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## **The First Provincial Council of Manila, 1907: A Preliminary Study**

Published in Rome on 17 September 1902 and promulgated in the Philippines three months later, on 8 December 1902, Leo XIII's Apostolic Constitution *Quae Mari Sinico* provided, among others, for the holding of a Provincial Council.<sup>1</sup> The pope directed then Apostolic Delegate Giovanni Battista Guidi to convoke the council, which Guidi was able to set—only a year and a half later—for 7 August 1904. However, Guidi died on 22 July 1904, about two weeks before the meeting, and so the council had to be postponed. Ambrose Agius was immediately appointed to replace Guidi. However, it was only on 8 September 1907—another year and a half later—that Agius issued the decree calling for a council, setting its opening on 8 December 1907. It was to be the first canonically valid Provincial Council in the Philippines.

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1 In this article, previously delivered as a paper, we use the words *council* and *synod* interchangeably. This reflects the usage in the *Acta et decreta concilii provincialis Manilani I in urbe Manila celebrati anno Domini 1907* (Romae: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1910) [henceforth *Acta et decreta*]. Moreover, while the assembly has come to be known as the “provincial council of Manila,” it was actually for *all* the dioceses of the Philippines, because at that time there was only one ecclesiastical province.

This article is a preliminary study on this first Provincial Council of Manila, held in 1907. It looks briefly into some important aspects of the council: its goal and task, the instructions governing its conduct, the synodal participants, the proceedings, the solemn sessions, and the conciliar decrees. Then, it makes some remarks that hopefully will contribute to a better understanding of this important event in the history of the Church in the Philippines.

## The Objective and Task

In the section *De disciplina ecclesiastica* (sec. 11) of *Quae Mari Sinico*, Leo XIII declared that he was appointing Guidi as Apostolic Delegate to the Philippines “pro hac disciplinae ecclesiasticae instauratione proque plena constitutionis huius nostrae executione.” The pope then added that Guidi had been given the appropriate faculties as well as the mandate to convoke and to hold a Provincial Synod as soon as possible.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the pope envisioned the council as an instrument to restore ecclesiastical discipline and assure the full implementation of his directives, as outlined precisely in his Apostolic Constitution.

According to P. Achútegui and M. Bernad, the Apostolic Delegate Agius—in his *Decretum indictionis synodi*—defined the purpose of the Provincial Council as threefold, that is: “(1) to revive the faith of the Filipino people, now as always Catholic; (2) to restore the Church in the Philippines, once so flourishing and now so weakened, to its pristine vigor and glory; (3) finally,

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2 “Cui [i.e. to Guidi] propterea opportunas tribuimus facultates; insuper etiam in mandatis dedimus, ut provincialem Synodum quam primum per adiuncta licuerit, indicendum ac celebrandum curet” (*Quae Mari Sinico*, 11). The text of *Quae Mari Sinico* is in *Acta et decreta*, xi–xxiii. It is also in P. de Achútegui and M. Bernad, *Religious Revolution in the Philippines*, Vol. IV: *The Schism of 1902. A Documentary History* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University, 1972), 280–291, where a summary (in English) of the document’s principal provisions is given. See also appendix, this volume, 183–265.

to inspire in the clergy a spirit of apostolic zeal.”<sup>3</sup> Actually, Agius raised this point in the discourse he delivered at the opening of the synod.<sup>4</sup> However, the Papal Delegate did not exactly identify them as the objectives of the council. Rather, he was referring to his efforts to accomplish them. He probably saw that they were the things that had to be done at that time. Now, given this, it is not altogether unlikely that Agius would also see the council as helping to achieve them. However, in that same discourse, the papal representative had a more direct reason for holding the council: “Igitur . . . convocata est haec Synodus, ‘ut exstirpandis erroribus, quos conflavit impietas, removendis malis, quibus Ecclesia affligitur, emendandis moribus, et utriusque cleri disciplinae instaurandae, coniunctas vires nobiscum adhibeatis.’”<sup>5</sup>

In his decree of convocation, Agius identified certain tasks that the Provincial Synod ought to accomplish. However, these were rather general and could very well be applied to any other synod. Asserting that the Provincial Council would certainly be beneficial to the clergy and the people, the Apostolic Delegate maintained that it should also stop the abuses in the Church; put order in ecclesiastical affairs; shape customs; protect and promote Catholic institutions for the youth; settle controversies; unite parties in conflict; and contribute to the growth of religion.<sup>6</sup> Basically, Agius hoped that “opera huius Primi Manilani Concilii, per Philippinas Insulas fides firmetur, charitas magis magisque abundet.”<sup>7</sup> More concretely, he hoped that those who had joined the Aglipayan church would come back to the Catholic fold.

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3 P. de Achútegui and M. Bernad, *Religious Revolution in the Philippines*, Vol. I: *The Life and Church of Gregorio Aglipay, 1860–1960* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila, 1961), 356.

4 *Acta et decreta*, xlvi.

5 *Acta et decreta*, xlvii.

6 *Acta et decreta*, xxix.

7 *Acta et decreta*, xxxi.

