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The New Dioceses and the Bishops until 1910

The Plan for More Dioceses: Jaro

As early as 8 October 1851, the then Bishop of Cebu, Romualdo Jimeno, petitioned the Queen, Isabela II, to divide Cebu into two dioceses, the other to be Jaro in Panay.¹ Reasons advanced were the following: 1) the vast territory; 2) the big and growing population; 3) the indiscipline of the clergy; and 4) more and better openings for the diocesan clergy. The Cebu diocese, according to Jimeno, is the “largest in the world . . . with 1,800,000 souls in 30 far distant islands,” excluding the Marianas. The petition was endorsed by Governor General Urbiztondo seven months later.² Madrid

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- 1 Our account is based primarily, if not exclusively, on documents found in the Vatican secret archives: Archivio Storico del Consiglio per gli Affari Pubblici della Chiesa, Sacra Congregazione degli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari; [hereafter, SCAAEESS]; Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Segreteria di Stato [hereafter, ASV, SSt.]; Archivio Nunziatura Madrid [hereafter, Arch. Nunz. Madrid]; Archivo Historico Nacional, Ultramar [hereafter, AHN].
 - 2 Governor General Urbiztondo to Ultramar, 11 May 1852, AHN, Ultramar, leg. 2206, exp. 40. The necessity of splitting Cebu into two dioceses was brought

found the reasons worthy of consideration and the creation of a new diocese useful and advisable. A study on the financial state of the country informed Ultramar that the project was feasible. The *ad Limina Report* of 1858 of Jimeno additionally suggested that a new diocese in Panay would be an effective way of combating the indiscipline of the clergy, especially the regulars.³ The Bishop of Cebu, in 1860 (24 February), asked the Papal Nuncio Barili in Madrid to follow up the case with the government because the most pressing and necessary measure “in favour of religion in the country . . . is the increase of bishops.” Otherwise, added the bishop, he would “retire to [his] convent in Manila.” The Nuncio confessed of Madrid’s “deplorable inertia”;⁴ the real reason, however, was money, or lack of it.

The petition for one additional diocese was modified, during the Philippine Bishops’ exposition of early 1863, to four additional dioceses.⁵ The reasons were identical with those of Jimeno in 1851: “*muchas almas, muchas islas, gran extension.*” As envisioned by its author, Bishop Gainza of Nueva Caceres, the four

up still earlier, in 1831, by Jimeno’s predecessor, Bishop Santos Gomez Marañon. See Buzeta-Bravo, *Diccionario geografico* (Madrid: Imprenta de D. José C. de la Peña, 1850), i., 543; and Pablo Fernández, *History of the Church in the Philippines (1521–1898)* (Manila: National Bookstore, 1979), 33.

- 3 Jimeno: ASV, S. C. Concilio, *Caebuan. Relat. ad Limina 1858*. See also Fidel Villarroel, “The Making of a Diocese in the Philippines-Jaro 1865,” *Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas*, vol. XXXIX, no. 437 and no. 438 (April and May 1965): 463–477 and 538–557.
- 4 Nuncio Barili to Gainza, 4 September 1862, no. 2134, ASV, Arch. Nunz. Madrid, 447.
- 5 Governor General Echagüe to Ultramar, 25 August 1863, AHN, Ultramar, leg. 2206, exp. 40. See also Jimeno to Nuncio Barili, 10 August 1863, no. 2297, ASV, Arch. Nunz. Madrid, 447. This plan to divide the islands into eight dioceses was one of the Philippine Bishops’ *exposiciones* in early 1863. Gainza had in the meantime sent a copy to Nuncio Barili on 1 March 1863. It was received in Madrid on 10 May 1863. (Gainza to Nuncio Barili, 1 March 1863, no. 1046A, ASV, Arch. Nunz. Madrid, 447), also Nuncio Barili’s answer dated 22 October).

additional dioceses would be: Jaro and Mindanao; Cagayan, of Nueva Segovia; and Batangas, cut off from both Manila and Naga. Despite the big earthquake that had hit Manila just two months before, Governor General Echagüe recommended the division of Cebu an “absolute necessity,” although he did consider the reorganization of the whole archipelago into eight dioceses to be “inopportune and must at least be suspended momentarily.” The papal bull *Qui ab initio* was sent to Madrid on 6 June 1865. The *pase regio* was granted by the Queen on 30 April 1867. Archbishop Martinez inaugurated the See of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary (Jaro) on 10 October 1867. Mariano Cuartero, OP, Jaro’s first ordinary, was ordained bishop on 30 November 1867. He took possession of the diocese, now the fifth in the country, on 24 April 1868. He died in 1884.

