



# VINCENTIAN EFFORTS IN THE FORMATION OF ILONGGO CLERGY (1869 – 1901)

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*This article attempts at a historical inquiry into subsequent Vincentian efforts to form the Ilonggo clergy between 1869 and 1901. The time-frame marked their arrival, subsequent establishment and progress of the Seminario de San Vicente Ferrer in Jaro, Iloilo. Vincentian efforts during the period set in place important elements of seminary formation. The systematic and multi-faceted approach to formation of the clergy of the Vincentians, under the Congregation of the Mission in the Philippines, proved to be decisive and significant in the formation of the Ilonggo clergy and could provide lessons to present-day challenges in the continuing formation of the Filipino clergy.*

## INTRODUCTION

### The Diocese of Jaro

**M**anila was made a suffragan diocese to the Archdiocese of Mexico in 1579. Sixteen years later it was elevated into an archdiocese with three suffragan dioceses of Cebu, Nueva Caceres, and Nueva Segovia. In the nineteenth century a fourth diocese was added. A part of the original Cebu diocese, Jaro in Iloilo became a diocese of its own on May 27, 1865. It was comprised of the islands of Palawan, Panay, Negros, Basilan, and of the provinces of Davao and Zamboanga.<sup>1</sup> The papal decree for the creation of Jaro as a

<sup>1</sup> Rafael Bernal, "The History of the Seminario de San Vicente Ferrer, 1869-1969," *St. Vincent Ferrer Seminary, Jaro, Iloilo City: The First Hundred Years* (N. p., n. d.) unnumbered, p. 1. (This pagination refers to the article, not the whole brochure.)



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diocese was implemented two years later. The first bishop of the diocese was Fray Mariano Cuartero, O.P., a man with vast learning and long experience as a pastor. He took possession of the diocese on April 25, 1867.<sup>2</sup>

Economically, Iloilo was prosperous and fairly peaceful. Her port had been opened to foreign trade years before the arrival of the Vincentians in Jaro, and her agricultural economy was on the upswing, at least relatively. Negros was experiencing a boom in the sugar industry. These factors contributed to a great measure to the advancement of social, economic, and intellectual Ilonggo life. This growth was not confined to the Visayas alone. Contemporary historians were unanimous in their assessment that the opening of the Iloilo port to foreign trade in 1855 marked a new era in the economic history of the country.<sup>3</sup>

There was a relative stability in the province when Bishop Cuartero arrived. One of the first things he did was to lay the foundation for the building of a seminary in his diocese. He sought the help of the Vincentian Fathers to organize and run this institution. Belonging to the Congregation of the Mission founded by St. Vincent de Paul, the Vincentian missionaries- also known as “Lazarists” or “Paules” – are priests living in common with private religious vows. The central purpose of their mission in the Philippines is to help the hierarchy form its native parochial clergy. Their presence made possible the profound transformation that took place in the seminary of Manila, and because of this the bishops of Nueva Caceres and Cebu also asked them to run their respective seminaries.<sup>4</sup> It was in this context that in December of 1869, although very few in numbers, the Vincentians arrived in Jaro to directly undertake the formation of the Ilonggo clergy.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Alfred W. McCoy and E. C. de Jesus (eds.), “A Queen Dies Slowly: The Rise and Decline of Iloilo City,” *Philippine Social History: Global Trade and Local Transformations* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1982), 302.

<sup>4</sup> Manuel A. Gracia, “The Congregation of the Mission in the Philippines,” *Boletín Eclesiástico* 39 (1965): 301.