Clearly, from the Holy See's perspective, much was being placed on the council for the reorganization of the Church in the Philippines. The Church then was adjusting to a new order, and she had external and internal issues to address. Local church leaders also looked to the council to rebuild the Church and to resolve the problems she was facing. This largely explains, for example, Archbishop Harty's urgent cable to Cardinal R. Merry del Val,<sup>8</sup> urging him to hold the council as soon as possible, after it was postponed due to Guidi's death a few weeks earlier.<sup>9</sup>

### Instructions Concerning the Proceedings

The Apostolic Delegation prepared detailed instructions governing the conduct of the council.<sup>10</sup> Signed by Giuseppe Petrelli, Agius's secretary, the twelve-point *instructio* was published on 8 September 1907, the same day as the decree of convocation. It stipulated that:

1. The Archbishop of Manila was to enjoy all honors and privileges due to his being a metropolitan, except those that belonged to the Apostolic Delegate as presider of the council.
2. The suffragan bishops were to come to Manila, at least eight days before the solemn inauguration of the council. During these days, particular and conciliar (general) congregations were to be held, where the decrees to be promulgated in the synod were to be discussed and drafted.
3. The synod participants were to bring their vestments, making sure that they had the proper attire or garb for the funeral

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8 Cardinal Raphael Merry del Val was the Vatican Secretary of State during the pontificate of Pius X, 1903–1914.

9 Antolin Uy, "The First Three Apostolic Delegates to the Philippines and the Entry of Rome," in A. Kwantes, ed., *Chapters in Philippine Church History* (Mandaluyong: OMF Literature, 2001), 177.

10 The whole *Instructio pro concilio* can be found in *Acta et decreta*, xxxii–xxxiv.

mass for the deceased bishops, for the solemn sessions, and for other functions.

4. So that the bishops could be easily assembled for any eventuality, they were to stay in the archbishop's palace or at the residence of the Apostolic Delegate.
5. The bishops could bring along with them to the council their attendants as well as two priests who were knowledgeable in ecclesiastical disciplines and who could serve as their theologian-consultors. The Archbishop of Manila could bring four consultors.
6. Besides the bishops, others were also invited to attend the council, but they would only have a consultative vote. These would be the superiors of the different religious orders and congregations; the Rectors of UST and the seminaries; and finally, two priests from each diocese, who with their experience, virtues, and knowledge, would be useful to the council.
7. All priests must attend the general congregations and solemn sessions in choir habits appropriate to their rank and dignity. In other meetings, the secular priests could come in their habits and use the biretta, while the religious could wear their religious habits.
8. All priests coming to Manila were to stay in religious convents or parishes.
9. Solemn sessions were to take place at the cathedral, while the conciliar congregations were to be held at the residence of the archbishop.
10. The first preliminary congregation of the bishops was to take place on Tuesday, 3 December 1907, at 9:30 am. Another preliminary congregation, where all synod participants could intervene, was set on the same day, at 4 pm.
- II. On the day on which the first general (conciliar) congregation was to be held, at 6 pm, the novena to the Holy Spirit, with the corresponding preaching to the people, would begin at the

Manila Cathedral. The bishops and other synod participants were to attend as much as possible.

12. So that the whole matter of the council would be set more properly and more orderly, a booklet entitled *Methodus Synodalis* would be distributed to the bishops and the other synod participants, who all must conform to it.

## The Participants

There were, all in all, 68 participants in the council.<sup>11</sup> But of the 68, only five had a deliberative vote, namely, the five “synod Fathers”: A. Agius (Apostolic Delegate), J. Harty (Manila; Administrator, Jaro),<sup>12</sup> D. Dougherty (Nueva Segovia), T. Hendricks (Cebu), and the Filipino bishop J. Barlin (Nueva Caceres). The rest simply had a consultative vote.

More than a third of the synod participants—26 to be exact<sup>13</sup>—were from the regular clergy. This number included the superiors of nine religious orders, namely, F. Mir (SJ), R. de la Iglesia (CM), J. Verbrugge (Mill Hill), P. Leo (CSsR), M. Diez (OSB), I. Casero (OFM), L. Illa (OSA), F. Ortuoste (OAR), D. de Arbacegui (OFM Cap); as well as the Rectors of UST and the diocesan seminaries, namely, R. Velasquez OP (UST), P. Pi SJ (Manila), P. Julia CM (Cebu), E. Caño OP (Nueva Caceres), M. Mata SJ (Nueva Segovia), and M. Napal CM (Jaro). The rest attended as consultors of the bishops or as officials of the council.

The Vincentians had the most number of members participating in the synod—six. They were followed by the Jesuits

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11 The full list of the participants can be found in *Acta et decreta*, xxxvi–xl.

12 Bishop Rooker of Jaro died before the council convened. Archbishop Harty was then appointed administrator of Jaro, and thus, in the council, Archbishop Harty was representing both Manila and Jaro. Achútegui and Bernad, *Religious Revolution*, 358.

13 We did not include the Papal Delegate Agius, who was a Benedictine, in this count.

and the Dominicans, who had four each, while the Benedictines had three. The Franciscans, Augustinians, and the Recoletos each had two members, while the Mill Hill Fathers, Redemptorists, and Capuchins were represented in the synod just by their respective superiors.