America and the Entry of the Vatican: the *Episcopabiles*

Upon the arrival of the United States in the Philippines in 1898, the Spanish *patronato real* de facto ceased. Before a declared benevolent policy toward the new colony and with the introduction of the American principle of separation of church and state, Rome (the Vatican) could at this time interfere directly (no longer via Madrid) and freely in ecclesiastical affairs of the Church in the Philippines on three particular issues: 1) the reorganization of the Church; 2) the genuine development of the native clergy, priestly as well as episcopal; and 3) the unhampered nomination of bishops. To facilitate matters, Rome sent Placidus Ludovicus Chapelle, Archbishop of New Orleans, Apostolic Delegate Extraordinary to Cuba and Puerto Rico, extending his jurisdiction to include the American colony in the Pacific. Chapelle, an American, perceived to have been pro-friar, suggested, correctly, the replacement of the last remaining Spanish bishops in the Islands, but not as would have been expected. He proposed five names as *episcopabiles*: two Americans and three Spanish friars. In the context of the colony under a secular, Protestant power and in

an atmosphere of anti-friar sentiments in the country, Chapelle's idea was clearly not acceptable to Rome. Chapelle's successor, Apostolic Delegate Guidi (1902–1904), in the spirit of *Quae Mari Sinico* (he brought the Apostolic Constitution to Manila) wrote to the Secretary of State Cardinal Rampolla, at the end of 1902, saying that naming non-Spanish bishops was urgent (*d'urgenza*) and must be undertaken soon, "*perche est periculum in mora.*" Among the names submitted were three Americans for Manila, Nueva Segovia, and Jaro, and two Filipinos (Singzon and Barlin) for Cebu and Nueva Caceres. Why the nomination of only Americans and Filipinos?⁶ As Guidi explains: 1) the presence of Spanish bishops would be harmful to the Church as it would abet the cause of Aglipay and his group; 2) it would please the American authorities as surely as naming Filipino bishops would soothe the Filipinos' *amor proprio*; 3) it would signal the end of Spain's low estimation of the native clergy. Among the 10 Filipino *episcopabiles* were, besides Singzon and Barlin, Gorordo and Ignacio Tambungui, perhaps "the most learned of the clergy."

Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul, Minnesota, the Vatican's contact man in Washington, and US Secretary of War Elihu Root were for an American in Manila, a "see of supreme importance," to bring peace to the land. To two American bishops the post was offered with an appeal "to please accept." Both refused. A third name, Bishop Messmer of Green Bay, accepted "out of obedience" to the Holy Father, but blocked by Archbishop Ireland with a blunt comment: "No to Messmer, highly unacceptable to government, moreover unfit." Earlier, Apostolic Delegate to Washington, Archbishop Martinelli, had himself a roster of American *episcopabiles* for the vacant Philippine dioceses—with occasional comments: Bishop O'Gorman of Sioux Falls, a member of the Taft mission to Rome and Guidi's nominee: No,

6 Guidi to Rampolla, Manila, 31 December 1902, no. 10, no. 75917, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a. 1902–1903, Posiz. 988, Fasc. 385: 37–38. The two Filipino candidates, Singzon and Barlin, were suggested for Cebu and Nueva Caceres, respectively.

“he is an *Americanista*.” Interestingly, Chapelle recommended Messmer because of the bishop’s opposition to Americanism. Rooker, secretary to the Apostolic Delegation in Washington, and theology professor Dougherty of Philadelphia were both endorsed by Martinelli. For Manila, he had four names. The first three were bishops; the fourth, written in pencil, was “Harty Parroco di S. Leone in St. Louis.”⁷

The Post-Spanish American Bishops

JEREMIAS HARTY: Archbishop of Manila (1903–1916)

Because of the refusal of some nominees (Montgomery and O’Connell) and the rejection by others (O’Gormann, Messmer, and Fr. Edward Fitzgerald), Rome had to try its hand at appointing a parish priest from St. Louis, Missouri, for Manila. *Propaganda Fide* was consulted on Fr. Harty and other prospective candidates “who speak Spanish, at least Italian.” The quick response of *Propaganda* on Harty was: “excellent credentials” (*informazioni ottime*). A month later, June 1903, Rampolla was instructing Apostolic Delegate Falconio to “please insist on Harty’s acceptance.” Two days later Harty accepted.⁸ In the same month Rampolla informed Guidi about the new archbishop, together with the papal nomination of Frederic Rooker as Bishop of Jaro, Dennis Dougherty for Vigan, and Jorge Barlin as Apostolic Administrator of Nueva Caceres. Harty was invited to come to the Eternal City for his episcopal ordination and for “appropriate instructions” (*opportune istruzioni*). He was consecrated by Cardinal Satolli on 15 August 1903. On 15 January 1904 he arrived in Manila.

7 List of candidates, Martinelli to Rampolla, 11 January 1903, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a. 1903, Posiz. 998, Fasc. 396: 8.

8 Rampolla to Falconio, 5 June 1903, cable, no. 77674, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a. 1903, Posiz. 998, Fasc. 396: 73; Falconio to Rampolla, cable, received 7 June 1903, 75.

Except for his *Ad Limina* Report of 1915 there is hardly any account of his activities to be found in the Vatican archives. There exist, however, abundant documents on the question of the *patrimonium* of San Jose. On this problem Harty and Apostolic Delegate Agius (1904–1911) incurred the enmity of the Dominicans who were in actual possession of the *patrimonium*. Harty, as Archbishop of Manila, wanted the “return” of the *patrimonium* of San Jose since it was willed by the donor for the diocesan seminary. He was disappointed at Rome’s decision to hand it back to the Jesuits.

In 1911, Harty requested to be transferred to Dubuque. Nine years into his office as Manila archbishop he asked for a 10-month leave in the United States for reasons of health. Harty got his transfer; he became the Archbishop of Omaha, 1916–1927. He died in Los Angeles, 29 October 1927, at the age of 74.

