation of St. Vincent de Paul, whose Superior will present to the Bishop the persons who shall be appointed Director (or Seminary Rector), Vice-Rector, Dean of Studies, Professors, Procurator, and others who may be in charge of the religious, scientific, and economic direction of the establishment.” (Ib., Art. 5)
"The Seminary also will be a house for the confinement and correction of the ecclesiastics who might have committed some faults deserving removal from parish, punishment or reclusion. At the same time the Seminary will be a house for the clergy, i.e. all secular priests coming to the city for whatever motive, should come and reside in the Seminary during their stay in the city." (Ib., Art. 8)

"Transient ecclesiastics shall be accommodated in a hall completely separated from the rest of the Seminary, since they should not have contact with the young students. Similarly confined penalized clerics shall be given decent rooms with sufficient seclusion." (Ch. II, Art. 2)

"The boarding students of this Seminary will be either working students (famulos or capistas), boarding scholars (colegiales de beca) and clerics aspiring to Orders (clerigos ordenandos)". (Ch. II, Art. 1)

"For admission as a "famulo-capista" or "colegial de beca", it is enough that they know how to read and write, and to accredit the legitimacy of their birth by the Baptismal Certificate and the Certificate of Marriage of their parents. Also, they must be accredited for good personal conduct, physical health, absence of any contagious disease, as well as for the good name of their family." (Ib., Art. 3)

"In order to be promoted to First Tonsure and the successive Orders, it is necessary furthermore to show a mature and temperate conduct during their stay in the Seminary, including aptitude, application and progress in their studies, frequent recourse to the sacraments, and vocation to the ecclesiastical state. The Director (or Rector) of the institution is in charge of appraising all these qualities, taking into account the evidences of the candidate, the information from the professors, and other facts he might demand or inquire confidentially." (Ib. Art. 5)

"The admission of "famulos" or "colegiales", and the previous information, will belong to the Director, in previous agreement with the Prelate. But the admission of those who are to be promoted to the clerical state, will be on the exclusive prerogative of the Bishop. Those who desire such promotion will transmit their documented petitions through the Director (Rector), who upon forwarding them shall adjoin all truthful information about the case, without human considerations of any kind, and having in mind only the greater glory of God, since the Bishop has to rely on him for his pastoral responsibility." (Ib., Art. 6)

"The tuition fee of "famulos-capistas" will be, for the time being, 40 pesos yearly; that of "colegiales de beca" and "clerigos ordenandos", sixty pesos yearly. Transient priests and those who are penalized, shall contribute to the Seminary at the rate of seven pesos monthly. The
tuition fee may change according to the Seminary resources, and the cheapened prices or the scarcity of articles for basic needs.

“For the time being, there shall be one boarding student scholarship for every ten paying students. The grant-in-aid shall be bestowed on the most virtuous and diligent students, and — other things being equal — on the poorest. Teachers who are not of the Congregation of St. Vincent, but mere seminarians — as there are some now — will not pay any tuition.” (Ib., Art. 8-9)

“For the direction and complete organization of the Seminary-College there shall be a Director (Rector), a Vice-Rector or Dean of Studies, a Secretary, the professors of Moral-Theology and Liturgy, Sacred Chant, Philosophy and Humanities; a Procurator, a Porter, one or more Infirmary, as many Majors as there are halls, the “colegiales de beca”, the “famulos or capistas”, and lastly, the servants that may be necessary for the various departments, workrooms and service of the establishment.” (Ch. III, Art. 1)

“It will be the Rector’s duty to receive the applications, examine the documents, demand proofs and ask for information about those who want to enter in the Seminary, as servants or as boarding students. ... Similarly it will be his duty to transmit with due information the applications of those who want to be invested with the clerical habit or receive any Order. ... It is his duty to watch over the observance of these Statutes, to punish their infraction, to correct the negligent, and even to dismiss from the Seminary, according to his prudence and discretion, the “sirvientes capistas”, and with previous consent of the Prelate, the boarding scholars. It is only for the expulsion — not for the punishment — of clerics with tonsure or in Minor Orders, that the Rector should give an account to the Bishop; for all other cases he will have ample and complete freedom of action.” (Ib., Art. 3, 4, 5)

“He shall frequently demand the Majors or beadles in the various departments to report to him about the students’ faults, at least once
every week, and whenever some special incident happens. He shall punish severely any connivance or neglect in this matter. . . He shall be accessible to any student wishing to confide in him, ask for advice, or report about anything.” (Ib., Art. 7).