On the other hand, the diocesan clergy present in the synod included the whole cathedral chapter of Manila, headed by the dean, S. Lopez Tuñon, and the two representatives from each of the five dioceses, namely: E. Almeda, P. Baltazar (Manila); J. Diasnes, C. Bastes (Cebu); D. Ravago, M. Borbon (Nueva Caceres); B. Brillantes, E. Mendoza (Nueva Segovia); and S. Apura, T. Gotera (Jaro). As with the religious, the remaining secular priests attended the assembly as consultors of the bishops or as synodal officials.

The *elenchus omnium synodalium* had 16 names in the list of consultors. Dougherty, Hendricks, and Barlin had two consultors each, while the Apostolic Delegate Agius had four. Harty, as Archbishop of Manila, was entitled to four consultors, but as administrator of Jaro, he had an additional two consultors to assist him. Now, of the 16 consultors, 10 were attending the synod in another capacity. For example, the Jesuit P. Pi was designated consultor of the Papal Delegate, but at the same time, he was also present as Rector of San Carlos Seminary (Manila).

Something similar could also be seen in the *catalogus officialium concilii*. It had 35 names listed, but almost half of these ecclesiastics—17 to be exact—were participating in the council in another capacity. For example, Monsignor S. Lopez Tuñon was attending the synod as the dean of the cathedral chapter, but at the same time, he was also named *promotor* of the council.

## The Schema, the Proceedings, and the Sessions

In his brief *allocutio* during the preliminary congregation of the bishops held at the archbishop's palace on 3 December 1907, Agius mentioned that right after the publication of the decree

of convocation, he had a *schema* of the decrees distributed to the bishops so that they could each deliberate on them with their respective theologians.<sup>14</sup> Now, according to the Dominican Raimundo Velásquez, this whole *schema* of the conciliar decrees had been worked out between Agius and the Jesuits, and so the others were simply being called to an assembly to stamp its approval on what had already been decided.<sup>15</sup> This was also the position of a *manifesto* made by some religious who took part in the synod: “Schemata confecta sunt in Delegatione Ap.ca, Patribus Societatis Iesu, inspirantibus ac dirigentibus, ut passim narratur, et effectum videtur comprobari.”<sup>16</sup> However, according to Agius, the *schema* given out to the bishops was a product of the work done in the diocesan meetings, held already during the time of Guidi, and of additional materials coming from recent papal directives.<sup>17</sup>

Now, after the results of the diocesan deliberations had been received and the corresponding modifications had been made, Agius proceeded to have the revised *schema* printed. Apparently this later *schema decretorum* was the working draft used in the council for discussion and deliberation. It was distributed,

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14 “Litteris indictionis synodi publicatis, se decretorum schema . . . inter comprovinciales episcopos distribuisset, ut de eodem unusquisque cum suis theologis deliberaret” (*Acta et decreta*, xxxiv).

15 J. Schumacher, “The Manila Synodal Tradition: A Brief History,” *Philippine Studies* 27 (1979): 330. Fr. Schumacher cites a document found in the Dominican archives, “Apuntes del R.P. Fr. Raimundo Velasquez sobre el concilio de Manila, Diciembre de 1907,” Archivo de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario (Archive of the Province of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosario) [henceforth, APSR], HEF, t. 8, doc. 7. Unfortunately, we were not able to locate this document in the microfilms of the Dominican archives presently housed in UST.

16 “Concilio de Manila. Manifiesto de los Regulares que intervinieron en el Sinodo celebrando en Manila en diciembre de 1907, contra los procedimientos y algunos decretos de dicho Sinodo. Manila. 19.12.1907,” Archivo Franciscano Ibero-Oriental, Madrid, Spain [henceforth, AFIO] 3/75, 4v. Fr. Velasquez was a signatory in this *manifesto*.

17 *Acta et decreta*, xxxiv.



together with the *Methodus synodali*, toward the end of the preliminary congregation *omnium synodalium*, which was held in the afternoon of 3 December 1907 at the archbishop's palace.<sup>18</sup>

It seems there were basically four different types of assemblies that carried out the work of the synod: the particular congregation, the private congregation of bishops, the general congregation, and the solemn sessions.<sup>19</sup>

There were also two preliminary congregations that took place: that of the bishops (*congr. praelim. RR. Episcoporum*), on the one hand, and on the other, that of all synodal participants (*congr. praelim. omnium synodalium*). They were both held on 3 December 1907, about a week before the formal opening of the council, with the bishops' preliminary assembly in the morning and the preliminary congregation of all synodists in the afternoon. These assemblies were essentially preparatory, and they set certain conditions that naturally affected the work and the outcome of the synod.