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### Seminario de San Vicente Ferrer: Early Years

The Vincentian efforts in the formation of Ilonggo clergy revolved around the history of the Seminario de San Vicente Ferrer. Unlike in Naga and Cebu, there had been no existing seminary in Jaro before the arrival of the Vincentians. Until 1869, “Ilonggo seminarians had to go to other places like Cebu for their training and education. Some of them, like Basilio Albar and Silvestre Apura, transferred back to Jaro when its seminary opened for the first time.”<sup>5</sup> With the Vincentians’ arrival, the seminary immediately opened with its location at the residence of the Bishop. Bishop Cuartero, himself a former professor of University of Santo Tomas in Manila and of San Carlos Seminary in Cebu, did not lose much time in generating a good deal of material and moral support from his flock. In 1871, two years after the arrival of the Vincentians, the construction of a new seminary building near the Jaro Cathedral began.

The Vincentian seminary personnel came in two waves. The first group consisted of Fathers Ildefonso Moral, rector; Aniceto Gonzales, and Juan Miralda. They were later joined by Fathers Juan Jaume and Rufino Martin, and Brother Francisco Lopez.<sup>6</sup> These priests and brother were responsible for founding the seminary “in which the Congregation of the Mission played a dominant, almost exclusive, role”, for a long period of time.<sup>7</sup>

The year 1872 saw the seminarians’ occupying the newly finished building. A year later, the seminary was again enlarged, and it was finally completed in 1874. This remodelled building occupied a floor area of 2,500 square meters and was able to accommodate, it was said, two hundred seminarians as well as one thousand lay students.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Bernal, “The History of the Seminario de San Vicente Ferrer,” 2.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Leo Cullum, “Diocesan Seminaries in the Philippines,” *Philippine Studies* 20 (1972): 86.

<sup>8</sup> Evergisto Bazaco, *History of Education in the Philippines* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Press, 1953), 115.



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### ***Spiritual Formation***

The general condition of the seminaries in the Philippines before the arrival of the Vincentians in 1862 was in need of serious reforms. To take a couple of examples, the seminary in Manila was serving both as a seminary and as a residence for priests who had been sent there “to do some overhauling in their priestly life.”<sup>9</sup> In the case of the Vigan Seminary, which was for a time supervised by the Vincentians after they had opened Jaro, reports noted that before the arrival of the Vincentians seminarians did not consider serving Mass as a dignified thing to do.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, deacons had given up practicing service at the altar.<sup>11</sup> When “problematic” priests were sent to live with the seminarians and when seminarians and deacons were no longer convinced of the relevance of the Mass as evidenced by their distancing themselves from serving and ministering at the altar, one began to suspect serious flaws in the seminary’s system of formation. Such an atmosphere was evidently not conducive for the training of priests.

The Vincentians addressed themselves to the reform of this existing condition. Among the issues they first tackled was improving the spiritual formation. In the Manila Seminary, and undoubtedly in the seminaries they ran all over the country, Jaro included, they started and tactfully pursued pious exercises for seminarians.<sup>12</sup> In places where chapels were not in good shape, efforts were made to reconstruct and remodel them to provide a proper atmosphere for liturgical celebrations and for prayer and adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. Moreover, to show the importance of nourishing one’s spiritual life, the formators initiated retreats for priests, ordinands and even for laymen.<sup>13</sup> In the seminary, the school year ended normally with a spiritual retreat “that was made to serve as an introduction to a gradual increase in the purity and spirituality of seminary life.”<sup>14</sup> In

<sup>9</sup> Gracia, “The Congregation of the Mission in the Philippines,” 300.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 303.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 301.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 304.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 302.



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line with this spiritual program, subjects like Moral Theology and Liturgy were taught to complement practice with an understanding of spiritual activities.