“He will watch over the porter, beadles, etc., lest they allow some communication between the students and outsiders. He will not permit any letter, note, order or gift to be sent or received by the students without passing through him or through the Vice-Rector, because from the observance or infraction of this statute may depend the progress, peace and tranquility of the students or their dissipation or distraction from their studies, and their neglect or tepidity in virtue.”

“From time to time he will visit the halls and departments of the Seminary and inspect the boxes, drawers and other belongings of the seminarians, first to see if they are tidy and clean, and then to make it sure that they do not keep gifts, letters or suspicious papers, fiction books or unsuitable or perhaps forbidden books; in which case these should be taken away, and the guilty student punished according to the seriousness of the fault. If this imply some relation with women, that may be enough to dismiss the student.” (Ib., Art. 8-9).

“He will see to it that some lamps may be lighted always in the rooms and halls, and that these should never be closed at night so that they might be visited at any time. This is an essential point among the youth, to prevent many offenses against God. The boys should sleep in their own beds separated by a reasonable distance.” (Ib., Art. 10)

“The Rector may not undertake any new construction in the Seminary building without permission of the Bishop, who will judge its opportuneness and the manner or way of doing it.” (Ib., Art. 13)

“The Vice-Rector is called to supervise for the Rector during his absences. . . As Regent of Studies he will care for everything concerning the classes. He will see to it that the professors are punctual in their attendance in the classroom, and he will appoint their substitutes in case of absence, sickness or other legitimate occupation. He will direct all that is related with the Seminary studies; but always in dependence on the Rector.” (Ch. V, Art. 1, 3)

“Above all, the Vice-Rector’s main duty shall be to study the character and qualities of the students, to note their aptitude and application, to observe their inclinations and defects and to examine their vocation since it is on his information, more than in anything else, that the Director (Rector) shall rely in order to present the candidates for ordination, and for the Bishop to accept them.” (Ib., Art. 8).

It was the custom in those Seminaries to have a short period for reviewing the lesson of the day before starting the morning classes, and
also to study some time at night for the next day. This period was called the “Paso”, abbreviation of “repaso” which means review. To guide this review period some qualified students were appointed as “pasantes” (review leaders). Chapter XII dwells on them in the following manner:

To keep due order during the review periods and to help the students avail well of that time, the Vice-Rector shall appoint the “Pasantes” as many as needed choosing them from among the most diligent, and those of better conduct and more fluent in the Spanish language.

The “Pasantes” shall observe the method and way of instruction given them by the respective Professor of the subject to be reviewed. They shall try their best to achieve their honorable function to the satisfaction and profit of the students.

They should notify the respective Professor about the faults committed during the review, for the proper action to be taken.

The “Pasantes” are actually the substitutes of the respective Professors in their absence, sickness, etc.: and this service will be counted as merit to advance in the studies. Under equal circumstances, they are to be preferred for filling vacant teaching positions.

Chapter XIII deals with “The boarding students in general and their duties.” The Statutes in this Chapter repeat the norms we have already seen in the Vincentian Seminary Rules.

Chapter XIV deals with the working students (called “capistas”), and their privileges and duties.

For the interior service of the boarding students, of the chapel, halls, infirmary, and library, there shall be as many working students (“capistas” or “famulos”) as Fr. Director (Rector) may deem necessary. For admission as “capistas” the poor students diligent and of good conduct, shall be preferred.” (Art. 1).