During the preliminary congregation of the bishops, the synod "fathers" decided to use the decrees of the Plenary Council of Latin America, held in Rome in 1899,<sup>20</sup> as the basis or foundation

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18 *Acta et decreta*, xliv. The *manifesto* of the regulars, however, maintained that the *Methodus synodali* and the *schema decretorum* were given to the synod participants separately, that is, the former on 2 December 1907, while the latter, on the following day: "die 2<sup>a</sup> Decembris, omnibus synodalibus missum fuit exemplar Methodi Synodali in qua agenda in Concilio taxantur; Die vero sequenti, in qua praeliminaris congregatio habit[a] fuit, singuli distribuita sunt schemata tractanda in congregationibus particularibus, qua a die sequenti 4<sup>a</sup> scilicet eiusdem mensis incoeperunt." (AFIO 3/75, 3v)

19 Unfortunately, we were not able to find a copy of the *Methodus synodali*. It seems the synod participants returned their respective copies, in accordance with the decree *De secreto servando et de Statutis restituendis*, which was read during the first solemn session: "mandamus et decernimus, ut in fine ultimae Generalis Congregationis acta et statuta omnia restituantur." (*Acta et decreta*, li)

20 The council was held at the Collegio Pio-Latinoamericano from May to July, 1899. The council ran for about six weeks—with 29 general congregations

of the Provincial Council of Manila.<sup>21</sup> They also resolved to fully incorporate *Quae Mari Sinico* into the decrees of the council.<sup>22</sup> The bishops likewise approved the *catalogus officialium concilii* and confirmed the list of all synod participants. With this finalized list, the synod “fathers” were able to set up the *particulares theologorum congregationes* and assign to each group different sections of the working draft.<sup>23</sup>

During the preliminary congregation *omnium synodalium*, Agius reminded the synod participants of the strict silence to be observed over their work in the council: “verbis gravissimis indixit strictum silentium circa ea, quae in Concilio agerentur, esse servandum.”<sup>24</sup> Then, the following were read to the assembly: the list of the council officials, the list of the synod participants, and finally, the composition of the different particular congregations. Thereafter Agius extensively explained the functions and tasks assigned to each particular congregation, and urged everyone to actively participate in the work at this level. After the decree *De secreto servando et de statutis restituendis*<sup>25</sup> had been presented, the Apostolic Delegate read *alta voce* the “formula” of the oath, which each synod participant was to make. Then, in groups of four, the *synodales*—with a hand on the Bible—took the oath, and solemnly swore “to be silent about the things of the council; not to say or write anything to detract from the respect of the council or of the

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and nine solemn sessions. See the *Acta et decreta concilii plenarii Americae Latinae in Urbe celebrati anno Domini 1899*, Città del Vaticano 1999, an edition of the council’s *acta et decreta* published on its centennial anniversary.

- 21 “Decreta Concilii Plenarii Americae Latinae, tamquam huius Provincialis Synodi fundamentum haberi” (*Acta et decreta*, xxxv). See also *De Decretis Concilii Plenarii Americae Latinae adoptandis* in *Acta et decreta*, xci–xcii.
- 22 See *De Constitutione Apostolica «Quae Mari Sinico» servanda* in *Acta et Decreta*, xci.
- 23 *Acta et decreta*, xxxv.
- 24 *Acta et decreta*, xxxvi.
- 25 *Acta et decreta*, li.

persons in it; and to return the *schema decretorum* at the end of the synod.”<sup>26</sup>

The particular congregations were basically the first-level working groups of the synod.<sup>27</sup> Each congregation was composed of a synod Father and the theologian-members. The *congregatio prima* (under Agius) and the *quarta* (under Hendricks) each had 11 theologian-members, while the other *congregationes* had 10 theologians each. Every congregation was assigned certain sections of the working draft, with each section identified by its title. Most probably, there were 16 sections in the *schema* or working draft, which would correspond to the 16 titles of the Provincial Council’s decrees.<sup>28</sup> However, only 14 sections were distributed to the different particular congregations. Apparently, the *schemata* on sacramentals (no. 6) and on the promulgation and execution of the decrees (no. 16) were not given to any group for examination. Basically, each particular congregation had to work on three *schemata*, except for the group headed by Agius, which only had to deal with two sections: the part concerning divine cult and the part concerning the instruction or formation of clerics. At the particular congregation, the theologian-consultors, together with their *praeses congregationis*, examined the different *schemata* and deliberated on them. It is likely that the modifications, suggestions, and recommendations on these *schemata* were given to the synod Fathers, so that they could be included in the final draft to be presented in the general congregation or in the solemn session.

We do not have much information about the general congregations. But it is likely that a final draft of a particular

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26 *Acta et decreta*, xliii–xliv.

27 For the list of the members of the different *congregationes particulares*, see *Acta et decreta*, xli–xliii.

28 These 16 titles also correspond to the titles of the decrees of the 1899 Plenary Council of Latin America. But not only is there a correspondence, even the order of the titles is the same.

section (or title) was produced after the earlier version had already gone through the deliberations of the particular congregations and the private congregations of bishops. Most probably, these final drafts were reported in the general congregations, and once found acceptable, they would then be presented in the solemn sessions for approval and promulgation.