### ***Intellectual Formation***

Another aspect of formation which particularly concerned the Vincentians as they started seminary work was the intellectual training of seminarians. Events in the past showed that the lack of proper intellectual formation resulted in the native clergy's incompetence for fulfilling their responsibilities and made them vulnerable to criticism by Spanish authorities. In 1804, for example, Governor Rafael de Aguilar spoke thus about them:

The result is that they neglect the preaching and the religious instruction of their parishioners, a duty which they are incapable of fulfilling properly, because many of them do not have enough Latin and Spanish to read the authors they need to consult in order to provide their flocks with the nourishment of spiritual doctrine. No wonder then that, engulfed in ignorance, they pay not the least attention to the regulation strictly obliging them to reside in their parishes or to other obligations inseparably connected with the office of parish priest.<sup>15</sup>

In response to this long-felt need of improving intellectual formation, the Vincentians adopted a more systematic approach, one made possible by their experience in running the Manila and Naga seminaries where they had added a course on Dogmatic Theology to the existing curriculum.<sup>16</sup> Such an approach shows how even an important course like Dogmatic Theology could be missing from the curriculum or be without an available professor to teach it. In the Vigan Seminary, too, when the new school year opened, courses in Latin, Philosophy, and Moral Theology had to

<sup>15</sup> Schumacher, *Readings*, 206.

<sup>16</sup> Gracia, "The Congregation of the Mission in the Philippines," 301.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 303.



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be added to the curriculum.<sup>17</sup> This pattern of additions made in other seminaries to remedy gross deficiencies in the curriculum indicated the importance of the Vincentians' taking over the new Jaro Seminary.

When the said Seminary opened for the first time, its curriculum was designed to teach substantial courses. Among these were General Culture, Latin, Philosophy, Dogmatic Theology, Liturgy, Moral Theology, and Music.<sup>18</sup> The axis of seminary studies rested, however, on Moral Theology. The seminarians had to take this subject for a period of six to eight years.<sup>19</sup> Aside from a curriculum with a wider scope, an entrance examination was introduced and its passing was made a prerequisite for admission. This examination for admission to seminary formation was one decisive contribution towards improving the quality of future priests.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, the mediums of instruction were both Spanish and Latin, the latter specifically used for Philosophy subjects. This scenario gave students ample exposure to educational materials and enabled them to communicate in these languages with facility.

The Vincentians also demanded stricter requirements for the seminarians. They allowed no one to pursue ecclesiastical studies without finishing a course of secondary education. It was only after a secondary education that one was asked to study Philosophy for a couple of years. This philosophical study was followed by the courses of Theology which included, Dogmas of Faith, Moral Theology, Hermeneutics, New Testament, Homiletics, Liturgy, and Religious Chant.<sup>21</sup> Such courses were patterned after those in the conciliar seminaries of Europe. This educational program was the result of an evolution from 1869 onwards. Judging from what was emphasized, the seminarians' intellectual formation revolved around the courses of Philosophy and Theology. And by 1899, there were already 117 ordained priests who had passed through this kind of

<sup>18</sup> Bernal, "The History of the Seminario de San Vicente Ferrer," 3.

<sup>19</sup> Rolando Delagoza, "The Contributions of the Congregation of the Mission to the Philippine Culture" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Santo Tomas, 1974): 96.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>22</sup> Gracia, "The Congregation of the Mission in the Philippines," 306.



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seminary program.<sup>22</sup> As early as 1875, the Vincentian program for seminarians' intellectual formation was reflected in the report of Bishop Cuartero to the Holy See. In his report, the bishop mentioned the policy he was adopting for a proper seminary training before ordination, one which required seminarians to pass an examination before receiving any major order.<sup>23</sup>

### Establishment of the Seminary College

In 1875, the seminary underwent a substantial change. Up until 1874, the school of San Vicente Ferrer admitted only boys with a vocation to the priesthood. However, after the inauguration of the new and bigger edifice in that same year, the curriculum was modified to accommodate subjects for higher courses (Baccalaureate). Correspondingly, lay students were admitted.<sup>24</sup>