THOMAS HENDRICK: Bishop of Cebu (1903–1909)

Viewed from the ecclesiastico-political situation of the American colony in Asia, Hendrick was possibly the ideal choice for Cebu, or even for Manila. For the latter he was the best choice of Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore, of the Archbishop of New York, and of the Bishop of Rochester, Hendrick’s home diocese. He had influential friends in Washington; President Roosevelt held him in “very high esteem” and considered the man for Manila.⁹ Holder of an MA in Education and a doctorate in Canon Law, he was regent for five years at the State University of New York. A worthy priest, adds Fr. John Wynne, SJ, editor of the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, esteemed by fellow-priests and firm in his principles, and courageous in speaking for the Church. The exchange of cables between Rome and the Apostolic Delegation was done in order to gather information quickly within days. The *informazioni* on Hendrick forwarded to the Vatican were *ottime* (excellent) and no

9 Cardinal Gibbons to Rampolla, Baltimore, 6 May 1903, no. 77319, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a. 1903, Posiz. 998, Fasc. 396: 60–61.

doubt was raised about his “*devozione ed attaccamento alla Santa Sede.*” Cardinal Rampolla appears apologetic to Cardinal Gibbons because of the Holy Father’s inability to meet the American prelate’s and President Roosevelt’s wish to place Hendrick in Manila. Instead, the pope named Hendrick for Cebu because of a “*precedente compromesso.*”¹⁰ Hendrick was ordained to the episcopacy by Cardinal Satolli in Rome on 23 August 1903. Born on 29 October 1849, he died young at the age of 60 in Cebu on 30 November 1909.

FREDERIC ROOKER: Bishop of Jaro (1903–1907)

Tomas Rodriguez, OSA, the Augustinian General, even as he attacked Archbishop Ireland and Governor General Taft for being against the interests of the Church and of the Spanish religious, backed the episcopal candidacy of Rooker whom he considered a lover of Rome and the Spanish friars. In the spring of 1903 Rampolla wired Apostolic Delegate Falconio the names of a trio of bishops-designate: Montgomery for Manila, Dougherty for Nueva Segovia, and Rooker for Nueva Caceres. Both Dougherty and Rooker accepted the pope’s offer but Montgomery declined.¹¹ Guidi, in Manila, must have known of the acceptance by the two and the refusal of Montgomery for Guidi accordingly suggested the designation of two Filipino priests as bishops for the sake of peace and in order to check the spread of the Aglipayan schism. A name and a change were proposed—that Jorge Barlin, a Filipino, be appointed Bishop of Nueva Caceres, and the bishop-designate Frederic Rooker be sent instead to Jaro.¹² On 16 June 1903 the communication to Guidi carried the names of the four new

10 “Previous arrangement,” referring to the earlier choice of Harty for Manila (Rampolla to Gibbons), 25 June 1903, no. 77985, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a. 1903, Posiz. 998. Fasc. 396: 88.

11 Rampolla to Falconio, 6 April 1903, cable, no. 76437, Fasc. 396, p. 18; Falconio to Rampolla, 7 April 1903, no number, SCAAEESS, *Fasc.* 396: 17.

12 Guidi to Rampolla, Manila, 20 April 1903, no no., SCAAEESS, *Fasc.* 396: 25.

American bishops: Jeremias Harty (Manila), Dennis Dougherty (Nueva Segovia), Frederic Rooker (Jaro), and Jorge Barlin as Apostolic Administrator for Nueva Caceres.¹³

The new Bishop of Jaro was an excellent nominee. Son of a known journalist, Rooker was secretary to the Apostolic Delegate Martinelli, former Augustinian General, predecessor of Falconio, and a future cardinal. Martinelli's portrayal of Rooker was weighty. Rooker had his own qualities to speak of. He studied in Rome (North American College and Urbaniana). "Highly regarded for his learning and erudition," "a doctor of philosophy and theology"—something "not common among the prelates of America"¹⁴—Professor at the Catholic University of America, and fluent in Latin, French, Italian, and Spanish. He was believed to have stood in opposition to the German party and was "promoter of the American party" in the American Church. He was a friend to both church and government officials. Cardinal Martinelli ordained Rooker bishop in the Eternal City on 14 June 1903. He governed Jaro for a little more than four years, dying there at the early age of 46.

DENNIS DOUGHERTY: Bishop of Nueva Segovia (1903–1908); Jaro (1908–1916)

The youngest of the American quartet for the Philippine dioceses, Dougherty's name appeared in Cardinal Martinelli's list of *episcopabiles* with this note: "professor of theology in the seminary which Mons. Sbarretti conducted in Canada."¹⁵ Like Rooker he immediately accepted the nomination and was ordained bishop in Rome. Born in Honesville, PA, on 16 August 1865, he entered the North American College in Rome, earned

13 Rampolla to Guidi, 16 June 1903, cable, no. 77856, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a. 1903, Posiz. 998, Fasc. 396: 79.

14 Martinelli to Rampolla, Roma, 11 January 1903, no number, SCAAEESS, *Fasc.* 396: 6–7.

15 List of candidates, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a. 1903, Posiz. 998, Fasc. 396: 8.

a Doctorate in Sacred Theology (STD), and was ordained bishop by Cardinal Satolli on 12 June 1903. Appointed to the Diocese of Nueva Segovia (1903), he was transferred to Jaro (1908), then to Buffalo (1915) in the United States. Promoted to the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, he became cardinal in 1921, and Papal Legate to the XXXIII International Eucharistic Congress held in Manila in 1937. He died in Philadelphia, 31 May 1951.