Another arena for deliberations was the private congregations of the bishops. In the *Acta* of the council, there are some excerpts of the minutes of these episcopal meetings.<sup>29</sup> The following are some of the sessions reported in the *Acta* and the matters addressed by the bishops during those meetings: (1) 1° private congregation, 7 December—The bishops examined the decree concerning the consecration of the council to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Virgin Mary; (2) 2° private congregation, 13 December—The bishops granted a consultative vote to the *synodales* who had been invited to the council *ex privilegio*; (3) 3° private congregation, 13 December—The bishops discussed the division into new dioceses, as directed by *Quae Mari Sinico*; the topic was covered in Tit. III, cap. III of the *schema*, where the Fathers suggested making some modifications. It was mentioned that the Jesuit J. Algue prepared some maps for the new circumscription, which in the end, according to the bishops, should be referred to the Holy See; (4) 4° private congregation, 14 December—The synod Fathers discussed the reconstitution of the cathedral chapter; (5) 5° private congregation, 17 December—The bishops discussed a matter arising from Tit. III, caput XV, *De Regularibus*, which concerned temporal goods, both movable and immovable, that were given to the religious in parishes or mission areas. The bishops declared that if it were given to the religious parish priest or religious head of the missions, then it was meant for the parish or the mission territory; (6) 6° private congregation, 19 December—The bishops were thinking of a decree to establish

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29 *Acta et decreta*, lxxv–lxxviii.

a provincial seminary in Manila, where the alumni of the diocesan seminaries could go for advanced studies.

Finally, there were the solemn sessions where the decrees were approved and promulgated. These assemblies were held on four consecutive Sundays, namely, 8, 15, 22, and 29 December.

The first solemn session actually coincided with the opening of the council. The day began with the bishops and other synod participants assembling at the archbishop's palace. From there, "inde solemnī pompa ad Ecclesiam Metropolitanam, per vias publicas, . . . ordine processerunt."<sup>30</sup> At the cathedral, Dougherty celebrated the Mass *de Spirito Sancto*. After the Mass, Agius addressed the Fathers and the other synod participants.<sup>31</sup> In his discourse (*concionem ad Patres et ad Synodum*), the Apostolic Delegate hinted at what he believed the council would hopefully be able to accomplish. Here, he also identified some important challenges that the Catholic Church in the Philippines was facing at that time, namely, (1) the "new form of the republic," that is, a new political system in place, which was quite different from the framework of the *patronato real de las Indias* that characterized the Spanish colonial period; (2) the "freedom of religion" (*religionum libertas*) brought by the new dispensation, which offered opportunities as well as inconveniences; (3) the menacing retinue of errors from those who claim to have received from Christ the authority to lead; and (4) above all, "the schismatics and the schism" (obviously, a reference to the Aglipayans) that cut to pieces vast dioceses. After Agius's discourse, the solemn session started. The appointments were read first, "singulis ad sua nomina respondentibus."<sup>32</sup> Then the decree on opening the synod was read and approved. This was followed by the promulgation and the approval of the decree *de consecratione Primae Provincialis Synodis Manilanae Sacratissimo Cordi Iesu et Immaculatae Virgini*

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30 *Acta et decreta*, xlv.

31 *Acta et decreta*, xlv–xlix.

32 *Acta et decreta*, xlix.

*Mariae*. Then, the other “customary decrees” were read as well: *De modo vivendi in Concilio*, *De praeiudicio non afferendo*, *De non discedendo*, *De secreto servando et de Statutis restituendis*, *De Synodi officialibus*, and *De professione Fidei*. The first solemn session was basically a reading and promulgation of these decrees needed to carry out the work of the council. It ended without any final draft of a title or a section being presented or approved. Later that day, a telegram was sent to Pius X, informing him that the council was already in session.<sup>33</sup>

The second solemn session was again preceded by a Mass at the cathedral. Hendrick presided over the Mass *de Spiritu Sancto*, and after the celebration, the doors of the church were closed and the session started. In this session, the following decrees were presented and approved: the “[*decreta*] *praeliminaria*; omnia decreta tituli I, *De Fide et Ecclesia Catholica*; decreta tituli III, *De personis ecclesiasticis*, a cap. I ad XIV inclusive; et decreta tituli V, *De Sacramentiis*, cap. I et II.”<sup>34</sup> There was no occasion to discuss the decrees or any of their provisions during the solemn session. This was probably not something expected to take place at this level, perhaps because the discussions and deliberations were already being done during the particular congregations and the private congregations of bishops.

On the day of the third solemn session, Barlin presided over the Mass at the cathedral. Right after Mass, the third session began, where the following decrees were brought up: “*decreta*, quae continentur in tit. III, *De personis ecclesiasticis*, cap. XV, XVI, XVII; in tit. V, *De Sacramentis*, a cap. III ad finem tituli; in tit. VIII, *De institutione Clericorum*; in tit. IX, *De catholica institutione iuventutis*; in tit. X, *De Doctrina Christiana*; et in tit. XI, *De zelo animarum et charitate christiana*.”<sup>35</sup> The synod Fathers apparently

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33 For the telegram to the pope and the response from the Holy See through Cardinal Merry del Val, see *Acta et decreta*, liii.

34 *Acta et decreta*, liv.

35 *Acta et decreta*, lv.

had modified some of the decrees. But since the changes had already been accepted in the general congregation, there were no problems in having them all approved and promulgated.

