

# Church Realities in the Philippines: 1900-1965

Ramón Stephen B. AGUILÓS\*

## 1. *Introduction*

This year, 1998, the Philippines commemorates the centenary since her independence from a foreign domination. At the time of this writing, it is «all-systems-go» for this former Spanish colony, with both government agencies and non-government organizations pooling all human and material resources for a successful once-in-a-lifetime celebration. In the academe, various historical societies have been organized —if not revived— both in the national and regional levels, in an effort to put into writing slices and fragments in history that have been for long relegated to oral traditions and folklore.

«What happened to the Church in the Philippines of the post-Spanish era?» Or, «How did the Filipinos fare being Catholics after our forebears left their shores for good?». These are questions perennially posed by modern-day Spanish nationals about the country Spain had ruled for close to four centuries.

A short paragraph culled from a paper presented to the Faculty of Theology of the University of Navarre in 1995 by a Spanish lady-scholar shows the demographic profile of contemporary Philippine Church:

«The Philippines is a clear testimony of the good seed of faith sowed there by the Spanish missionaries, and the pastoral efforts of those who followed them thereafter. Today in those islands there exist thirteen ecclesiastical provinces with a total of thirty-one suffragan dioceses.

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\* Ramón Aguilós, who holds a Doctorate in Sacred Theology (STD) by the University of Navarre (1996), is presently the Vice Rector for Administration at the same time professor of St. John the Evangelist School of Theology, Palo, Leyte, Philippines. Concurrently, he is the Dean of Studies of the Sacred Heart Seminary, which houses the high school and college seminarians of the Archdiocese of Palo. The author is also a member of the Executive Board of the newly-organized Leyte-Samar Historical Society, and a member of the Leyte Executive Committee for the 100 Days Countdown to the Philippine Centennial (Editor's Note).

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There are four apostolic vicariates in Mindoro, Jolo, Northern Luzon and the Palawan Island, and twelve prelatures nullius (eight in Luzon and 4 in Mindanao)»<sup>1</sup>.

The above description sounds more of the Philippines' «status quo» than a historical narrative. How the Philippine Church reached this point in history, or how She survived the post-Spanish era, struggled through the war-torn years and evolved into what She is in these contemporary times is something that might be of interest to many a Spanish national.

This essay is to address part of the question. Here I draw some vignettes of the Philippine Church particularly from 1900 until that period shortly before the Second Vatican Council. For all intents and purposes, this article is an expression of my filial devotion to «Mother Spain», even as I fear there are contemporary Spanish intellectuals and ordinary citizens who, wittingly or unwittingly, may have relegated into oblivion their ideas and impressions about this «daughter-country», the Philippines, her history and her cultural heritage<sup>2</sup>.

This article begins by depicting the Philippine scenario at the outset of the twentieth century. It was the time when the Filipinos, already freed from Spanish domination, were already under a new superior power, the American regime. There is a very brief description of that «war-time interlude», or the years from 1941 to 1944. Fairly interesting is the period when the Church is seen emerging from the debris of war and witnessing Her growth through the succeeding years. However, the discussion stops at the time of Vatican II era. This epochal event in the Church is so overwhelming in importance that an account of its influence on the Philippine Church is better off essayed in a separate paper.

## 2. *Historical Events at the Onset of the 20th Century*

At dawn of August 13, 1898, the Americans headed by Commodore George Dewey and together with Filipino forces, began firing at the Spanish troops. Then from their boats, the Americans bombarded Fort San Antonio Abad, south of Manila. An hour before noon that day, gunfire from the ships ceased even as white flags appeared above the city walls. At six o'clock in the evening, the Spanish flag at Fort Santiago was lowered, and the American Stars and Stripes was hoisted<sup>3</sup>.

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1. L. DÍAZ-TRECHUELO, *La Historia de la Iglesia en Asia*, in J.-I. SARANYANA-E. DE LA LAMA-M. LLUCH-BAIXAULI (eds.), *Qué es la Historia de la Iglesia. Actas del XVI Simposio Internacional de Teología de la Universidad de Navarra*, EUNSA, Pamplona 1996, p. 202; also in «Anuario de Historia de la Iglesia» 5 (1996) 190. The text is a free translation from the Spanish original.