Fifteen years in the Philippines, Dougherty proved himself an energetic shepherd, animated and aggressive in pushing his projects through. In 1906 the seminary in Jaro was burned down. The seminary, according to him, “has plenty of students who, because of lack of space, are now sleeping on the floor.” Could not the kind Cardinal Secretary of State please grant him P40,000 (from the friar lands fund deposited at the Vatican for the Church in the Philippines) to rebuild the seminary? Merry del Val obliged with a generous check of 50,000 francs (half of the amount sought), explaining at the same time that the amount did not come from the friar lands fund because the subsidies destined for the Philippine dioceses “are taken only from the interest.” To think, said the bishop, that Jaro needed from 500 to 600 priests. Before leaving Vigan for Jaro, Dougherty succeeded in convincing—with the help of Harty, Guidi, and Archbishop Gasparri—Arnold Janssen (founder of the SVD) to send missionaries to Abra. Dougherty asked for a vacation leave for a much-needed rest, to collect funds for the seminary, and for a Catholic hospital to offset the influence of a Presbyterian hospital. He intended to visit Europe and recruit priests and sisters from England and Belgium.

Reorganizing the Church, the *Episcopabiles*: The Role of Chapelle, Guidi, and Agius

The events in the Philippines toward the end of the 19th century must have pleased the Vatican more than the fall of Catholic Spain saddened her. With the exit of Spain from the Islands and the cessation of the *patronato real* and the introduction of the

American system of separation of church and state, the Vatican could now have a direct hand in the ecclesiastical affairs of the Philippines. For pragmatic reasons, American bishops had to take over the dioceses left by the departing Spanish bishops. It was, however, clear to the Vatican and the American bishops that at the soonest possible time Filipino bishops would take over. This line of thinking is evident in the correspondence between the Vatican and the Apostolic Delegation in both Washington and Manila. The Apostolic Constitution *Quae Mari Sinico* of Leo XIII (17 September 1902), issued to reorganize the Church in the Philippines, explicitly states that (Filipino) secular priests found most worthy “be gradually promoted to higher dignities.” The US Secretary of War Elihu Root thought that raising a Filipino to the episcopal dignity would contribute to peace since the (Aglipayan) schism is “basically a question of race.”¹⁶

The recognition and selection of candidates for the old and new dioceses lasted for just a few years. It was not only the Vatican but also various Filipino sections that wanted a say for varied reasons.

By September 1899 an Apostolic Delegate was already appointed in the person of Ludovicus Placidus Chapelle, Archbishop of New Orleans, who was simultaneously Apostolic Delegate to Cuba and Puerto Rico. Chapelle’s mission to the Philippines was “to protect effectively the interests of the Catholic Church under the actual circumstances of the country;”¹⁷ in effect, the defense of ecclesiastical persons and properties.

Chapelle arrived in Manila in January 1900, and soon summoned the bishops, religious superiors, and diocesan

16 Archbishop Ireland, St. Paul, 9 May 1903, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a. 190, Posiz. 997, Fasc. 395: 59. Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul, Minnesota, was the Vatican’s contact man with Washington.

17 Rampolla to Chapelle, 2 September 1899, n. 51877, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a. 1899, Posiz. 903–905, Fasc. 316: 67; also Rampolla to Msgr. Martinelli, 10 September 1898, no. 45858, SCAAEESS, *Sp.* a. 1898, Fasc. 307: 18.

priests. In a meeting with the Manila clergy, Fr. Mariano Sevilla and fellow priests declared their desire to have Filipino coadjutor bishops *cum jure successionis*. The Apostolic Delegate assured the diocesan priests that he would present their claims to the Holy Father, adding that the Holy See “knows how to give in to their legitimate demands” and that the Church “does not exclude anybody from the episcopate.”¹⁸ A friend of Sevilla’s, Fr. Manuel Roxas, submitted a *memoria* addressed to the Holy Father suggesting among other things that there should be “in the future a diocese for every 100 parishes . . . an archdiocese for every 10 dioceses” and that the Holy See “elevate to the cardinalate two or three prelates of the Philippine Church.”¹⁹ Called to pass by Rome on his way back to the US, Chapelle, who a year and a half previously asserted that the Church “does not exclude anybody from the episcopate,” submitted a roster of names to replace the outgoing Spanish bishops. It included Messmer, Bishop of Green Bay, for Manila, a canon, two Augustinian friars, and his secretary the Dominican Llorente. No name appeared from the native clergy, which group he held to be in a “deplorable state” and “absolutely incapable.” The memorial from the Jaro clergy (signed by Fr. Arsenio Hinola and Fr. Silvestre Apura) was also handed to Chapelle containing, among its demands, this one: “Filipino bishops must be named to dioceses in the Philippines.”²⁰ A surprise solution came from Isabelo de los Reyes and nine others in Madrid offering that the “*only effective remedy* would be to grant . . . most fit Filipino clergy

18 The minutes of the meeting are found in Chapelle’s report to Cardinal Rampolla, 27 April 1900, no. 57245, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, Posiz. 934, Fasc. 332.

19 Manuel E. Roxas y Manio to the Holy Father, 1 April 1900, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, Posiz. 934, Fasc. 332: 99.