Two of them may be assigned for each hall; two others for the refectory; some others for the infirmary, for the chapel, and for the corridors. The Vice-Rector shall appoint them either alternating by the weeks, or in a fixed manner. . . (Art. 2)

The capistas shall take care of the cleanliness of the
chapels and the refectories, seeing to it that nothing may be lacking at the right time. They may ask for the help of the house servants when they are not able to finish their work alone. However, the services rendered to the boarding students in the refectory, or for opening and closing doors and windows of the halls, or awaking the students in the morning and after siesta, or ringing the bell for community acts in the chapel or the classrooms, shall be performed by the *capistas* themselves, in turns assigned by the Vice-Rector. In a word, they shall be the immediate servers of the boarding students in the halls and other departments, and for that service they shall enjoy the right of board and lodging, as well as academic training during their studies and a very moderate stipend shall be requested of them. In this way they will be able to continue step by step towards the priesthood, although by the time they may receive the Tonsure they will cease to be "capistas" (Art. 3)

Chapter XV and Chapter XVI of the Statutes give the distribution of time during class days and during holidays respectively. We have seen in the preceding Chapter 8 of this work the Time Schedule followed in the Manila Seminary, according to the Vincentian Rules approved by Archbishop Pedro Payo, O.P. on November 23, 1878. But since that Seminary was only a Major Seminary there were some slight variations in the Time Schedule observed in the other Seminary Colleges of Naga, Cebú, and Jaro where the Minor Seminary was attached in the same building to the Major Department.

Chapter XVII of the Naga Statutes deals with the academic formation, number of Classes or subjects to be taught, their duration, the authors to be followed for textbooks, the academic exercises, the examinations, and the time of vacation. From the start, the Statutes declared that the courses offered in the Seminary will depend on the available personnel and the resources to maintain them. The suggestion was made to increase the limited number of subjects taught at the beginning (1865) by adding Philosophy, Liturgy, Sacred Oratory, and Plain Chant. The textbooks adopted were the same as those used in the University (of Santo Tomas) of Manila (Art. 1).

The school year shall begin on July 2, and shall end on the Thursday before Passion Sunday. The duration of classes will be scheduled in the Time Table. Vacation time will be from the Vigil of Christmas until the Epiphany (January 6), and summer vacation from the Thursday before Passion Sunday until the beginning of
July. Every week, there will be a free non-class day on Thursday. In the weeks where there is a feast day, the holiday will take the place of Thursday. (Art. 2)

The Philosophers will have a weekly little disputation for each Class at the second period in the afternoon, and a yearly formal Thesis defense of six conclusions. The Theologians ("moralists") will hold these academic exercises at the hours and days assigned by the Dean of Studies. In the little disputations the Proponent will prove his thesis or conclusion assigned beforehand, and will defend it against the objections of two arguers appointed previously (as the Proponent himself) by the respective Professor. The academic exercise will be held in Latin and will last for one hour. For the formal Thesis defense a dissertation will be made to prove the proposed conclusions, and three arguers will be appointed for the morning, and another three for the afternoon. The exercise will last for an hour-and-a-half each time and the Proponents may be two: one for the morning session, another for the afternoon, so as to render it less onerous. To be trained in the practice of argumentation the "Pasantes" (review leaders) will see to it that the night review periods will be limited to attack and defend the conclusions of the subject matter at hand, in the lesson to be reviewed. (Art. 3)

After the feast of Corpus Christi, the examinations for Grammarians (Minor seminarians), and the private exams of those in the Major Department (Philosophy and Theology) with their respective Professors alone, will begin. The Grammarians' examiners will be one of the Professors and Fr. Vice-Rector or Dean of Studies. For those to be promoted to Philosophy, other two Professors of Humanities will join the tribunal. The public exams of Major Seminarians will be held on the first days of July, in the presence of the respective Professor, the Dean of Studies and Father Rector. Those approved will get a Certificate with the approval of the Rector, and the signatures of the Professor and Secretary and the seal of the Seminary. The marks will be: "Mediano" (Regular), "Aprovechado" (Good), and "Sobresaliente" (Excellent) (Art. 4).

The Opening of the School Year will be held at the Cathedral Church, with a suitable Discourse in Spanish delivered by one of the Professors. The Bishop, City Major, and other Dignitaries will be invited to this function and greeted afterwards with a frugal breakfast in the Seminary. (Art. 5)

To avoid unrewarding loss of time during the best years of the young students, as well as useless sacrifices of their parents, any Minor seminarian who after staying six years in the Seminary
cannot be promoted to Philosophy, will be irremediably dismissed and sent back home. The same policy will be observed for any Major seminarian in Philosophy or Theology who, without legitimate excuse due to sickness, etc., and only through negligence, laziness, or lack of aptitude or whatever other defect may happen to fail two successive years, according to the norms of Art. 34 of the Regulations (approved by the Superior Government of the Philippines, on July 27, 1858). The qualification and dismissal of the student belongs to the Fr. Rector, after hearing the opinion of the student’s Professor. (Art. 6-7)