2. There is another motive for the author in writing this short article to show his gratitude to the University of Navarre, his alma mater, for the times he spent within her hallowed halls. The university is a mute witness to the author's pains and pleasures as a student who came to this campus in 1993 with nothing but his meagre, if ever, knowledge of the Spanish language and culture. He went through the rigors of academic life, enjoyed the amenities the academic community offered him, and finally left in 1996 with a rich cultural experience, an academic degree and, well, a satisfactory working knowledge of Spanish.

3. J.S. ARCILLA, SJ, *An Introduction to Philippine History*, Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City <sup>4</sup>1994, pp. 95-96.

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The Americans had conquered. After 377 years since a fleet of three ships commanded by Ferdinand Magellan reached Eastern Samar in 1521 and 333 years since Miguel López de Legazpi entered Cebu port in 1565, Spain finally lost her colony in Southeast Asia. On December 10, 1898 the Philippines was ceded to the United States by Spain under the terms of the Treaty of Paris<sup>4</sup>. By virtue of this treaty, the Filipinos, freed from the Spanish yoke, were under another foreign master, an episode that would last until 1946.

When the Americans conquered the Philippines in 1900, the population was estimated at 7.6 million, of whom 6.9 million were listed as «civilized Christians». The rest were what are called today as «the cultural minorities»<sup>5</sup>. At that time, there was only one city, Manila. Of the 7, 102 islands comprising the archipelago, only 342 were inhabited<sup>6</sup>.

#### *Education*

As literacy was low, the Americans started their colonization work by educating the Filipinos. They immediately introduced a system of free primary education. By April 1900 there were about 1000 schools in the Philippines, 39 of them in Manila. The American soldiers were the first teachers. In 1901 volunteer teachers arrived: 48 aboard the *Sheridan*, 48 aboard the *Buford*, and 523 aboard the *Thomas* (it is for this reason why the first American teachers were called, *Thomasites*)<sup>7</sup>. They administered what would be one of the contributions of America to Philippine culture, the public school system. That same year the Philippine Normal School was founded, so Filipinos could be trained to do actual classroom teaching. English was introduced as the medium of instruction, and soon, Filipinos were taught to speak English<sup>8</sup>. Paul Monroe would later write, «As the Church was the symbol of the Spanish [rule], so the school has been the symbol of American civilization»<sup>9</sup>.

#### *Christianization*

The situation of the Church during the early years of American rule, socially and physically speaking, was one of total disaster. Church buildings and institutions were razed to the ground and many were severely damaged. There were fewer than six hundred seventy-five Filipino priests<sup>10</sup>.

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4. G. ZAIDE, *The Pageant of Philippine History*, II, Philippine Education Company, Manila 1979, p. 234.

5. J.S. ARCILLA, SJ, *o.c.*, p. 103.

6. *Ibidem*.

7. *Ibidem*.

8. V.A. MAYNIGO, *Evangelization and Philippine Culture in the Light of the Second Vatican Council*, Published Doctoral Dissertation, Angelicum University, Rome 1978, pp. 15-16.

9. P. MONROE, *A Survey of the Educational System of the Philippine Islands*, Philippine Bureau Printing, Manila 1925, p. 12.

10. J.N. SCHUMACKER, SJ, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City 1979, pp. 292 ff.

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The union of Church and State, which existed during the Spanish period, was severed. As an effect, the priests were left almost without material resources. For one thing, the clergy could no longer engage in government functions. Then, with the public schools now established, the Church had no more control over them<sup>11</sup>. American democracy protected the principle of separation of Church and State, and on account of this, it became a major discussion whether religion, as in the Spanish regime, should continue as a school subject. Some wanted it removed, as it would revive the difficulties which the Filipinos had taken up arms to solve. Since the Treaty of Paris provided that Filipino customs and traditions be respected, a compromise solution was approved, thus allowing religion to be taught to children whose parents asked for it, thrice weekly, and outside class hours<sup>12</sup>.

The presence of the Spanish friars in the parishes also occasioned opposition among the Filipino clergy and eventually led to the formation of the Filipino National Church, better known as *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* in 1902. This was founded by Isabelo de los Reyes, a journalist, and Gregorio Aglipay, a Filipino Catholic priest. They were joined by six hundred Filipino priests and soon gained a moniker, the *Aglipayans*<sup>13</sup>.