20 “Memoria que la Comision del Clero de la Diocesis de Jaro presento a Monseñor La Chapelle” in Chapelle to Rampolla, 22 May 1900, no. 57312, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, Posiz. 934, Fasc. 332: 91.

their rights to occupy *exclusively all* offices from archbishoprics down to seminary administrations.²¹

The pro-Spain and pro-friar bias of the conservative Chapelle did not stand well with liberal Archbishop John Ireland, Cardinal Gibbons, and the Vatican. Chapelle's successor, Archbishop John Baptist Guidi, an Italian, was, unlike his predecessor, a friend of Civil Governor Taft's, and unabashedly for the native clergy. In a wide-ranging instruction (*istruzioni*) from the Vatican, Guidi arrived in Manila November 1902 armed with the widest possible discretion in the reorganization of the Philippine Church contained in the Apostolic Constitution *Quae Mari Sinico* which he was bringing with him.²² The papal document and Guidi roundly rejected the recommendation of Chapelle. Guidi vetoed any Spanish candidate and turned down an all-American hierarchy. Instead he proposed a mix of three Americans and two Filipinos, insisting to Cardinal Rampolla that there was "the necessity and *urgency*" of adopting his measure.²³ He stuck to his original names of Barlin and Singzon, more so now after a Vatican cable informed him that Rooker was being assigned to Nueva Caceres and Dougherty to Nueva Segovia; in effect, Bishop Ferrero would remain in Jaro and Bishop Alcocer in Cebu! Which meant, Barlin without Nueva Caceres and Singzon without Cebu. Otherwise, Guidi pleaded that "clergy and natives would greatly

21 Isabelo de los Reyes, Presidente de la Comision Secular europeo-americana por el clero Filipino; Felix de Leon, Vice-Presidente de la Misma; Tomas Arejola, Presidente del Comite Republicano Filipino de Madrid and seven other individuals to Leo XIII, Madrid, 29 June 1901, no no., SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a. 1901, Posiz. 954, Fasc. 348: 64.

22 See the *Istruzioni*, September 1902, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a. 1902–1903, Posiz. 986, Fasc. 384. The *Istruzioni* was originally drafted for the then newly appointed Apostolic Delegate Msgr. Sbarretti and dated February 1902. Both the *Istruzioni* and *Quae Mari Sinico* suffered changes because of the visit of Governor-General Taft in Rome in June 1902.

23 Guidi to Rampolla, Manila, 17 February 1903, no. 15, no. 76472, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a. 1903, Posiz. 947, Fasc. 394: 6.

(*vivamente*) be disgusted and the schism would increase, and my mission compromised.”²⁴ The threatening cables from Manila must have roused the Secretary of State to quickly advise the three resigned Spanish bishops in Spain to hand in their opinion on a list of candidates, “in particular on Giorgio Barlin, *mestizo*, of an English father and a Filipina mother.”²⁵ The list contained 10 names: D. Lucas Leico of Binondo; D. Jorge Barlin, Vicar Forane of Sorsogon; D. Pablo Singzon, Provisor and Ecclesiastical Governor of Cebu; D. Juan Gorordo, secretary of the Diocese of Cebu; D. Leonardo Tailo; D. Ignacio Tambungui; D. Sacerdote Calderon; D. Sacerdote Pacis, of Manaoag; D. Eulogio Ocampo, Vicar Forane of Pampanga; and D. Julian Ope, of Guinobatan.²⁶ The consent of the two bishops was generally mild, even friendly. The stand of Bishop Campomanes of Nueva Segovia was both antagonistic and, quite understandably, bitter. For 37 years he lived in the Philippines and for 16 months he was a prisoner of the *revolucionarios*. In an 11-page handwritten report Campomanes rated the Filipino priests

24 Guidi to Rampolla, 20 April 1903, cable, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a. 1903, Posiz. 998, Fasc. 396: 25.

25 Rampolla to Nozaleda of Manila, Arsenio del Campo of Nueva Caceres, and Campomanes of Nueva Segovia, 28 April 1903, no. 76870, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a. 1903, Posiz. 998, Fasc. 396: 40. The date, however, given, by the three bishops to the letter from Rampolla is 27 April, not 28 April. See also Guidi to Rampolla, Manila, 31 December 1902, no. 10, no. 75917, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a. 1902–1903, Posiz. 998, Fasc. 385: 37–38.

26 Bishop Arsenio of Nueva Caceres to Rampolla, Villadolid, 14 May 1903, no. 77851, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, 1903, Posiz. 998, Fasc. 396: 56–59. The list of candidates sent in by Rampolla contains the following 10 names: D. Lucas Leico, parish priest of Binondo; D. Jorge Barlin, parish priest and Vicar Forane of Sorsogon; D. Pablo Singzon, Provisor and Ecclesiastical Governor of Cebu; D. Juan Gorordo, Secretary of the Diocese of Cebu; D. Leonardo Tailo; D. Ignacio Tambungui; D. Sacerdote Calderon; D. Sacerdote Pacis, parish priest of Manaoag; D. Eulogio Ocampo, Vicar Forane of Pampanga; and D. Julian Ope, parish priest of Guinobatan. Rampolla’s list is the same list provided by Guidi in his letter to the Cardinal Secretary of State, 31 December 1902.

with a failing grade, and his report to Rampolla abounded in biased and even unkind remarks, like the following:

They are not for the priesthood, much less for the episcopacy. All aspire and all believe themselves fit to become bishops, cardinals, even popes It is necessary to consider the native priests as *neofitos* in the faith, and it is not prudent (*non conviene*) to make them bishops.²⁷

He knew two of the 10, Leico and Pacis, but they were not fit “by reason of the defects proper of the native race.” Only Europeans and Americans may qualify. Bishop Arsenio del Campo of Nueva Caceres allotted the most information on Barlin, Singzon, and Gorordo. He chose Barlin as eligible under the present circumstances. Archbishop Nozaleda conceded that the priests on the list “are not tainted with any moral blemish and they for sure constitute a select group of the native clergy.”²⁸ Of the 10, the most qualified were narrowed down to three: Barlin, Pacis, and Singzon. Barlin would be best for Nueva Caceres.