Besides this provision, any seminarian may and should be dismissed before the specified terms, as soon as his incapacity is known or whenever his malicious negligence or lax conduct may demand such penalty. The Rector and Professors of the Seminary shall ignore in these cases any ill-advised compassion, and shall show themselves inexorable, since that is what the service of the Church and the good of the State, as well as of the families of the students, demand. Otherwise these students may lose their best years, get into the habit of idleness, learn nothing profitable and, in the future, become parasites, good for nothing but making trouble and committing sedition in their own towns.

Chapter XVIII deals with the Sacraments of Confession and Communion and the Spiritual Exercises of the students. On account of the large number of students, the Statutes foresaw the difficulty in demanding monthly Confession for all. At least the clerics or “Ordinandi” were thus enjoined to go to the Sacrament of Penance once every month. Other boarding students and “capistas” (working students) were supposed to go at least four or six times every year. But whoever, without exception, clerics or mere students, would like to go more frequently, should be encouraged to do so, as a most profitable practice for the youth. The Seminary Rules of the Vincentians, in all Seminaries entrusted to them, demanded from all, without restrictions for lack of available Confessors, to go to Confession “at least once a month, and those who are clerics, more frequently.”

On the days appointed for Confession, those who were to go to the Sacrament were exempted from attending the afternoon class, so as to be able to prepare themselves in the Chapel or in the Study hall for a fruitful reception of God’s grace. Confessions were generally heard at nightfall, since that is a cooler hour and more recollected time for the penitents and also more convenient for the Confessors. (Art. 5). Furthermore, the whole Community will devote ten days for the yearly Spiritual Exercises, beginning on Thursday evening of the 4th week of
Lent so as to finish on the Saturday before Palm Sunday with a General Communion. The method to be followed, distribution of time, and diversity of practices during those days were left to the prudence of the Rector. (Art. 6). Again, the Father Rector shall try to introduce the pious practice of the Monthly Recollection. The distribution of time and variety of exercises during that day are left to him. (Art. 7).

"The tree is known by its fruits." (Mt. 12:33)

Such in detail was the type of ecclesiastical education, studies, discipline and acts of piety fostered and maintained in the Philippine Seminaries directed by the Vincentians during the Spanish regime. From the actual conditions prevailing in the Seminaries of the 19th century all over the world, and in spite of the scarcity of available personnel and resources in the Philippines at that time, these Seminaries offered a clerical training which was comparable to that of the best in Europe and elsewhere. Nevertheless, our Conciliar Seminaries, following the Church's mind in their institution, did not aim precisely to produce erudite scholars and doctors distinguished in theological disciplines — that was the function of Church Universities — but rather, learned and zealous pastors of souls, virtuous priests ready to sacrifice and consume their lives in the remotest towns and villages, in the obscure service of poor and humble people who were scattered, "harassed and helpless, like sheep without shepherd" (Mt. 9, 36). That was the main goal pursued by those Diocesan Seminaries run by the Vincentians. Facts show that they achieved that goal satisfactorily.

The shortage of Filipino native clergy before the coming of the Vincentians was notably remedied during the period of their work in the Seminaries. 38

Concerning the fostering of priestly vocations among the Filipino youth during the second half of the 19th century, we know that the Seminary of Cebú alone in 1855 had about 200 seminarians, according to extant records. "The enrollment of the Seminary of Naga (Major seminarians only) from 1865 to 1896 gives these figures denoting a constant increase of vocations: 63, 40, 45, 44, 46, 59, 72, 71, 86, 95, 107, 110, 118, 123, 109, 116, 122, 113, 98, 104, 121, 121, 111, 114, 142, 161, 190, 156, 133, 145, 155, 109. During the period of 1898 to 1925, the greatest number of Major seminarians in that Seminary was 66 in the school year 1912-1913. 39

With regards to steady increase of native clergy, we have the following data. For the years before 1870: "The Seminary of Manila gives an average of 12 to 16 priests ordained each year; that of Nueva Caceres, 6 to 10; that of Cebú, a little more than Nueva Caceres; that
of Nueva Segovia, also a little more than Nueva Caceres; that of Jaro, no available data.\textsuperscript{49} This means, an average of some 30 to 46 Filipino priests ordained every year at that time.