This anti-clerical sentiment was likewise manifested in the growing Masonic Movement which, with its strong anti-Catholic bias, influenced many political leaders and educators<sup>14</sup>.

We cannot fail to mention, too, the Protestant ministers who came all the way from the United States. They penetrated the public schools where most of the teachers, the Americans, were Protestants. One can be right in saying that the public schools were favorable for the spread of Protestantism in the country.

In short, the Philippine Church was slowly removing the vestiges of Her heavy Spanish influence —something She would realize as quite difficult to do in the long run— and was moving towards an American orientation.

*The Padres Paúles*

Before moving further, mention must be made of the work of the missionaries of St. Vincent de Paul (better known as the *Padres Paúles*, or sometimes, the Vincentians) in the country. Since their arrival in the Philippines in 1862, their apostolate had been geared towards the training and education of the Filipino native clergy. At the turn of the century when the faithful had been left deprived of their pastors and besieged by the propaganda against the Church, these missionaries were laboring silently but intensely and devotedly in

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11. W.C. GUBUAN, *The Basic Christian Communities in the Church in the Philippines. A Historico-Theological Reflection on the Ecclesial Identity of the Basic Christian Communities*. Published Doctoral Dissertation, Angelicum University, Rome 1991, p. 20.

12. J.S. ARCILLA, SJ, *o.c.*, p. 104.

13. Cfr. J.N. SCHUMACKER, SJ, *o.c.*, pp. 317-333.

14. P.T. GIORDANO, SJ, *Awakening to Mission. The Philippine Catholic Church 1965-1981*, New Day Publishers, Quezon City 1988, p. 17.

the task of fostering vocations. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, they were the ones running most of the seminaries<sup>15</sup>. Some of these seminaries, though, had to be closed on account of the political situation in the country. The turn-of-the-century crisis became a challenge to them all the more. With the religious instruction excluded from the public school system of education, it became a stronger-felt need for Catholic institutions to be established. The Vincentians were once again tasked for the job<sup>16</sup>.

### *Holy See to the Rescue*

Deserving attention at this point in the Philippine Church History was the Holy See's response to a troubling situation in the country. During the Spanish period, the Holy See had no direct charge over church matters in the Philippines. This was because of the *patronato real* which had granted the Spanish monarchs the right to exercise dominion in both church and state affairs in the colony<sup>17</sup>. With the fall of the Spanish government, the Holy See had to address the needs of the Church in this former Spanish colony. To this end, it sent its Apostolic Delegate in Manila in the person of Archbishop Placide Chapelle of New Orleans. But his work was shortlived; in his return to the United States passing through Rome, he fell ill of yellow fever, and shortly thereafter, died<sup>18</sup>. In 1902 a new Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Giovanni Battista Guidi, arrived in the Philippines bringing along the papal constitution, *Quae Mari Sinico* of Leo XIII. Dated September 17, 1902, the document was to provide fresh direction to the politically and ecclesiastically beleaguered Philippine Church<sup>19</sup>.

The document gave special attention to clerical formation in the diocesan seminaries. It enjoined bishops to erect «institutions for the education of young men aspiring to the clerical state». In that document there was a provision which at the time was difficult to implement the one forbidding a mixed clerical training, or education of seminarians with lay students. This latter provision could not be put into effect at once, until decades later when minor and major seminaries began sprouting in the Philippines<sup>20</sup>. Here again the Vincentians came into the picture as many of the pre-World-War-II diocesan seminaries were entrusted to their direction<sup>21</sup>.

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15. R.S. DE LA GOZA, CM-J.M. CAVANNA, CM, *Vincentians in the Philippines 1862-1982*, Salesiana Publishers, Manila 1985, pp. 465-468. The seminaries referred to here were the seminaries in the archdioceses of Manila (arrival in 1867), Nueva Cáceres (1865), Cebu (1867), Jaro (1869) and Nueva Segovia (1870).

16. *Ibidem*, pp. 285-287.

17. P. FERNÁNDEZ, OP, *History of the Church in the Philippines (1521-1898)*, National Book Store, Manila 1979, p. 345.

18. *Ibidem*, p. 346.