An unlikely source surfaced in Paris. Felipe Agoncillo, sent by Aguinaldo to “represent,” actually to protest against the exclusion of the Philippines in the deliberations between Spain and the United States at the Treaty of Paris of 1898, succeeded in contacting the Papal Nuncio in Paris, albeit only indirectly, through a prominent Catholic. To hear Nuncio Lorenzelli:

Aguinaldo was most disposed to negotiate with the Holy See for the release of the Spanish prisoners of religious (*monaci*) and priests including the Bishop of Vigan, should the same Holy See consent to name as bishops of the four dioceses which

27 Jose Hevia Campomanes to Rampolla, Oviedo, 14 May 1903, no. 77849, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a. 1903, Posiz. 998, Fasc. 396: 48, 51.

28 Archbishop Bernardino Nozaleda to Rampolla, Ocaña, 27 May 1903, no. 77583, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a. 1903, Posiz. 998, Fasc. 396: 70.

remains under the power of the Philippine government, native ecclesiastics, or Filipino nationals.²⁹

Lorenzelli realized the *delicatezza* of the situation and import of the proposal as it “would imply, at least outwardly, a certain recognition of his [Aguinaldo’s] government on the part of the Holy See.” Events had in the meantime overtaken the problem. The Vatican’s position: “for the time being there is nothing to do.” For the Holy Father had already named an Apostolic Delegate to the Philippines and the Spanish prisoners had in the meantime been released.³⁰

After Guidi, Apostolic Delegate Ambrosius Agius (1904–1911) was no less energetic in his advocacy of the Filipino clergy. A day before his departure for the Eternal City, Agius held a meeting on 23 September 1909 with the religious superiors regarding the erection of the new dioceses and their prospective occupants. The question discussed was principally about the “nomination of indigenous bishops” and also of other nationals.³¹ The Dominican Paya enumerated again his favorites: Singzon, Lope, and Pacis. On

29 Nuncio Benedetto Lorenzelli to Rampolla, Paris, 8 January 1900, no. 174, no. 54079, confidential, ASV, SSt., a. 1901, Rubr. 249, Fasc. 5: 50. The number of Spanish prisoners varied: 130 friars, 186 religious, and 300 nuns. Bishop Campomanes related that he and 118 prisoners were released towards the end of 1899 after a captivity of 16 months. See Bishop Campomanes to Holy Father, Manila, 15 March 1900 in Chappelle to Rampolla, 20 September, no. 59601, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a. 1900, Posiz. 934, Fasc. 335: 18. The release was accomplished through the diplomatic efforts of the Vatican with the help of Washington.

30 Rampolla to Nuncio Lorenzelli, 11 January 1900, no. 54079, ASV, SSt., a. 1901, Rubr. 249, Fasc. 5: 52.

31 Agius to Merry del Val, 1 December 1909, no. 106, no. 41799, ASV, SSt., a. 1910, Rubr. 258, Fasc. 1: 183. Enclosed was Agius’s report on his meeting of 23 September. The superiors present were the following: Fidele Mir, SJ; Angelo Martinez, CM; Martino Diez, OSB; Giacomo Paya, OP; Marcelliano Tapetado, OFM; Mariano Rivas, OSA; Fernando Hernandez, ORSA; and Daniele de Arbacegui, OFM Cap. The Vincentians arrived in the Philippines in 1862; the

non-Filipinos? “Not the American priests,” continued the Spanish Dominican, “they tend to Americanize everything.” For Cebu, Gorordo (Bp. Hendrick was ailing) was the choice.³² Augustinian Provincial Rivas was against naming either Americans or Filipinos; against the latter because they lack “moral qualities and learning,” exception: Singzon. The Recollect Fernandez granted that “American bishops have to be more in number than the Filipinos” as they, the Americans, “have been imposed by circumstances.” It was the Jesuit superior Mir who categorically stated that “there [is] a necessity native bishops must be named.”³³ Although in the Philippines only since 1862, Martinez, CM, warned nevertheless that “much caution ought to be had” in picking native bishops. The Capuchin Arbacegui’s views were similar to those of Paya—he supported Singzon but excluded “Germans and Spaniards for Philippine bishoprics.”³⁴ Two *episcopabiles* obtained each five endorsements: Gorordo to remain as auxiliary bishop in Cebu and Singzon be named bishop. No Germans, no Frenchmen, no Spaniards, yet the superiors decided and called for an Italian.³⁵ The Apostolic Delegate volunteered an interesting observation: To find a Filipino candidate would “not be easy, nay, hardly possible because of lack of worthy and fit candidates for the episcopacy within the Filipino clergy.”

Capuchins in 1886; and the Benedictines in 1895. For reasons of convenience the Italian Christian names are retained.