The opening of the doors of San Vicente Ferrer Seminary to non-seminarian students was not an isolated event in the country. The bishops of the Philippines had become alarmed at the rise of the Masons who were trying to control the education of the young.<sup>25</sup> One concrete measure the bishops took after the Vincentians had made their services available was to utilize the seminary for the education of non-seminarians. As a seminary-college, San Vicente followed the standard curriculum of all seminary-colleges throughout the islands. This curriculum consisted of Religion, Morals, Spanish, Latin, Geography, Universal History (Spain and the Philippines included), Rhetoric, Poetry, Logic, Psychology, Metaphysics, Ethics, Mathematics, and Physics.<sup>26</sup> Not only was the curriculum standardized. The teaching staffs were made more extensively organized. Aside from the Vincentian Fathers, lay professors were hired although with careful screening. At the beginning of the school year the names of the professors and the subjects they were to teach were sent to Manila for authorization.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Pablo Fernandez and Jose Arcilla, "The Diocese of Jaro in 1875," *Philippiniana Sacra* 7, no. 19 (January-April, 1972): 137.

<sup>24</sup> Bazaco, *History of the Education in the Philippines*, 319.

<sup>25</sup> Delagoza, "The Contributions of the Congregation of the Mission to Philippine Culture," 118.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.



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After 1875, the seminary-college developed into a primary center for secondary education in the Visayas. By 1891, the Jaro seminary-college was declared a fully qualified school, “de Segunda Enseñanza de Primera Clase,” and was then able to grant the Bachelor of Arts Degree.<sup>28</sup> Soon it became clear that quality education was possible without going to the educational centers of Manila. The Jaro seminary-college, with its expanded building, organized staff, standardized curriculum, and authorization to grant a Bachelor of Arts Degree, turned out to be a practical venue where a wide range of students seeking higher learning found a place to pursue their dreams to study.

From 1875 to 1885, in the span of a decade, the seminary-college recorded a total of 5,344 enrollees.<sup>29</sup> From a separate record it can be learned that from 1875 to 1891 there was an average of 100 to 150 interns and between 200 – 300 externs in the place.<sup>30</sup> Upon the introduction of the four-year Bachelor’s course in 1891-92 the interns reached 200 while the externs increased to between 600 – 700.<sup>31</sup> This system made possible the education of a good number of students who later became politicians, businessmen and lawyers. These pieces of data, in the end, shed significant light on the extent of education made possible to the Ilonggo seminarians and lay students through the efforts of the Vincentians.

### **Setbacks and Obstacles**

The Vincentians were surely faced with different problems in their seminary formation work. These problems came at different times and in a variety of ways and served as setbacks and obstacles to the continuity of their efforts.

First, on their arrival in 1869, they were faced with problems of lack of personnel, of seminary-building, and of meager financial resources. Though these problems were obviously inter-related, the lack of seminary personnel would continually recur as the most

<sup>28</sup> Bernal, “The History of the Seminario de San Vicente Ferrer,” 4.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Bazaco, *History of Education in the Philippines*, 320.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.





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important difficulty, which needed urgent attention. The first batch of missionaries under Fr. Moral was extremely undermanned. Fr. Moral, though himself assigned in Jaro, was assigned at the same time as Rector of the Seminary in Naga.<sup>32</sup> This situation divided his attention and hampered administrative efficiency. Likewise, the increasing demand for Vincentian supervision of other seminaries resulted in the frequent transfer of personnel, who at times, were forced to leave previous assignments without finishing them and to pitch camp somewhere else. Lack of personnel and frequent change in assignments would be seen later on as one factor adversely affecting the formation program.

In the absence of a seminary-building, the Vincentians, instead of being able to start immediately with seminary formation and to pool all their resources towards that goal, had to resign themselves to working part-time in the construction of the seminary building. Bishop Cuartero assigned Fr. Aniceto Gonzales as a “foreman” to supervise the construction. Other missionaries, together with their first seminarians, were said to have helped carry by hand the bricks from the river bank where the bancas unloaded them to the place of work.<sup>33</sup> There was a problem too, with financial resources. The finances of the seminary depended largely on a three percent tax on parish priests, plus the P7.00 monthly payment of students.<sup>34</sup> This income was minimal in comparison with the high cost of operation, a situation that would often drive the Vincentians to sacrifice the little amount intended for their own subsistence. Furthermore, the lack of financial resources meant fewer opportunities to provide and maintain adequate materials for studies, including books for the library.