19. *Ibidem*; also cfr. J.N. SCHUMACKER, *o.c.*, p. 322.

20. R.S. DE LA GOZA, CM.-J.M. CAVANNA, CM, *o.c.*, p. 267.

21. *Ibidem*, p. 467: such was the case of the preparatory seminary of Jagna, Bohol (Diocese of Tagbilaran) in 1911-1922, San Felipe Neri, Mandaluyong, Rizal (Archdiocese of Manila) in 1913-1943, San Pablo, Bauan, Batangas (Diocese of Lipa) in 1914-1942, and Lipa, Batangas (Diocese of Lipa) in 1931-1944.

With this papal constitution also came the announcement of the Holy See appointing four American bishops to replace the Spanish hierarchy. There were four Spanish bishops residing in the Philippines when the Spanish government in the Philippines ended: Archbishop Bernardino Nozaleda, OP of Manila; Bishop José Hevia de Campomanes, OP of Nueva Segovia; Bishop Martin Garcia Alcocer, OFM of Cebu; and Bishop Andres Ferrero, ORSA of Jaro<sup>22</sup>. Thus, Bishop Dennis J. Dougherty became the Bishop of Nueva Segovia; Bishop Frederick Sadok Rooker of Jaro; Bishop Thomas Augustine Hendrick of Cebu, and Archbishop Jeremias J. Harty of the Archdiocese of Manila<sup>23</sup>. Then, too, came the promotion of Filipinos to the episcopate. The first Filipino to be raised to the hierarchy was Father Jorge Barlin, appointed Apostolic Administrator of Nueva Cáceres; he was named bishop on December 14, 1905. Other members of the Filipino clergy raised to the episcopal office in the first quarter of the century were Juan Gorordo (Cebu, 1909-1910), Pablo Singzon (Calbayog, 1910), Santiago Sancho (Tuguegarao, 1917), and Francisco Reyes (Naga, 1925)<sup>24</sup>.

### *Early Signs of Resurgence*

To address the issues on internal reform and reorganization in the Church, there was to be a provincial council of the entire Philippines. In 1904, this council was convoked, but shortly thereafter, Archbishop Guidi, the Apostolic Delegate, died of heart attack, and the council was postponed. In 1905 Archbishop Ambrose Agius, OSB, arrived as the new apostolic delegate, and on December 8, 1907, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the First Provincial Council was convened. Held at the Manila Cathedral, it culminated on December 29 of the same year<sup>25</sup>.

The Council marked a turning point in the Philippine Church History. It strengthened the clergy and the people who at this time were reeling from the aftershocks of the Philippine Revolution and the menacing Aglipayan schism. It introduced needed reforms. In effect the progress of the Church in the Philippines was seen as growing.

Other indications that the Philippine Church was slowly rising was the entrance of religious priests from other countries. This was the bishops' (who were mostly Americans) effort to stem the tide of the growing Protestant culture. In 1905, the Irish Redemptorists started arriving in the Philippines. They were followed by the Dutch Mill Hill Missionaries in 1906, the Belgian Scheut Missionaries in 1907, the Dutch Sacred Heart Missionaries and the

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22. P. FERNÁNDEZ, OP, *o.c.*, p. 347.

23. R.S. DE LA GOZA, CM.-J.M. CAVANNA, CM, *ibidem*, p. 269.

24. *Ibidem*.

25. Second Plenary Council of the Philippines [Henceforth, this will simply be called as, «PCP-II»] COORDINATING OFFICE, *Primer on the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines*, in «Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas» 65 (1989) 497-498. The Council was a *Provincial Council* since it involved only one ecclesiastical province, with the Metropolitan Archbishop of Manila —then the only archbishop in the islands— and the suffragans, the other bishops of the Philippines participating. Although not a plenary council in the canonical sense of the term, but only a provincial council; it was in fact a *national* council.

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German Divine Word Fathers, who both arrived in 1908. It was in 1921 that the first American Jesuits came<sup>26</sup>.

The American Jesuits proved to be the greatest factor in the Church's transition from a Hispanized culture to one which was becoming heavily influenced by American mores, customs and language. Their work in education, research and scholarship, retreats, social involvement and mission work provided more impetus in the Church's apostolic activity<sup>27</sup>.