32 Ibid., 183.

33 Ibid., 184.

34 Ibid., 185.

35 Agius to Merry del Val, Rome, 13 November 1909, ASV, SSt., a. 1910, Rubr. 258, Fasc., 1: 53. The Italian turned out to be Guiseppe Petrelli, secretary to Agius and future Bishop of Lipa. At the conclusion of the 23 September meeting a consensus was reached where all agreed 1) to send an American to Nueva Caceres, 2) to retain Gorordo in Cebu, and 3) to name a bishop of another (a third) nationality, (to this, the Recollect Hernandez took exception).

The first five American bishops were ordained in mid-1903. They were followed by Barlin (1906), Gorordo (1909), and Singzon (1910). The next two Filipinos (Verzosa and Sancho) would appear only in 1916 and 1917.

The First Filipino Bishops and their Dioceses

JORGE BARLIN: Bishop of Nueva Caceres (1905–1909), First Filipino Bishop

Surprisingly little is to be found in the SCAAEESS archives [*Sacra Congregazione degli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari*] on Barlin. When the five Philippine dioceses were left vacant by their last Spanish bishops, all but one, Nueva Caceres, were occupied by Americans. The Apostolic Administrator then of the Bicol See was Jorge Barlin. He was recommended to this post by the outgoing Bishop, Arsenio del Campo. He was a parish priest and Vicar Forane of Sorsogon. Guidi pointedly cited his loyalty: during the revolution he defended the rights of the Church and now he was doing the same against the (Aglipayan) schism. Guidi had in fact inserted Barlin's name for Nueva Caceres in early December 1902. He describes his two favorite candidates, Barlin and Singzon:

...under every regard, most worthy and most fit for the episcopate. They are virtuous, they possess more than sufficient learning, they are prudent and at the same time firm of character (*fermi di carattere*) and gifted with talent for government. Both have moreover the practice and experience in managing church affairs. The parish priest Barlin was for many years close to and the secretary of the famous Dominican Bishop Gainza of Nueva Caceres.³⁶

Bishop Arsenio, Barlin's own bishop, saw the danger of Barlin's "character [being] weak in the extreme and inconstant,"

36 Guidi to Gasparri, Secretary, 26 April 1903, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a, 1903, Posiz. 998, Fasc. 396: 41.

but under the present conditions and the threat of schism hanging, Jorge Barlin was the only choice.³⁷

Born in Baaó (Camarines Sur) on 23 April 1859, ordained priest in 1894, Barlin started his ecclesiastical career at the diocesan seminary. He did very well in pastoral care and as Vicar Forane for 16 years, during which period his bishop “received no complaint against him, and he enjoys a good name before the public.” After the resignation of Bishop Arsenio, Barlin became in charge of the diocese until his designation as Apostolic Protonotary and “at the same time Apostolic Administrator of Nueva Caceres” on 15 October 1903. Proposed for Nueva Caceres by Pope Pius X in the secret assistory of 14 December 1905, he was ordained bishop on 29 June 1906 by Apostolic Delegate Agius with Archbishop Harty and Bishop Rooker assisting. In the next three years, Barlin was able to visit the vast diocese of 800,000 faithful, attend the Council of Manila (1907), and make his *ad Limina* visit in the summer of 1909. There, in the Eternal City, he took ill and died at the Roman Spanish Dominican College, early autumn of the same year.

JUAN GORORDO: First Filipino Bishop of Cebu (1910–1932)

Juan Bautista Gorordo was one of the usual trio in Rome’s quest for native Filipino *episcopabiles*. Guidi had placed his name among the 10 Filipino priests submitted to Rampolla, although for Cebu Guidi was eyeing Singzon, then Ecclesiastical Governor of the diocese.³⁸ As early as the summer of 1905, we find the American Bishop Hendrick of Cebu requesting the Holy See to confer “on Fr. Juan Gorordo, Secretary of the diocese and Provisor during the absence of Monsignor Singzon the title of Domestic Prelate.” Why the honor? Hendrick explains:

37 Bishop Arsenio to Rampolla, Villadolid, 14 May 1903, no. 77851, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a. 1903, Posiz. 998, Fasc. 396: 56.

38 Guidi to Rampolla, Manila, 31 December 1902, no. 10, no. 875917, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a. 1902–1903, Posiz. 986, Fasc. 385: 25.

. . . A proper and just recognition of the native clergy would tend very much toward a settlement of the few difficulties that we have in this diocese To him is due, in a very large measure, the success which we have had, in this poor diocese, in the collections for the Holy See and for the coronation of the Immaculate Virgin.³⁹

Gorordo was more than merely a true and exemplary ecclesiastic. As a priest and in blood lineage there was more to him:

There is no priest in the diocese more respected than him. He is a member of a good and much respected family of Spanish *mestizos* and his brother-in-law is a respected Spaniard. He is forty-three years old . . . and as coadjutor to friars, in two parishes, he had had the record of being a well behaved, pious, able and zealous priest, and an untiring worker . . . a man of dignified conduct and presence, tactful and efficient at all times.⁴⁰

The letter of Bishop Henrick to Cardinal Merry del Val was coursed through the Apostolic Delegation, and Agius added: "Gorordo enjoys my full and total, unconditional trust."⁴¹ Another Monsignor in Cebu, a future bishop himself, Pablo Singzon, felt slighted that he, the Vicar General, was not consulted in the preparation of the testimonial accorded Msgr. Gorordo by the diocesan clergy. Singzon told of an anti-Singzon campaign affecting even some among the clergy and lamented this "*especie de division del clero.*" We do not know whether the Vicar General

39 Bishop Thomas A. Henrick to Cardinal Merry del Val, Cebu, 6 June 1905, no. 13630, ASV, SSt., a. 1905, Rubr. 258, Fasc. unico: 39–40.