The fourth and final session was preceded by a solemn Mass *de Sanctissima Trinitate* celebrated by Dougherty. Right after the Mass, the council's final session commenced. The synodalists who were unable to attend the session were reported: Fr. Raimundo Velasquez, OP, *excusatus ob malam valetudinem*; Fr. Pedro Julia, CM, *legitime absens*; and Fr. Jose Ruiz, OP, *absens ratione infirmitatis*. Then, the decrees “tit. II, *De Fidei impedimentis et periculis*; tit. IV, *De cultu divino*; tit. VI, *De Sacramentalibus*; tit. VIII, *De vita et honestate clericorum*; tit. XII, *De modo conferendi ecclesiastica Beneficia*; tit. XIII, *De iure Ecclesiae acquirendi et possidendi bona temporalia*; tit. XIV, *De rebus sacris*; tit. XV, *De Iudiciis Ecclesiasticis*; et tit. XVI, *De promulgatione et executione Decretorum Concilii*”<sup>36</sup> were approved and promulgated. Thereafter, the decrees usually identified with the close of an assembly—namely, *De testibus Synodalibus*,<sup>37</sup> *De subscriptione*, and *De fine Concilii*—were also passed. It was also decreed that the next provincial council would be in 1919.

## The Decrees

The decrees<sup>38</sup> of the first Provincial Council of Manila are made up of 1176 articles (or paragraphs) that are ordered in 16 titles.<sup>39</sup> These 16 titles are exactly the same—even in their sequence—as

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36 *Acta et decreta*, lv–lvi.

37 The Vicars Forane were appointed *testes synodales*, whose main task was to observe and examine if the prescriptions of the council were being faithfully carried out. See *Acta et decreta*, lvi.

38 Here, the “decrees” refer only to the main decrees of the council. We do not include here the decree of consecration to the Sacred Heart and to the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculate, as well as the two preliminary decrees.

39 See table 1, this volume, 180.

the titles of the decrees of the Plenary Council of Latin America, which was held in Rome in 1899. This is hardly surprising since, as mentioned earlier, the synod Fathers had decided to adopt the decrees of the Latin American council. The longest section is the one on ecclesiastical persons, which consists of 207 articles. This is followed by the section on the sacraments, which has 158 articles, and the section on divine cult or worship, which has 148 paragraphs. The shortest section is *tit. VI, De sacramentalibus*, which consists of four articles.<sup>40</sup> It would be interesting to find out—in a subsequent study—if the length of the section indicates a pressing issue at that time, or if it reflects the preoccupation of the *synodales* over that particular topic, or if it is just the result of essentially reproducing that particular part of the Latin American conciliar decrees.

Recognizing *Quae Mari Sinico* as the “fundamentum iuris ecclesiastici peculiaris hisce insulis Philippinis,”<sup>41</sup> the council decided to incorporate the Papal Constitution into its decrees.<sup>42</sup> One thus finds the whole papal document—the introduction and all the 12 sections—practically assimilated, here and there, into the council’s decrees. Actually, the different parts of *Quae Mari Sinico* are in 34 of the council’s 1176 articles or paragraphs.<sup>43</sup> These 34 articles are distributed in eight of the council’s 16 *tituli*, namely, “*tit. I. De fide et ecclesia Catholica*,” “*tit. III De personis ecclesiasticis*,” “*tit. VII. De institutione clericorum*,” “*tit. VIII. De vita et honestate clericorum*,” “*tit. IX. De Catholica institutione iuventutis*,” “*tit. X. De doctrina Christiana*,” “*tit. XI. De zelo animarum et de caritate Christiana*,” and “*tit. XII. De modo benefica ecclesiastica*

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40 This is one paragraph (or one article) less than the last section, *De promulgatione et executione decretorum concilii*.

41 *Acta et decreta*, xci.

42 “In primis Nos, Patres huius Synodi Provinciali Manilanae, Constitutionem Apostolicam . . . *Quae mari sinico* . . . in capite horum Actorum Synodalium integram decernimus inserendam” (*Acta et decreta*, xci).

43 See table 2, this volume, 181.



*conferendi.*"<sup>44</sup> A good number of these articles are in the section *De personis ecclesiasticis*. This third part of the synodal decrees contains sections 1–4, 8, and a part of section 5 of *Quae Mari Sinico*.

Canon law required that the conciliar decrees be submitted to Rome for review, and when approved, they were to take effect three years after the end of the council. On 19 March 1910, Pope Pius X, through a letter of his secretary of state, Cardinal Merry del Val, approved the acts and decrees of the first Provincial Council of Manila.<sup>45</sup> A few months later, on 29 June, the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, Agius issued the decree of promulgation,<sup>46</sup> and at once, the decrees took effect.

### Some Remarks

The decision<sup>47</sup> of the synod Fathers to adopt the decrees of the plenary council of Latin America, held in Rome in 1899, affected the general direction and the outcome of the Provincial Council of Manila. The decision was mainly due to the perception that there were similar conditions in the two regions: "Insuper nos, iidem Patres huius Synodi Provincialis

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44 See table 3, this volume, 181.

45 Letter of Cardinal Merry del Val to Agius, 19 March 1910, in *Acta et decreta*, ix–x.

46 *Acta et decreta*, vii–viii.