By the second half of the 1920's the situation of the Church was making a turn for the better, showing multiple signs of revival. Members of the Aglipayan Church returned to the Catholic Church in large numbers; Catholic education grew both in numbers and in its standard of excellence, thanks to the arrival of religious orders and congregations; seminaries run by the Vincentians and the Jesuits started to get more seminarians.

### *3. During the Japanese Occupation*

For the Church in the Philippines, all those hopeful signs mentioned in the preceding section continued well into the 30's, only to be interrupted by a succession of events of worldwide proportion, and which precipitated the Second World War. The Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 8, 1941, and the next day, December 9, the Japanese Imperial Forces attacked and eventually occupied the Philippines. The USAFFE (United States Armed Forces in the Far East) composed of American and Filipino soldiers fought together courageously side by side against a common enemy in Bataan, only to surrender to the Japanese on April 1942<sup>28</sup>.

Meanwhile, the Church, which was already showing vigor and promise before the Japanese invasion, was now feeling that those promised hopes were about to be dashed. There were many foreign priests and religious who belonged to nationalities with whom the Japanese were at war, and, as a result, were interned in prison camps, tortured and killed. Still others escaped into the hills where they continued to exercise their ministry with guerillas and refugees<sup>29</sup>.

On October 20, 1944, two and a half years after he made his famous pledge, «I have come through and I shall return», in Corregidor shortly before escaping to Australia, General Douglas MacArthur landed on Red Beach, Palo, Leyte<sup>30</sup>. Fierce fighting ensued throughout all parts of the country. On July 5, 1945, the Philippines was liberated from the Japanese<sup>31</sup>.

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26. J. SCHUMACKER, SJ, *o.c.*, pp. 360, 402.

27. P.T. GIORDANO, SJ, *l.c.*; also see A.A. WEISS, SJ, *Jesuit Social Apostolate: 1859-1956*, in «Philippine Studies» 4 (1956) 273-290.

28. Cfr. J.S. ARCILLA, SJ, *o.c.*, p. 120.

29. J.N. SCHUMACKER, *o.c.*, pp. 383-384.

30. See A.M. MOLINA, *Historia de Filipinas*, II, Instituto Cooperación Ibero-Americana, Madrid 1984, p. 642. Molina gives a blow-by-blow account of this decisive event.

31. J.S. ARCILLA, SJ, *o.c.*, pp. 123-124.

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It would only be at the end of the World War II, in 1946, after the Philippines was granted independence by the United States, that the Church could start Her work of rebuilding and reorganization from the ravages of war<sup>32</sup>.

#### 4. *The Post-War Period*

The situation of the newly independent Philippine Republic as a whole and the Church in particular after World War II was reminiscent of the situation after the Philippine Revolution, or even worse. The cities and towns were destroyed and plundered, and Manila was one of the most devastated cities in the world, second only to Warsaw, Poland<sup>33</sup>. Most of the buildings of Manila were either burned or reduced to rubble. Some structures that were left standing were rendered inhabitable, so that many had to be demolished.

##### *Rehabilitation Work; Establishment of the Catholic Hierarchy*

After the liberation of Manila in March 1945, the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Guglielmo Piani sent a message to the Holy See concerning the atrocities suffered by the Church personnel and the number of church buildings on account of the bombings and shelling. Totally destroyed were the residence of the Apostolic Delegate, ten churches, nine monasteries and convents, twelve seminaries and schools, two Catholic hospitals and one orphanage<sup>34</sup>.

The first five years after the war were spent in the restoration and rehabilitation of the Church's damaged institutions. As early as the last days of the war, the Catholic Welfare Organization (CWO) was set up for this herculean post-war task. Initially established in 1945 by Father John F. Hurley, a Jesuit, the organization was a product of a need for a liaison between the Catholic Church and the US Army<sup>35</sup>. The Jesuit priest enlisted the services of volunteers, who would risk their lives in supplying prisoners, internees and refugees with food, shelter, medicine and other relief supplies. When Archbishop Piani headed the organization as its President-General, the relief and rehabilitation work became nationwide, using the diocesan network for its operations<sup>36</sup>. The organization became the agency for War Relief Services, and the bishops and prefects apostolic became regional directors, with all the

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32. W. GUBUAN, *o.c.*, p. 21.