During the last 35 years of the Spanish regime, in the Manila Archdiocese alone 300 Filipino priests were ordained, i.e., an average of about nine priests every year. During that same period, an average of 13 Filipino priests were ordained each year in the Seminary of Naga; an average of four, in the Seminary of Cebu; and probably two, in the Seminary of Jaro, and other two in that of Vigan. So that, all in all, during the last decades of the 19th century, an average of about 30 Filipino priests were ordained every year. Indeed, nor a poor record, compared with our 20th century ordinations.

For the sake of an accurate perspective, it must be pointed out that, according to statistics from the Church Catholic Directories in 1876, there were in the Philippines 748 native priests for a population of 5.5 million people. In 1950, there were 1,250 native priests for some 20 million people. During the Spanish regime, under the maligned Spanish Royal Patronage, there was one native priests for every 7,000 inhabitants, while in the first half of the 20th century, there was one native priest for every 16,000 inhabitants; that is, in the 20th century there are proportionally less than half the number of Filipino priests under the so-called Spanish “anti-native” dispensation.

It is true that according to statistics released in 1898, most of the 675 secular (native) priests working then in the Philippine parishes, held the office of coadjutors to the 967 Regular pastors. And this was probably the case during the last half of the 19th century. Again, this was not due to race discrimination but to certain political precaution by the Spanish civil and ecclesiastical authorities. In the American colonies, native secular priests were found behind the revolutionary movements for independence. Church and State authorities in the Philippines, as a consequence, became reluctant to leave in the hands of Filipino priests posts of leadership, lest the case of Spanish America might be repeated in the Philippines. It was a shortsighted policy of a decadent though well intentioned government, which was badly in need of serious reforms. But, once more, it was not due to racial prejudices or to skin-color discrimination.

Filipino priests, Rectors of parishes

Were those Filipino priests ordained during the last decades of the 19th century poorly prepared by the Vincentians, so as to keep them forever subordinate to the religious, as their perpetual coadjutors only? Peculiar circumstances of this period prevented the granting of parish
rectories to Filipino native priests, as it was truly the Church ideal, and even a previously tried out State policy, which through adverse circumstances could not crystallize in the end. Admittedly, a great majority of parish rectories remained in the hands of the Spanish regular clergy up to the end of the Spanish regime and a majority of the Filipino priests had to remain as mere coadjutors in the parishes. But this was not a systematic policy. In fact, a good number of the Filipino native priests were actually conferred parochial benefices and were assigned as parish rectors in all the dioceses of the Philippines. Hence, it is false to suppose that parish rectories were barred from Filipino priests, and that the native candidates to the priesthood could not aspire nor dream of becoming parish priests someday, and, worse still, that their mentors and Seminary professors and directors were naturally tempted to give them just a "second-class" clerical training and priestly education, since anyhow their charges would never be able to occupy posts of responsibility and leadership in the Church hierarchy.

Statistics give us the truth on the matter. From the Chancery of the Archdiocese of Manila are kept the official figures of the clergy, regular and secular working in all the dioceses of the Philippines in 1898. To wit.41

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dioceses</th>
<th>Parish Rectories under</th>
<th>Total Number of Secular Priests</th>
<th>Percentage of Secular Rectors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in 1898</td>
<td>Regulars</td>
<td>Seculars</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manila</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cebú</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaro</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vigan</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caceres</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Among the Parish Rectories under the Spanish regulars there were 116 Active Mission posts, which were not properly normal parishes but just mission stations; and 97 Parish-Missions, which were parishes, indeed, but in remote barrios or poor villages, among destitute people who could hardly support a parish priest. Hence, it is also false to suppose that the Spanish Regulars reserved for themselves the richest and flourishing rectories, with abundant incomes or remunerations.
## Vincentians During The Spanish Regime

