

HISTORICAL SECTION

Notes on

THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN THE PHILIPPINES * 1521-1898 *(continued)*

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Chapter Four

DIOCESES

A. The Archdiocese of Manila

1. Before the hierarchy was established in the islands, the Church in the Philippines was governed by a deputy judge of the Order of Saint Augustine, in accordance with the privilege granted by Pope Paul III to the religious missionaries to the Indies. But the Archbishop of Mexico, Ordinary of the Philippines, unmindful of this privilege, appointed as deputy judges two secular priests resident in the Islands, the licentiates Luis Barruelo and Juan de Vivero, so that they could govern the Philippines spiritually in his name.

The Augustinian fathers contested this arrangement as an infringement of their privileges, and appealed to the Governor General who, as Royal Vice-Patron, could confirm them in the use of their rights. Not long

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after by a disposition of the Governor, the provincial of the Augustinians. Fray Agustín de Albuquerque, resigned as deputy judge in September 27, 1578 in favor of Fray Pedro Alfaro, Commissar of the Franciscan Province of Saint Gregory. He and Frs. Juan de Ayora and Agustín de Tordesillas successively acted in this capacity until the arrival of the first bishop of the Philippines, Fray Domingo de Salazar.¹

2. Erection of the Diocese of Manila

In 1578 Fray Domingo de Salazar was presented by Philip II as bishop of Manila, but he was consecrated in 1579, upon receiving the bulls of nomination. Arriving in the Philippines in September 1581, he erected the episcopal see of Manila, suffragan to Mexico, by virtue of the bull *Illius fulti praesidio* signed by Gregory XIII on 6 February 1578. Of 27 prebends proposed by Salazar, the king approved only the strictly necessary: 5 dignitaries, the Dean, the Archdean, the Precentor, the School Master and the Treasurer; 3 canonries, magisterial, doctoral and penitentiary; 2 full prebends and 2 half-prebends. Their stipends were charged against the royal funds. In a royal cedula dated 2 June 1604 King Philip III fixed the stipends for the ecclesiastical chapter of Manila in this way: the Dean, 600.00 pesos; the five dignitaries, 400.00 pesos each; each canon, 400.00 pesos; 300.00 pesos for each prebend, and 200.00 for the half-prebends.² On 28 May 1680, Charles II allotted 5,000 pesos in gold to the Archbishop of Manila and raised by 100 pesos the salary of each dignitary.³ Construction of the cathedral began in 1581 and it was finished four years later. Ruined by earthquakes in 1645, it was rebuilt by Archbishop Miguel Poblete. The new edifice crashed to the earth during the earthquake of 1863. A third cathedral, inaugurated by Archbishop Pedro Payo (1876-89), was destroyed during the battle for the liberation of Manila from the Japanese in 1945.

¹ Cf. "Anales eclesiásticos." *Philippiniana Sacra* II, No. 4 (January-April 1967) 193-201; Gómez Platero, O.F.M., *Catálogo Biográfico de los religiosos franciscanos* (Manila, 1880), 14,15,23.

² *Philippiniana Sacra* III, No. 7 (January-April, 1968) 153.

³ Blair and Robertson, XVIII, p. 110.

3. The Division of the Diocese of Manila

In 1595 Bishop Salazar journeyed to Spain to picture personally before King Philip II the spiritual condition of the Philippines and petition a remedy for several abuses. One of the many concessions obtained from the king was the raising of his farflung diocese into an archbishopric, with its see in Manila and with three suffragan dioceses, that of Nueva Segovia, of Nueva Caceres and of Cebu. In a brief dated 14 August 1595, Pope Clement VIII approved the promotion of Manila into a see and the others as suffragan sees. Bishop Salazar would certainly have become the first archbishop of Manila, but he died on 4 December 1594. Fray Ignacio de Santibañez, a Franciscan, was named in his place; he too, died, having occupied his see for only a few months in 1598.

4. The more salient events

Throughout the three long centuries of Spanish rule, the archdiocese of Manila was the scene of many memorable events which we shall recall in their proper places. Suffice it now to mention the three quarrels between three archbishops and as many governors-general, ending with the imprisonment of the former — more exactly, the imprisonment and exile of archbishop Hernando Guerrero in 1636 by Governor Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera; the imprisonment and exile of Archbishop Felipe Pardo in 1683 by Governor Juan de Vargas y Hurtado; and lastly the imprisonment of Archbishop Francisco de la Cuesta in 1719 by Governor Fernando Bustamante y Bustillo.

5. Extent of the Archdiocese

The territorial jurisdiction of the old archdiocese of Manila included the actual civil provinces of Nueva Ecija, the southern half of Tarlac, Zambales, Pampanga, Bulacan, Rizal, Cavite, Batangas, Laguna, and the islands of Mindoro and Marinduque.