33. *Ibidem*, p. 22; also J.S. ARCILLA, *o.c.*, p. 124.

34. J.N. SCHUMACKER, *l.c.*

35. An exhaustive essay offers a significant section on the genesis of the Catholic Welfare Organization, the Episcopal Conference's original name before it became the present official organization of the Catholic hierarchy. See R.C. SANTOS, *A Short History of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines*, in «Philippiniana Sacra» 32/96 (1997) 395-449.

36. *Ibidem*, p. 400.

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parish priests and various congregations supervising the distribution of relief goods and services without racial or religious distinctions<sup>37</sup>.

On July 7, 1945, the majority of the Catholic bishops met for the first time in Manila since the outbreak of war. Having observed the good work of the CWO, they expressed the idea of converting it into the permanent and official organization of the Catholic hierarchy. On July 18, Archbishop Piani handed over the leadership of the organization to the Philippine bishops, who, in turn, elected Archbishop Gabriel Reyes, Archbishop of Cebu, later of Manila, as the chairman of the administrative board. By January 23, 1946, the CWO was incorporated with the Securities Exchange Commission, thus putting an official stamp to its moral personality<sup>38</sup>. It would take two more decades (1967) for the organization, in response to the changing times and to the shifts of Church orientation, to be changed to its present name, the *Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines*<sup>39</sup>.

#### *First Plenary Council of the Philippines*

The first major act that the Philippine Catholic hierarchy did less than a decade after the war was to convoke a Plenary Council. It was held at St. Augustine Church in Manila, from January 7 to 25, 1953. Pius XII, the reigning pontiff at the time, appointed Cardinal Norman Thomas Gilroy, Archbishop of Sydney, as Papal Legate *a latere* to the council<sup>40</sup>.

The council was composed of 6 Archbishops, 21 Bishops, and 4 Apostolic Prelates. Invited to take part in the council was the procurator of the Metropolitan See of Manila and 21 Superiors of the various male religious orders, congregations and societies existing at the time in the country<sup>41</sup>.

By that time, the Philippines had remained the only Christian nation in the Far East, and to a certain extent, had prospered with the rest of the world. The population had grown three times as great as it was fifty years back, to around twenty-five million. There were, by then, 28 dioceses, 1,301 parishes, 25 religious orders for men, and 28 religious orders for

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37. L.C. ROBREDILLO, STD, *Challenges and Responses. A Brief Historical Survey of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines*, in A. ALTMANN LINSANGAN (ed.), *Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. 1945-1995*, CBCP, Manila 1995, p. 23.

38. R.C. SANTOS, *o.c.*, pp. 404-405.

39. *Ibidem*, pp. 423-424.

40. Cfr. *Acta et Decreta Primi Concilii Plenarii Insularum Philippinarum. Manilae a die VII ad diem XXV Ianuarii Anno Domini MDCCCCLIII Celebrati*, UST Press, Manila 1956, pp. xxii-xxv.

41. *Ibidem*. The data given by the PCP-II National Coordinating Office seem to vary, but are more complete: 6 archbishops, 20 bishops (12 of them residential, 2 apostolic administrators, 2 auxiliary bishops, 2 apostolic vicars, 2 prelates nullius), 4 ordinaries (not bishops: 3 apostolic administrators and 1 prefect apostolic), 21 major religious superiors and 81 other priests as members with consultative votes, cfr. PCP-II NATIONAL COORDINATING OFFICE..., *cit.*, p. 496.

women. There were 28 bishops, 1,397 Filipino priests (religious and diocesan combined), and 1,162 foreign priests<sup>42</sup>.

In the face of these positive signs of growth, there were some problems and issues that had been giving the Philippine Church a cause for alarm. First, there was the growing religious indifference among the rising generation, coupled by an educational system that had long excluded the teaching of religion. Second, there was the seething issue of Communism which had been exploiting the material problems of the poor and the workers<sup>43</sup>. Such was the state of affairs of the Church which the First Plenary Council had to face. In the whole, nonetheless, this Council gave the Philippine Church the needed boost and impulse. Although normative in nature and character, it provided concrete measures for the preservation, enrichment and propagation of Catholic life in the country<sup>44</sup>, as well as means for the increase of the number of the clergy, and most of all the quality of formation for future priests in the country<sup>45</sup>.