### Dioceses and Parish Rectors in 1898

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dioceses</th>
<th>O.S.A.</th>
<th>O.R.S.A.</th>
<th>O.P.</th>
<th>O.F.M.</th>
<th>S.J.</th>
<th>Seculars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manila</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cebú</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaro</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vigan</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caceres</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above figures, it is to be concluded that:

a) The chances of a Filipino priest to become Rector of a Philippine parish were slight indeed in Manila and Vigan (13% and 6% respectively); not so small in Cebú and Jaro (33% and 35%); and quite fair in Caceres (40%);

b) The Filipino Parish Rectors were more in number than the Spanish Dominican or Jesuit parish priests;

c) Filipino Parish Rectors were found in all the Philippine dioceses, while the Spanish Parish Rectors of each Religious Order were confined to some particular dioceses only, and were not found at all in the others. This was a result of the ill-famed royal Decree of 1594 by which Philip II apportioned various districts or provinces of the Philippines to each Religious Order, after declaring emphatically in a previous Royal Cedula that “the rectory of Parish churches belongs to the clerics (secular priests) who should be helped by the religious as their coadjutors.”

Hence, if there was, as borne by statistics, a good number of Filipino priests formed under the Vincentians during the Spanish regime who became Parish Rectors in all the Philippine Dioceses, the conclusion is that they were properly trained and educated to assume such positions of responsibility and leadership. In fact, some of them were granted higher ecclesiastical dignities in the various Cathedrals and Chanceries of the Philippine Dioceses. The majority worked humbly and quietly in the pastoral ministries assigned to them, consuming their lives in the service of God for the salvation of souls, unknown to the world, without glamorous deeds, but simply fulfilling their priestly functions in the conviction that they were “unworthy servants who were only doing what was their duty” to do.

It is true that among the many “good and faithful servants, ministering in the Lord’s vineyard, there were not lacking then — as even in our own days — those who through human frailty did not show a priestly zeal for the house of God and the salvation of souls, and were drawn away by the greed of money, idleness or gambling, or the pleasures of
the flesh. And since in this matter the tendency of public opinion is to generalize — "from one instance, learn what all are doing" — soon the "few bad eggs" led people to forget or ignore the good deeds of the many. And thus can be partly explained the ill-reputation spread, specially in certain anti-clerical circles, against both the secular as well as the regular clergy, in general.

Archbishop of Manila, Pedro Payo, O.P. in his Relatio Status Ecclesiae Metropolitanae Manilae, an official Report sent to the Holy See in 1883, gives a more realistic view of the conditions of the Filipino and Spanish clergy in those days, saying.

There are certainly some among the (Filipino) native priests who are outstanding for their high moral conduct; but others, of course, forgetting their dignity, are a scandal to the faithful. Even the Europeans who receive prebendaries in the Cathedral church do not show that ideal character which inspires the rest of the clergy and the people. Unchastity is spreading far and wide.

And speaking of the Spanish religious parish priests, the Manila Archbishop continues:

Although there are many who, inspired by the zeal for God's glory and the salvation of souls, fulfill their pastoral duties well, nevertheless, there are not lacking those who, overcome by human weakness, show themselves unworthy of the pastoral ministry; and if it were within my power, I would remove them from the office.\(^43\)

Finally, the best proof that the ecclesiastical education and training given by the Vincentians in the Philippine Seminaries during the last decades of the 19th century was as worthy and accomplished as the times and circumstances allowed, are the first full-blooded Filipino Bishops elected at the beginning of our 20th century. Almost all of them were reared and formed by the Vincentians in the various diocesan Seminaries under their direction.\(^44\)

Most Rev. Jorgen Barlin, born in Baao, Camarines Sur on April 23, 1850, entered the Seminary of Naga, almost at the very time the Vincentians began to direct it. Ordained priest on September 19, 1874, he was appointed at once Bishop's Chaplain and Vicar of the Cathedral, then, Missionary Pastor of Sirona, afterwards Parish priest of Libog, and then of Sorsogon, capital of the province of Sorsogon, becoming
Vicar Forane of the whole Province at the age of 37. During the days of the Philippine revolution at the close of the century, the Spanish authorities left him as Governor of the Province. In 1903, he was appointed Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Cáceres. Pope Leo XIII granted him the dignity of Secret Chamberlain and Pope St. Pius X appointed him Apostolic Protonotary. In December 1905, he was elected Bishop of the Diocese of Cáceres and he was consecrated Bishop on June 29, 1906. In October 1907, at the inauguration of the First Philippine Legislative Assembly, Bishop Barlin was assigned to make the official invocation. Two months later, he took part in the Provincial Council of Manila. In 1909, sick as he was already, he went to Rome for his visit “ad limina” and there in the Eternal City, the Most Reverend Jorge Barlin, first indigenous Filipino Bishop, died in the peace of the Lord on September 4, 1909.