47 According to Fr. Schumacher, it was "the decision of the Holy See that the decrees of the plenary council of Latin America . . . should be taken as basis for the council of Manila" (Schumacher, "Manila Synodal Tradition," 331). In the *Acta* of the council, it is said that: "cum enim, iuxta mentem Episcoporum huius Ecclesiasticae Provinciae et Sedis Apostolicae beneplacitum statutum fuisset, Decreta Concilii Plenarii Americae Latinae, tamquam huius Provincialis Synodi fundamentum habere" (*Acta et decreta*, xxv). In the preliminary decree, the synod Fathers expressed their decision: "Insuper Nos . . . reverenter amplectimur ac nostra facimus fere omnia illa Decreta, quae a Venerabilibus Patribus Concilii Plenarii Americae Latinae, anno Domini 1899 in Urbe celebrati, condita ac typic Vaticanis edita fuere" (*Acta et decreta*, xcii).

Manilanae, singularem perpendentes paritatem, quam indoles ac mores populorum Americae Latinae illorumque Ecclesiarum conditiones ac necessitates, cum indole ac moribus Philippinae Gentis cumque conditionibus ac necessitatibus nostrae Ecclesiae praeseferunt.”<sup>48</sup>

The Philippine church and the churches in Latin America did have a common origin and for over 200 years, they were ruled together under the system of the *patronato real de las Indias*. But during the period when the two Church councils were held, were there indeed “similar conditions”? At the time when about half of the Latin American bishops assembled in Rome for the plenary council, most of the Latin American countries had already been independent from Spain for nearly a century. In some of these countries, liberal anti-clerical governments were in power, and by the time of the Latin American council, what was prevalent in many countries was a church-state separation that was antagonistic or hostile to the Church.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, the region was culturally Hispanic.

Given the context in Latin America, it is possible to see a certain “logic” in the decrees of the 1899 plenary council. The conciliar decrees begin with the theme of faith and they move to the related topics of ecclesiastical persons, worship, formation, and the salvation of souls. It is only toward the end, in section 12 to be exact, that the council talks about temporal goods and judicial processes. The importance and the priority given by the conciliar document to the themes of faith, sacraments, religious education, and zeal for souls indicate the preoccupation of the Latin American bishops over the secularization and ignorance present in their society and which was thus harmful to the

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48 *Acta et decreta*, xci–xcii.

49 See Eduardo Cardenas, “Introduccion histórica” a *Acta et decreta concilii plenarii Americae Latinae in Urbe celebrati anno Domini 1899*, Città del Vaticano, 1999, 7–45.

Church and her members. The pastoral thrust is quite discernible in the document.<sup>50</sup>

Now, the conditions in the Philippines were certainly different from those in Latin America. At that time, the Philippines had become an American colony, where the separation of church and state was based on the neutrality of the state in ecclesiastical affairs. Moreover, culturally speaking, the Philippines was not as “Hispanic” as the Latin American countries, and by the time of the council, the process of “Americanization” of Philippine culture and society was already under way.

The decision, therefore, to adopt the decrees of the plenary council of Latin America was flawed and deficient. It was based on a mistaken belief that similar conditions existed in the Philippines and in Latin America. The decision to take the Latin American council decrees as the basis or foundation of the first Provincial Council of Manila might have also limited the outlook on Philippine Church realities and might have curtailed the local church’s creativity in responding to the challenges.

But then again, it is perhaps rather unfair and quite harsh to just dismiss outright the decrees of the Provincial Council of Manila—that merely because it was based on the Latin American conciliar decrees passed in 1899, it was outdated, irrelevant to the Philippine situation, and had little pastoral import. There were, in fact, efforts to include the more recent Church directives in the decrees of the synod, to adapt these decrees to

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50 Fr. Schumacher, however, was very critical of the pastoral relevance of the conciliar decrees. “The decrees had been drawn up in Rome, not in Latin America, and were largely the work of Cardinal Vives y Tutó, a Spanish Capuchin who had spent some time in Ecuador . . . [They] contain long theological statements . . . [and] it is hard to see the purpose of all these, since they dealt with doctrines accepted by all Catholics, and certainly had no pedagogical value since all were . . . in Latin. The 998 paragraphs of the Latin American council . . . make clear how many of the decrees . . . were simply doctrinal statements with little pastoral value.” Schumacher, “Manila Synodal Tradition,” 331.

the Philippine setting, and to provide some concrete pastoral guidelines. The decrees of the Manila council made use of the magisterial pronouncements of Pius X as well as the more recent declarations from the Roman dicasteries. For example, there were quite a number of references to *Pascendi dominici gregis*, Pius X's encyclical against modernism, which was promulgated on 8 September 1907, just a few months before the council.<sup>51</sup> There were instances, too, when the council was clearly dealing with specific Philippine realities. For example, there were about 17 articles that were directly concerned with Aglipayanism, the persons connected to it, its teachings, and its cult.<sup>52</sup> Finally, several measures were recommended to the bishop in order to foster the spiritual growth of the people. For instance, in no. 438, the council criticized the practice of closing churches after Mass was finished; it called on bishops to see to it that churches were kept open all morning until noon, and from two in the afternoon until the evening Angelus.<sup>53</sup> In no. 826, the council encouraged every parish to open primary schools, one for boys and one for girls.<sup>54</sup> These directives may appear to be rather general, in the sense that they are applicable elsewhere and not just the Philippines, but they are not, in any way, less pastoral.