The decrees, all of which were patterned very closely to the 1917 Code of Canon Law, were approved by Pius XII on February 23, 1956, and promulgated by the Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, Archbishop Egidio Vagnozzi, on August 15, 1956<sup>46</sup>. This means that from the time the Council was celebrated till the time of the effectivity of the decrees, four long years had elapsed.

#### *Other Important Church Events*

There were other subsequent events in the Philippines which had ecclesiastical significance. One was the Marian Congress held in Manila on December 1, 1954, presided over by Fernando Cardinal Quiroga y Palacios, the Archbishop of Santiago de Compostela in Spain. Participated in by more than one million Catholics with President Ramon Magsaysay at the helm, the Congress was a huge demonstration of the growing Catholic faith in the country<sup>47</sup>.

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42. *Acts and Decrees of PCP-II. 20 January-17 February 1991*, CBCP, Manila 1992, p. 288. The data is presented to compare it with the data of the Philippine Church during the PCP-II.

43. *Oratio Saluatoria Excmi. et Revmi. D. Julii Rosales, Archiepiscopi Cebuani, in Congregatione Praeparatoria Concilii*, in *Acta et Decreta Primi Concilii...*, cit., pp. 295-296.

44. Cfr. L.C. ROBREDILLO, *o.c.*, p. 26.

45. The following lines are part of the speech delivered in Spanish by Bishop Alfredo Obviar, who, at the time of the Council was the Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Lucena: «¿Qué es este concilio con respecto a ti, amada Patria? Es la eflorescencia de tu catolicismo, con el cual y por el cual has merecido siempre el timbre glorioso de ser la nación católica en este extremo oriente; este timbre ha subido de punto en los actuales tiempos con la elevación de muchos de tus hijos al rango supremo del Episcopado... Con ellos vas emulando las naciones católicas de ambos mundos; con ellos te haces admirar de tus adversarios; con ellos tu cultura y civilización suben a mayor altura; con ellos tu fé se avallora y se consolida». *Oratio Excmi. Et Rvdm. D. Alfredi Obviar, Administratoris Apostolici Lucenensis*, in *Acta et Decreta Primi Concilii...*, cit., p. 314.

46. PCP-II NATIONAL COORDINATING OFFICE..., cit., pp. 496-497.

47. R.C., SANTOS, *o.c.*, p. 422.

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Then, from April 27 to May 2, 1965, the Church celebrated the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Christianization of the Philippines. Cebu's Archbishop Julio Rosales coordinated this mammoth commemoration graced by the Apostolic Delegate to the United States Egidio Vagnozzi, the President of the Philippines Diosdado Macapagal, Archbishop Fulton Sheen, the Philippine bishops and other prominent figures both of the Church and the State.

*3. Epilogue: The Second Vatican Council*

By this time the world was undergoing social, political and cultural transformation of unprecedented magnitude. Even ecclesiastical events of universal importance were happening at a faster, nay, breakneck, pace, that the decrees of the First Plenary Council of 1953 in the Philippines never had the chance to take off and become operative. On October 18, 1958, the College of Cardinals elected as Pius XII's successor, Cardinal Angelo Roncalli, who took the name of John XXIII. On October 11, 1962, in impressive ceremonies, the seventy-seven year old pope opened the Second Vatican Council. Sadly though, he died on June 3, 1963. His successor, Pope Paul VI, took up from where he left, directed the course according to plan, and saw its conclusion.

The Second Vatican Council, which ended in December 1965, issued a body of documents all touching upon nearly all aspects of Christian life and the relation of the Church to the world. To use the contemporary parlance, it created a paradigm shift. The Philippine Church found Herself met by the challenge of this shift, its corresponding theological and pastoral implications, and was soon addressing issues and problems along a different mold and perspective. It would take time before the hurricane winds of change would be felt in the Philippine Church. Suffice it to say that by 1965—four hundred years since the birth of Christianity in the Philippines—a new chapter was unfolding.

Ramón Stephen B. Aguilós  
St. John the Evangelist School of Theology  
6501 Palo, Leyte  
Philippines