Most Reverend Juan Bautista Gorordo was the second Filipino Bishop elected in the 20th century. He was not a full-blooded Filipino, but a mestizo, son of a Spaniard and a Filipina from Cebú. Born in Barili, Cebú on April 18, 1862, he received his elementary education in the School of Brother del Río, and at the age of 12 entered the Minor Seminary of Cebú, under the Vincentians. He was ordained Priest on May 31, 1885. His first assignments were in the parishes of Opon, Mactán, and San Nicolás. Then in 1890, he was transferred to the Cebú Cathedral, as Chaplain of Bishop Martin Alcocer, O.F. M., who upon leaving the Diocese on February 1, 1899 appointed him Secretary, Notary Major of the Chancery. Bishop Thomas A. Hendrick appointed him Chancellor and Vicar General on August 19, 1904; and Pope St. Pius X granted him on October 17, 1905 the dignity of Papal Domestic Prelate. He took part in the Provincial Council of Manila in 1907. He was elected Auxiliary Bishop of Cebú on April 29, 1909. When Bishop Hendrick died in November of that year 1909, the Holy See appointed Rt. Rev. Gorordo, Apostolic Administrator, and in April 1910, residential Bishop of the Cebú Diocese. In April 11, he presided over the Diocesan Synod he convoked in Cebú, whose wise dispositions were approved later cum laude by the Holy See. He had always been a champion of the Catholic press; at the beginning of the century he became one of the founders of the paper Ang Camatuoran (The Truth); and later on, as a Bishop, he founded the periodical Boletin Catolico. Even during his Seminary years, he loved the Vincentian vocation sincerely and wished to join the ranks of the missionaries. As a priest, he asked the necessary permission to become a Vincentian, and after arranging all the papers, he came to Manila to proceed from there to Shanghai where he was supposed to make his two years of novitiate. But the plans of God were different. He got seriously sick and was unable to
go on with his project. Finally he desisted from it following the advice of his physicians and directors. He always preserved a deep love and esteem for his mentors, the Vincentians, who had always considered him as their confere, title of which he publicly "boasted" at the panegyric he preached on July 19, 1913, on the occasion of the inauguration of the new Vincentian Church of San Marcelino in Manila.

Most Reverend Pablo Singzon de la Anunciacion, born in Calbiga, Samar on January 25, 1885 entered the Seminary College of San Carlos, Cebú, under the direction of secular priests, on November 9, 1866. On January 23, 1867, the Vincentian Fathers took over the direction of the Seminary. Soon they found the young Singzon quite prepared to take the Philosophy course, which he finished at the age of 18, when he started the study of Theology and Canon Law. He received the First Tonsure on September 11, 1870 from Bishop Romualdo Jimeno, O.P., who chose him as his domestic page or attendant on October 3, 1871. When Bishop Jimeno died on March 17, 1872, his successor Bishop Benito Romero de Madridejos, O.F.M., chose again the young seminarian Singzon, as his domestic page, on June 22, 1876. Once ordained Subdeacon on August 13, 1876, Bishop Madridejos, appointed him his private Secretary, and Vice-Secretary of the Chancery. He was ordained Priest on February 24, 1877; and on the day of his First Solemn Mass, March 1, 1877, he was appointed Notary Major and Master of Ceremonies of the Cebú Cathedral. Fray Martin Alcocer, O.F.M., who became Bishop of Cebú on December 11, 1886, confirmed Fr. Singzon in all the dignities granted by his predecessors. When the Bishop was forced to leave secretly the Diocese because of the revolution on January 26, 1899, he appointed Fr. Singzon as Chancellor, Vicar General and Ecclesiastical Governor of the Diocese during his absence. Upon the resignation of Bishop Alcocer, the Apostolic Delegate Guidi appointed Fr. Singzon Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese, sede vacante, an office he exercised from October 25, 1903 to March 6, 1904, when Thomas Hendrick became Bishop of Cebú. On March 9, 1904, Fr. Singzon was nominated by the Holy See a Domestic Prelate of His Holiness. After a trip of about one year to visit Rome and Spain, he returned to Cebú on July 24, 1905; and once more he worked diligently in the Diocesan Curia. On April 10, 1910, he was appointed by the Holy See Bishop of the newly erected Diocese of Samar. He was consecrated Bishop in the church of St. Francis, in Manila, on June 12, 1910. By the end of 1911, he finished the pastoral visitation of the 84 parishes of his Diocese, and during the days 2, 3, 4 of March of that year, he celebrated the first Diocesan Synod of Calbayog. On March 24 of that same year, he inaugurated the College for girls, entrusted to the Daughters of Charity. On August 5 of the same year 1911, he established the first
printing press of Samar, and founded the Catholic review, *Ecos de Samar y Leyte*.