Second, the seminary-college system had its own share of failure. For one thing, there were few priests to supervise an increasingly larger number of students. Because of this, guidance, discipline, and education of the students were not closely monitored. Less control thus gave more leeway for students to indulge in escapades and other vices. A more serious reaction to the seminary-college system was raised by Archbishop O’Doherty of Manila decades

<sup>33</sup> Bernal, “The History of the Seminario de San Vicente Ferrer,” 3.

<sup>34</sup> Fernandez and Arcilla, “The Diocese of Jaro in 1875,” 131.



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later. He pointed out that the mixed system of education was responsible for the alarming decrease in the number of vocations to the priesthood in his Archdiocese.<sup>35</sup> One reason for this seems to have been the negative influence of externs through materialism and other vices on the seminarians.

Third, the biggest disruption of the initial formation work of the Vincentians was the Filipino uprising against Spain in 1898. Not only was the school closed and classes were suspended, but the Spanish Vincentians were looked upon by some revolutionary leaders as antagonists to the nationalist cause. Hence, they were not spared verbal and physical pressures. At the beginning of the uprising the Spanish Vincentians were protected from undue harm by no less than Gen. Martin Teofilo Delgado, the Commander-in-Chief of the revolutionary forces in the Visayas. Through the mediation of a certain Fr. Praxedes Magalona, Gen. Delgado allowed the Vincentians to stay in Jaro after the surrender of all the Spanish forces there. In fact, records show that nowhere could one find a Spanish friar imprisoned in the territory under Gen. Delgado's control.<sup>36</sup> This kind of treatment given to the Vincentians was made possible because of Gen. Delgado's earlier contact with them. He had done his studies under the Vincentians in Jaro Seminary before he transferred to the Ateneo Municipal in Manila. It is not surprising, then, that revolutionary leaders like him showed respect to their earlier mentors. But this gentle treatment did not last long. When the Provisional Revolutionary Government was succeeded by the Consejo federal de Visayas on 12 December 1898, the revolutionary leaders' relationship with the Vincentians turned sour. The Consejo, apparently suspicious of their being spies, ordered them to leave the seminary.<sup>37</sup> When these priests went around to look for a place to stay, the local priests in the towns of Janiuay and Cabatuan accorded them cold hospitality.<sup>38</sup> The Spanish Vincentians found themselves antagonized by the revolution's deeply nationalistic color,

<sup>35</sup> Gracia, "The Congregation of the Mission in the Philippines," 309.

<sup>32</sup> Delagoza, "The Contributions of the Congregation of the Mission," 84.

<sup>36</sup> John Schumacher, *Revolutionary Clergy: The Filipino Clergy and the Nationalist Movement, 1850-1903* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1981), 237.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Bernal., "The History of the Seminario de San Vicente Ferrer," 5.



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and for some time, their formation work had to stop completely.

Finally, another significant problem worthy of mention was the unfortunate inclusion of the Vincentians in the controversy which started when the new friar bishop, Andres Ferrero, O.A.R., was refused acceptance in Jaro by a group of some 39 secular priests. This led to a 'partial' schism. Ferrero was completely new to the place. Though he had worked in a Recoleta parish in Negros, he had not been to Jaro any time before. When he was named bishop on 24 March 1898, he did not immediately come to Jaro. Instead, he took possession of his See by proxy on 29 November 1898. He appointed Fr. Agustin de la Peña, a Filipino secular priest, to administer the See until his arrival in September 1900. When Bishop Ferrero finally arrived, he met unfavorable responses. For one, he came in as a new friar-bishop "at the very height of the agitation against the return of the friars."<sup>39</sup> Moreover, he was taking over administration of the diocese from the hands of de la Peña who in Ferrero's two-and-a-half year absence, had legitimately governed the diocese. The priests sympathized with the predicament of de la Peña, which complicated the whole thing. The result was unfortunate. From the time of his arrival resistance from his priests continued and increased. It is even said that Fr. Pedro Trono, the Parish Priest of the Cathedral, at one time locked the door of the Church against him.<sup>40</sup>