6. Prerogatives of the Archbishop

The archbishop of Manila, as the Metropolitan of the Philippines, enjoyed, among others, the following prerogatives:

- a) He was the subdelegate and the military Vicar General of the islands, with full spiritual authority over any and all who belonged in any way to the army or the navy.
- b) The governor-general had to seek his advice before granting the faculty to any religious to return to the peninsula.
- c) The governor-general could not, without the advice and consent of the archbishop, forbid public processions, even if there were grave reasons to the contrary.
- d) If the governor-general failed to comply with his duty to present candidates for provisional nomination to the dignitaries or prebendaries of the Cathedral, the archbishop enjoyed the faculty to make these appointments.
- e) Finally, the archbishop of Manila was the ecclesiastical governor, *sede vacante*, of the suffragan sees.⁴

B. The Diocese of Cebu

The diocese of Cebu, under the patronage of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, was created by Pope Clement VIII by the bull *Super specula militantis ecclesiae*, dated 26 August 1595. The first bishop was Fray Pedro Agurto of the Order of Saint Augustine.

This was the most extensive and the most taxing of the four dioceses in the Philippines. It included the Visayan Islands, Mindanao and the Marianas Islands. It is no surprise then that the bishops made their visitations rarely, amid no mean share of difficulties and dangers. No prelate visited the Marianas Islands until the bishopric of Romualdo Jimeno (1847-1872).

Because of the vast spread of his jurisdiction and the many problems encountered during his visitation, this prelate succeeded, after repeated

⁴ Tamayo, Serapio, O.P., *Idea general de la disciplina eclesiástica en Filipinas, durante la dominación española* (Manila, 1906), 41-42.

requests, in getting the Spanish government to petition the Holy See for the creation of the diocese of Jaro in 1865, as we shall soon see.⁵

C. The Diocese of Nueva Caceres

Created at the same time as Cebu, it bore the name of Nueva Caceres since the beginning, in memory of the city of Cáceres in Spain. It included the present provinces of Quezon, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay and Sorsogon, and the islands of Catanduanes, Masbate, Burias and Ticao.

Its first bishop should have been Fray Luis de Maldonado, formerly Lector in Salamanca and later Commissar in the Philippines. Appointed by the Sacred Congregation of the Consistory on 14 August 1595, he died before receiving the nomination. Some historians think that St. Peter Bautista was appointed bishop of Nueva Caceres; but the latest exhaustive research done by the Filipino historian Domingo Abella, denies this. Francisco de Ortega, an Augustinian, was the second appointed bishop (13 September 1599). He also died in Mexico before taking possession of his diocese.⁶

D. The Diocese of Nueva Segovia

It owes its creation to Pope Clement VIII who erected it on 26 August 1595 together with the diocese of Cebu. Its first bishop was Fray Miguel de Benavides, a Dominican, who chose Nueva Segovia (now, Lal-loc) as the see. But because Vigan was better situated, the latter became the capital of the diocese provisionally, until, in answer to the petition of Bishop Juan de la Fuente y Yepes, King Ferdinand VI authorized the definite transfer to Vigan in a royal cedula dated from Villaviciosa, 7 September 1758. From 1762, through the continued efforts of

⁵ Redondo y Sendino, Felipe, Pbro., *Breve reseña de lo que fué y de lo que es la diócesis de Cebú en las islas Filipinas* (Manila: Establecimiento tipografico del colegio de Santo Tomas, 1886) 7 ff.; Jimeno, Ilmo, Romualdo, *Relación del estado de la diócesis de Cebú a su santidad Pio IX en 1863*. Ms in AUST, Sección de libros, tomo 112, No. 43.

⁶ Abella, Domingo, *Bikol Annals* (Manila, Philippines) 30-37.

Bishop Bernardo Ustariz, successor of Bishop de la Fuente, the town of Vigan became legally the capital city of the diocese of Nueva Segovia.⁷

E. The Diocese of Jaro

Already in 1831, Bishop Santos Gomez Marañon of Cebu had requested the Holy See to divide in two the diocese of the Most Holy Name of Jesus. But the suggestion fell on the deaf ears of the government. Twenty years later, in 1851, we see Bishop Romualdo Jimeno, the successor of Marañon, initiate a series of steps towards the same end. Finally, after many difficulties, he obtained a government decree from Spain, dated 17 January 1865, creating the diocese, of Jaro under the patronage of Saint Elizabeth. The new diocese, according to the first two articles of the decree, would include the provinces of Iloilo, Capiz, Antique, Calamianes islands, Negros, Zamboanga and Nueva Guipuzcoa (the present Davao provinces). On 27 May of the same year, the Holy See announced through a brief, *Qui ab initio*, that Pope Pius IX had recognized the government action.