Most Reverend Santiago Sancho was elected second Bishop of the Diocese of Tuguegarao on February 5, 1917, and first Archbishop of Nueva Segovia on July 17, 1951.

These illustrious full-blooded Filipino Prelates finished their studies under the Vincentians, during the last years of the Spanish regime. And besides these prominent figures formed and trained under the Vincentian Fathers in those difficult years of the 19th century, many other most worthy and exemplary priests could be found whose works of priestly apostolate and pastoral ministry might have deserved for them the reward of life eternal foretold by the prophet of old: “Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever” (Dan. 12, 3).

Before the coming of the Vincentians there were also outstanding figures such as those few exceptional Filipino priests, like Fr. Jose Burgos, Fr. Pedro Pelaez, and Fr. Mariano Sevilla, who belonged to the university trained clergy of the period 1850-1872, and who excelled above others, not only for their personal gifts, application and diligence but also for the academic training received at the university level. Yet for the pastoral work of the Church and for the eternal salvation of souls, it was certainly more valuable and important to count with pious and devoted priests who, like many of the seminary-educated clergy formed under the Vincentians in those days, faithfully and zealously fulfilled their duties in the posts assigned to them.

And that was what Vincentian Philippine Seminaries of the last century unpretentiously achieved in less than forty years. “Thus you will know them by their fruits” (Mt. 7, 20). The priests formed in the Seminaries during this period “were sufficiently trained and capable in their own right of governing parishes.” Such was the mind and stand taken by the Metropolitan Archbishop of Manila, and even the Spanish religious friars themselves, as gleaned from the *Defense of Filipino Priests* they made before the Government precisely at this time. The occasion came when in 1861, to compensate the Recollect Friars for the loss of their Mindanao parishes returned to the Jesuits, 27 secular parishes in the Archdiocese of Manila were given to the Recollects. The Archbishop of Manila, Pedro Payo, O.P., “made repeated representations before the Madrid government to revoke the Royal Order that commanded the turning over of those parishes to the Recollect Fathers. The Prelate deemed it prejudicial to the rights of the Filipino priests until then in charge of said parishes, and to those who, still in the Seminaries, would soon be ordained priests and justly be in expectation of parishes.”
Unfortunately, the Spanish Government did not understand the justice of these pleas. It was too afraid precisely of the competence and leadership of native priests whom it considered unfriendly to the regime.

“On 14th July, 1887, the Provincial of the Recollect Order in the Philippines, Father Toribio Minguella de la Merced, O.R.S.A. proposed a solution. He insisted that the Government decree was most unpopular with the Filipino priests and rightly so, for, he added, contrary to what blind passion had claimed, the Filipinos were sufficiently trained and capable, of governing the parishes. Besides, it was the Archbishop’s right to choose the personnel for the parishes of his diocese. The Recollect Provincial therefore requested that his Order be given the spiritual administration of Misamis (Mindanao) in exchange for the parishes they had returned to the Jesuits, while, at the same time, leaving the Manila Archbishop free to put Filipino Priests in his own parishes. This proposal was accepted by the Madrid Government. This incident shows that both the Spanish Bishops and the Spanish Friars, as well as the Spanish Government, duly acknowledged the capacity and rights of the Filipino priests to govern parishes in those times.