This controversy between bishop and priests pushed the Vincentians into the forefront. Fr. Viera, the former seminary rector defended the bishop and his episcopal authority. In many instances, he worked among the clergy to keep them loyal to Bishop Ferrero.<sup>41</sup> His actions inevitably incurred upon him and his companions ire from a number of native clergy hostile to the bishop. The Vincentians were then subjected to a "black propaganda", and this was more particularly directed against the person and works of Viera. But the most unfortunate incident happened between the bishop and the Vincentians themselves. The bishop, affected by the pressure of the clergy's refusal to accept him, tried all means to be conciliatory

<sup>39</sup> Schumacher, *Revolutionary Clergy: The Filipino Clergy and the Nationalist Movement*, 237.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 239.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 245.



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towards them. This was where the problem started. As a gesture of his good intention to accommodate the “schismatic group”, he ordained four seminarians from a quasi-seminary run and maintained by them.<sup>42</sup> This seminary of sorts was located in Mandurriao under the administration of Fr. Nicolas Valencia, the leader of the “rebels”.

The Vincentians were offended by the action of the bishop because they had not been consulted even though their seminary work gave them some authority in the matter. A conflict ensued between the bishop and Viera, which contributed more to the hostile propaganda of the schismatic group against Viera and company. This situation prompted the bishop to report to Archbishop Chapelle in Manila that “the clergy and the people of Jaro did not like the Vincentians and hated Fr. Viera in particular.”<sup>43</sup> A reconciliation between the bishop and Viera took place later. For a while, however, the Vincentians were burdened in their formation work by their deeply strained relationship with the bishop and some members of the native clergy, who had begun to turn cold towards them.

### **THE RELEVANCE OF THE VINCENTIAN EFFORTS TO THE CHURCH OF JARO**

The Vincentians’ coming to Jaro and their subsequent founding of the seminary was to initiate and to direct a seminary program for the better formation of future diocesan clergy. The actual implementation of this formation program served as their main contribution to the Church of Jaro since 1869 onwards. They were the ones responsible for the formation of Ilonggo clergy in the Seminario de San Vicente Ferrer. Concretely, their efforts were an attempt to form future priests to be spiritually committed and intellectually competent in the conduct of their ministry, an attempt more significant if seen in the context of that time.

Aside from the discouraging condition of seminaries when the

<sup>42</sup> Gracia, “The Congregation of the Mission in the Philippines,” 306.

<sup>43</sup> Dela Goza, “The Contributions of the Congregation of the Mission to Philippine Culture,” 145.



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Vincentians arrived in the 1860s, another serious issue that the Church faced was the increasing Masonic propaganda, a problem which particularly wooed the youth. Later on, the Aglipayans' increasing number became an added burden to the Church. In view of these problems, priests were expected to stand at the forefront as witnesses with strong spiritual dispositions, and unswayed by erroneous doctrines, and, having enough intellectual competence to criticize such doctrines, defend the faith, and catechize the faithful.

Undoubtedly, the proper spiritual and intellectual formation of seminarians was a primary need, and one in which the Vincentian efforts became decisive and relevant. It is not that they produced immediately a spiritually strong and intellectually competent clergy. But through the kind of emphasis on these aspects of formation, positive structures were built into the seminary system that made possible a better preparation for future priests. Better trained priests could become effective ministers in living out and teaching the faith and in intelligently defending it when circumstances demanded.