40 Ibid., 40.

41 Agius to Merry del Val, Manila, 8 July 1905, no. 13630, ASV, SSt., a. 1905, Rubr. 258, Fasc. unico: 25.

was only relating a sad happening or verbalizing a personal pique. But the letter was addressed to the Secretary of State who in turn asked Agius about the charges against Gorordo. Agius and Hendrick continued to vouch for Gorordo's credibility and personal qualities. Gorordo's nomination was "enthusiastically applauded by clergy and laity in Cebu and the Visayas"; the whole Filipino people [saw] "in the promotion of Msgr. Gorordo an honor and a distinction which the Holy See bestowed [on] the entire native race."⁴² On his relationship with the Aglipayans? He was strict with them, according to his bishop.

Already an ordained bishop in 24 June 1909, Gorordo acted as auxiliary to Bishop Hendrick since 29 April 1909. He was elected bishop of Cebu on 2 April 1910, taking possession of it on 2 July. A genuine Cebuano—Gorordo was born on 18 April 1862 in Barili, south of Cebu City—he studied at the Conciliar San Carlos Seminary and was ordained to the priesthood in 1885. He died on 20 December 1934. At the Vatican archives there are at least three reports (*Estado General*) from him of the Cebu diocese; namely, of 1911, 1915, and 1920.

PABLO SINGZON: First Bishop of Calbayog (1910–1922)

Singzon came to prominence at the time of the Philippine-American War. The Filipino General Lukban, known to have been anti-Church and anti-Spanish, sent a ship to seize Bishop Alcocer of Cebu and Spanish religious in February 1899. Singzon described to Rampolla how the bishop escaped (in the wee hours of the morning, 2:00 am) and relinquished responsibility of caring for a diocese of 216 parishes and missions abandoned by 127 friar-curates. As Apostolic Administrator, Singzon asked for dispensation as he had no "*titulo academico en derecho canonico*."⁴³

42 Agius to Merry del Val, 10 September 1909, no. 104, no. 39998, ASV, SSt., a. 1910, Rubr. 258: 25.

43 Singzon to Rampolla, Cebu, 8 February 1899, no. 49961, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a. 1899, Posiz. 904.

He must have had a hand in the negotiations for the surrender of Cebu to the Americans. The Protestants had seized the opportunity of distributing booklets and Protestant bibles although, commented Singzon, without much success. While other seminaries had been closed, ours “here has some one hundred seminarians,” and in the past month six had gone to Manila to be ordained by his Excellency, Bishop Alcocer, now back in the Philippines.⁴⁴

The talents of Singzon, mainly his handling of church affairs during the revolution, did not go unnoticed. What was said by his bishop, Alcocer, in praise of the Vicar General was confirmed by Guidi. Compared with the sorry performance of the Vicars General of Nueva Segovia and Nueva Caceres, Singzon’s elicited only praise from the Apostolic Delegate. Moreover, “highly esteemed and revered . . . he gives proof of possessing talents for government He is truly a worthy and good priest.”⁴⁵ Singzon was one of the 10 *episcopabiles* in Guidi’s list. He personally chose, for the two “most peaceful and disciplined dioceses”: Singzon for Cebu and Barlin for Nueva Caceres. The two were not only “most worthy and most fit for the episcopacy” but were also “quite close to the religious orders.” On the perception that no Filipino is fit to become bishop, Vattmann, the American Catholic chaplain, categorically testified that the “actual ecclesiastical administrator of Cebu nullifies that perception.”⁴⁶ The Spanish bishop Arsenio concurred with the American priest’s view. “He is blunt,” said Bishop Arsenio, “and is feared by the secular clergy of that diocese. He seems to be a zealot of ecclesiastical discipline.”

44 Singzon to Rampolla, 12 September 1899, no. 52634, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a. 1899, Posiz. 904, Fasc. 316: 35–36.

45 Guidi to Rampolla, Manila, 23 December 1902, no. 9, no. 75917, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a. 1902–1903, Posiz. 986, Fasc. 384: 84.

46 Fr. Edward Vattmann, *US Chaplain in the Philippines. A Report*, 1 June 1903, SCAAEESS, *Sp.*, a. 1903, Posiz. 997, Fasc. 395: 73, 82.

The big break came when the Vatican was finalizing the addition of four more dioceses to the existing ones and, perforce, choosing Filipino bishops. The day before his departure for Rome, precisely to follow up on the imminent division of ecclesiastical jurisdictions in the Philippines, Apostolic Delegate Agius consulted with the religious superiors and obtained from them an endorsement for the candidacy of Singzon.⁴⁷ Their unanimous choice for the new diocese for Samar and Leyte was Pablo Singzon.

Singzon was formally nominated Bishop of Calbayog on 12 April 1910, two days after the erection of the diocese. Ordained bishop at the Church of St. Francis in Manila on 12 June 1910, he took possession of his See, as its bishop, on 14 July the following month, in the presence of Apostolic Delegate Ambrose Agius and Bishop Juan Gorordo of Cebu.

47 Agius to Merry del Val, 1 December 1909, no. 106, no. 41799, ASV, SSt., a. 1910, Rubr. 258, Fasc. 1: 183–186.