One factor that also affected the first Provincial Council of Manila was the tension and division within the synod itself. Apparently there was considerable ill-feeling among the participants of the synod; the assembly was divided.<sup>55</sup> One group was composed of the friar orders and some Vincentians, who were

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51 References to *Pascendi* can be found in the following articles or paragraphs of the council: nn. 3, 52, 124, 125, 143, 753, 758, and 847. On the other hand, references to "modernism" can be found in nn. 3, 12, 124, 143, 248, and 758.

52 See Achútegui and M. Bernad, *Religious Revolution*, Vol. 1: *Gregorio Aglipay*, nn. 361–363.

53 *Acta et decreta*, 186.

54 *Acta et decreta*, 337.

55 See Schumacher, "Manila Synodal Tradition," 330.

critical of the Apostolic Delegation, the Jesuits, and the American bishops. The other group included the Jesuits and many of the Filipino secular clergy.

There were criticisms and complaints coming from the group of the friar orders and the Vincentians. First, there was the complaint that the *schema* of the council decrees had been drafted by the Apostolic Delegation in collaboration with some Jesuits, who included in it their notion of what the Philippine Church ought to be. Then, there was also the complaint that the subject matter in the *schema* was so vast and the time given them to examine the decrees so short, that it was impossible for them to prepare and make proper recommendations. Finally, there was the detailed protest, dated 19 December 1907, signed by some members of the friar orders and the Vincentians<sup>56</sup> against several decrees, among them: (1) those implying that the religious orders needed reform; (2) imprudent decrees which were injurious to women-religious; (3) the decree reducing the provincial diocesan seminaries to the level of Minor Seminaries, and establishing a central seminary in Manila (different from UST); (4) the declaration that the Virgin Mary, under the title of the Immaculate Conception, was the universal patroness of the Philippines.

Now, most of the points raised by the protesters do not appear in the published *Acta et decreta*. But it is difficult to determine whether the bishops themselves made the revisions because of the protests, or the changes were introduced in Rome before the papal approval. In any event, the atmosphere in the council, up until its closing, was still marred by the antagonism between the groups.<sup>57</sup>

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56 AFIO 3/75, 1v-3v.

57 At the closing session, the names of the *synodales* who were unable to attend were announced: "Fr. Raimundo Velasquez, OP, *excusatus ob malam valetudinem*; Fr. Pedro Julia, CM, *legitime absens*; and Fr. Jose Ruiz, OP, *absens ratione infirmitatis*" (*Acta et decreta*, lv). But in his "Apuntes," Fr. Velasquez narrated that he boycotted the meetings, including the closing session (Schumacher, "Manila Synodal Tradition," 336).

In summary, the first Provincial Council of Manila carried out its work hampered by certain limitations, which were due primarily to its flawed decision to adopt the Latin American conciliar decrees and the internal problems in the synod itself. However, despite some deficiencies, the council was able to lay the groundwork for the reorganization and renewal of the Church in the Philippines.

**Table 1: Different sections of the decrees and the corresponding articles or paragraphs.**

	TITLE	ART./PAR.
1.	De fide et ecclesia Catholica	1-108
2.	De fide impedimentis et periculum	109-203
3.	De personis ecclesiasticis	204-410
4.	De cultu divinu	411-558
5.	De sacramentis	559-716
6.	De sacramentalibus	717-720
7.	De institutione clericorum	721-769
8.	De vita et honestate clericorum	770-824
9.	De Catholica institutione iuventutis	825-838
10.	De doctrina Christiana	839-901
11.	De zelo animarum et de caritate Christiana	902-973
12.	De modo benefica ecclesiastica conferendi	974-985
13.	De iure ecclesiae acquirendi et possidendi bona temporalia	986-1051
14.	De rebus sacris	1052-1111
15.	De iudiciis ecclesiasticis	1112-1171
16.	De promulgatione et executione decretorum concilii	1172-1176

**Table 2: The sections of “*Quae Mari Sinico*” and the corresponding article or paragraph numbers in the council’s decrees.**

Introduction	n. 106
1	n. 240
2	n. 239
3	nn. 261, 281
4	nn. 243, 253
5	nn. 351, 800, 805, 812, 819, 824
6	nn. 721, 726, 729, 731, 736, 760, 763, 765, 957
7	nn. 825, 837
8	nn. 361, 364, 367, 368
9	n. 984
10	nn. 863, 925, 933
11	n. 785
12	n. 923

**Table 3: The sections in the decrees and the articles containing the passages from “*Quae Mari Sinico*”**

1	n. 106
3	nn. 239, 240, 243, 253, 261, 281, 351, 361, 364, 367, 368
7	nn. 721, 726, 729, 731, 736, 760, 763, 765
8	nn. 785, 800, 805, 812, 819, 824
9	nn. 825, 837
10	n. 863
11	nn. 923, 925, 933, 957
12	n. 984