Another noteworthy Vincentian effort in Jaro was their work to educate lay students. This was made possible by the seminary-college system, which helped the Church of Jaro indirectly, unlike the Vincentian efforts in seminary formation. It offered an opportunity by which the Church through the Vincentians was able to give youth a Christian education. Many of these students would later become political leaders, doctors, judges and businessmen. In short, they were in a position to take over the reign of leadership in their respective communities. Although there was no means of really measuring the extent they were affected or transformed by their Christian education, they had at least been offered a Christian preparation that improved their behavior as individuals and as members of the community. This impressed upon the people as to how the religious and the Christian values affect leadership. Although the seminary-college admittedly had its own negative effect on the seminarians, as pointed out earlier, still, through its Christian education it did indirectly contribute to the good of the church of Jaro.



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### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

The early years of the Vincentian efforts in formation were focused mainly on the spiritual and intellectual growth of the seminarians and partly on the education of lay students when their seminary later became a seminary-college. Spiritual formation revolved around the gradual introduction of pious exercises and, more concretely, of the spiritual retreat. Intellectual formation, on the other hand, consisted of a curriculum with a wider scope of the implementation of entrance examination for applicants, of the emphasis on Philosophy and Theology. There was also the constant exposure of the seminarians to Latin and Spanish as media of instruction. In the process of seminary work, however, the Vincentians also met failures, setbacks, and obstacles. The more prominently featured ones have been grouped into four. First, in the earliest years, it was the lack of a seminary building, the lack of seminary personnel, and the problem of financial resources. Of these, the lack of personnel would recur more urgently over the years. Second, the seminary-college system had its own disadvantage in terms of the negative influence of the externs on the seminarians resulting in a decrease in the number of applicants for the priesthood. The increase of students, both externs and interns together, also affected the quality of supervision rendered by the already undermanned seminary staff. Third, there was a disruption of seminary formation during the Filipino uprising against Spain in 1898 when the seminary had to close down, and when the Spanish Vincentians were subjected to hostile verbal and physical pressures. Fourth, there were the tensions resulting from the inclusion of the Vincentians in the controversy between Bishop Ferrero and his priests, and the conflict that followed subsequently between the bishop and the Vincentians themselves.

In conclusion, Jaro has gone a long way with its seminary formation program since the Vincentian efforts in the later part of the nineteenth century. Through magisterial guidelines, spiritual discernment, and help of human sciences, relevant and integrated programs have been created. But there has been a lag with respect to the second component. Present day seminaries still lack personnel



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especially competent ones. Unlike in Manila seminaries such as San Jose, San Carlos, and Santo Tomas where easy access to human and financial resources is available, formators and professors of provincial diocesan seminaries are still short in numbers, resources, and competence.

If there is one very important theme with regard to formation that has been brought to light by this paper, it is the need for a well-designed program and for sufficient and competent personnel to supervise seminary formation. This program is needed to form clergy for the task of renewal in the church. The earliest Vincentian efforts to form the clergy of Jaro show how important such a program can be. However, a good seminary program may not be properly implemented at all, if competent personnel are lacking to give it life and guidance. The author's own experience as a seminary formator attests to the fact that a 'well-designed' program and competent personnel are like two sides of one coin. Neither one can effectively produce results without the other. Hence, a two-pronged emphasis has to be given: a seminary program that is properly and responsibly designed and a team of competent personnel to implement the program.

It is this need to which this article would like to call attention. The Vincentian experience in formation helps considerably to highlight this problem, which continues until now. Authorities in the Church have to make serious efforts to give top priority to assigning competent seminary personnel. This may mean re-adjustment of diocesan priorities, for it will demand that a substantial number of priests be assigned to formation work. In addition, they need to be trained adequately so that they could bring substantial competence to their ministry. The more that formation is improved through good formators and well-designed programs, the more will there be a wider and richer possibility for renewal in the Church.

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