The first bishop of Jaro, nominated on 20 September 1867 and consecrated on 30 November of that year, was Bishop Mariano Cuartero, O.P. He took possession of his diocese in 1868 and he spared no effort to provide the new see with the necessary buildings, as the episcopal palace, which he finished in a year; the cathedral church, begun in 1869 and inaugurated on 1 February 1874; and lastly, the conciliar seminary, dedicated to Saint Vincent Ferrer, finished in 1874.⁸

F. Nomination of Bishops Under the Spanish Royal Patronage

Under the Spanish regime, the nomination of bishops for the Philippines was the duty of the Royal Patron, as were all the benefices. ac-

⁷ Garcia, Ilmo Miguel, *Relación del estado de la iglesia de Nueva Segovia, en las Islas Filipinas, remitida al Rey y Supremo Consejo de Indias*, Mss in APSR, Sección HEF, "Nueva Segovia," 1774, folios 1-2.

⁸ Villaroel, Fidel. O.P., "The Making of a Diocese in the Philippines, Jaro 1865," *Boletín Eclesiástico*, 1965, pp. 538-555; Cuartero, Ilmo. Mariano *Relación del estado de la diócesis de Jaro, hecha a su santidad Pio IX. hacia 1870*. Ms in AUST, seccion de libros, tomo 112, no. 45.

ording to the Laws of the Indies: "Archbishoprics, Bishoprics, Abbacies of our Indies shall be provided for through our presentation before our most holy Father, whoever at the time he may be, as has been done until now." (*Recopilación de Leyes de Indias*, libro 1, título 6, ley 3).

This was the procedure. When a diocese in the Indies fell vacant, the Supreme Council of the Indies presented a list of candidates to the king. The monarch in turn selected one of these; or, if he thought otherwise, he chose someone not included in the list. He then forwarded the name to the Spanish Ambassador to the Holy See for presentation to the Pope and for confirmation and canonical investiture of the bishop-elect.

Although it was severely forbidden in the Decretals that a chosen or presented candidate for any episcopal see should assume its government before he received papal canonical investiture, and showing to the chapter of the ecclesiastical governors the bulls of his appointment, it was for a time the accepted practice, set up by royal cédulas, that those so presented to the Holy See for the bishoprics in the Philippines could assume legally and canonically the government of their churches, with the condition only that he had been notified that the cédula of his nomination had already been sent and accepted.

By virtue of a provision in a brief of Pope Innocent XI on 24 April 1679, the ecclesiastical governor or the chapter, *sede vacante*, did not have to subdelegate authority to the bishop-elect, on the supposition that full authority or jurisdiction had been transferred to him by the mere act of presentation by the king and acceptance by the Holy See, even before the nominee had received either the papal letters or episcopal consecration. By the same brief, too, the Pontiff ordained that the nearest bishop should administer the diocese, *sede vacante*.⁹

G. The Cathedral Chapters

To govern their diocese properly, bishops need auxiliaries. Some of these are a college who form one moral person, like the *Cathedral* chapter;

⁹ Tamayo, *op. cit.*, 35-36.

others are individuals. Among the latter, we can count, in the first place the Provisor, or Vicar General; the Capitular Vicar, the Fiscal, and the Ecclesiastical Notary. They help the prelate govern the diocese and form the diocesan Curia. In the second place, we have the Vicars forane, and the parish priests who aid the bishop in the exercise of his authority over a part of the diocese. As historians, we are here especially concerned with the Cathedral and the parish priest. The latter we will discuss in the next chapter.

Although from their respective bulls of erection the dioceses in the Philippines should have had their corresponding cathedral chapters, the fact is, outside of the archdiocese of Manila, the rest have never had their chapter for lack of funds. This was noted in a royal cedula of 18 August 1853: "Seventh. With particular attention to the fact that the state of the royal funds of these islands do not permit for the present the establishment of chapters in the suffragan churches..."¹⁰

In Salazar's original plan, disapproved by Philip II, the Manila cathedral chapter was to be constituted by these persons: 5 dignitaries, 10 canons, 6 prebendaries and 6 half-prebendaries. We have already seen how the chapter was actually constituted. Towards the end of the Spanish regime, the chapter included 5 dignitaries — the dean, arch-dean, precentor, master of the school, and treasurer; 5 canons, two of which were by appointment and three *ex-officio*, doctoral, magisterial, and penitentiary; and 6 prebends with the necessary substitute for each one.

In the other dioceses, instead of the chapter, the bishop had as his auxiliaries three chaplains obliged to assist at the pontifical throne, with an annual stipend of 400 pesos each; one sacristan, with 200 pesos, and a master of ceremonies, with 150 pesos.¹¹

(to be continued)

¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, 45, note 1.

¹¹ *Constituciones formadas por el Ilmo. y Rmo. Sr. D. Basilio Sancho de Santa Justa y Rufina, Arzobispo de Manila, para la Observancia, del Venerable Cabildo de su Santa Metropolitana Iglesia* (Manila: Imprenta "La Patria," 1917).