

Miller Photo

*Manila's Beautiful and Majestic Cathedral on Plaza de McKinley, walled city*

If there is one feature that stands out among the many that arouse the interest of tourists in the City of Manila it is the many old and beautiful churches that have been erected by the Spaniards in all parts of the city. Under a local government in which the Church was the controlling factor, it was only natural that much time, money and effort were expended in the erection of pretentious religious edifices. This is true not only of Manila but also of the provinces. Throughout the Islands, the priests and the monks of the Spanish orders have put up stately piles, often out of all proportion to the size of the communities and the wealth of the people. Some of these architectural creations would do credit to old world capitals and their mere physical construction with the limited means and resources at the disposal of their builders is little short of miraculous.

In Manila, the oldest and largest churches are situated in the Walled City which until comparatively recent times was Manila proper, the country outside of the walls having been incorporated in the municipal district within the last century. All these churches, except the Roman Catholic Cathedral, are administered by the different religious orders, whose members are everywhere in evidence—brown-clad and bearded Capuchins, blue-gowned Franciscans, white-robed Dominicans and Augustinians, and Jesuits clad in somber black. These priests and brothers are all well-educated, cultured men, who spend a good deal of their time in their conventos (monasteries) adjoining their churches, engaged in study and research of various kinds. The University of Santo Tomas, the oldest educational institution in the Islands, and one of the best, with a history that antedates that of any American university, is administered by the Dominican fathers. Many of these monasteries are quite as interesting as are the churches.

#### • AUGUSTINIAN CHURCH AND CONVENTO

First in point of antiquity and interest is the Augustinian church, situated at the intersection of Real and General Luna streets. The first building, erected in 1571, was destroyed by fire. In its place was erected another church built of firmer material, but this was destroyed by an earthquake. Finally, in 1599, Juan Macias, a noted architect, began the present structure. On his death, the work was continued by the lay brother Juan de Herrera, son of the famous designer of the

# MANILA

## the City of Churches

### THE WALLED CITY

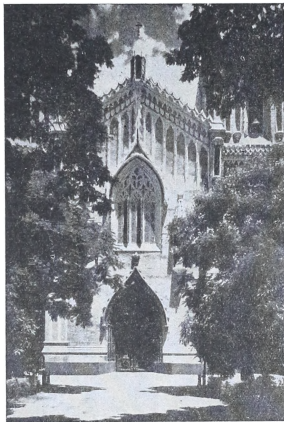
By Norbert Lyons

Madrid Escorial, the second largest church building in the world whose beauty was such that its architect gained classic fame for himself and country by his artistry. Young Herrera in Spain got into trouble over a woman and was condemned to death. Influential friends and relatives interceded for him and his sentence was commuted to banishment. He came to the Philippines and followed his father's profession. Herrera also built the old bridge of Spain and the church at San Pedro Macati, where he was killed by a stone falling on his head during the construction work.

Architecturally, the Augustinian church is of the peculiar Romanesque-Renaissance style so common in Spain and her colonies of that period. It has no special artistic appeal, aside from its antiquity, and what little it has is depreciated by the absence of one of the twin towers that originally adorned the structure. The east tower was demolished in an earthquake and has never been rebuilt. The body of the church is built to withstand the heaviest seismic shocks, with its great low arches that span the entire breadth of the building.

The interior of the church is chiefly notable for its mural decorations, made by Alveroni, an Italian painter, about 60 years ago. On either side of the two side naves there are five chapels, each named after a saint and decorated appropriately. The dimensions of the building are 231 feet long, 84 feet wide and 42 feet high. Beneath the beautiful hardwood floor lie the remains of some of the most prominent Spanish and native residents of the Islands, including those of Legaspi, Salcedo, Ronquillo, Lisarraga and other Governors General. Archbishops Guerrero, Serrano, Zamudio and Garcia are also buried here.

The Augustinian monastery, the largest in the Islands, occupies a space of six square blocks interspersed with six patios or open spaces. Of most massive construction, with walls in places twelve feet thick, this convent is practically immune to earth shocks. At one time it housed hundreds of friars; now some twenty odd occupy the huge structure. Its endless halls are lined with oil painting of saints and martyrs, made by Filipino artists for the most part. Some of these are interesting, but none are what might be considered distinguished works of art. They are poorly preserved and are rapidly falling to pieces. One of the sights of the convent is a huge well which on several occasions has saved the population of old Manila from drought. It also was used by the American troops during the early days



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*Dominican Convent Church of Our Lady, walled city, Manila, one of two great Churches in the Gothic style in the city.*

of American occupation. Its capacity is estimated by the Augustinian fathers at 65,000 gallons.

#### CHURCH OF THE CAPUCHINS

Two or three squares up General Luna street, just beyond Victoria street and close to the Delmonico Hotel, stands the Capuchin Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, the most modern of the Walled City churches. The Capuchins did not come to the Islands until 1886, when they established a mission and built a chapel in Pasay. In 1892 Brother Bernardo M. de Cieza had an image of Our Lady of Lourdes made by a Filipino artist, Manuel Flores. This work of art, because of its beauty and religious significance, aroused much enthusiasm among the parishioners of the church, especially the women, and immediately became the objective of pilgrimages and devotions, being credited with the power of curing bodily ailments. Finally, in 1897, it was decided to build a new church on the present site and Federico Soler, the architect, and Jose Garcia Morón, the engineer, were commissioned to begin work on the edifice. The following year the American troops came to Manila and there was great consternation among the populace, the people fearing a bombardment. The Superior of the Order, Brother Alfonso M. de Morontin, at the time the excitement was at its highest pitch, took a solemn vow that the new church would be dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes if the bombardment did not take place. The bombardment did not eventuate and on September 24, 1898, the church was completed. It is of a Romanesque style of architecture, in the main, with touches of Renaissance and other orders of decoration. While small, it is very impressive, and when fully illuminated presents a brilliant appearance. It is a popular church among the ladies and its 10 o'clock mass is largely attended on Sundays. It is also the scene of many fashionable weddings, having a wealthy and exclusive congregation.

#### RECOLETOS CHURCH

A short distance away, at the intersection of Recoletos and Cabildo streets, is the Church of the Recoletos or San José. The Order of Recoletos is one of the oldest in the Islands, its first representatives, 13 in number, having come here in 1606. They settled in what was then the barrio of Bagumbayan and on September 10, 1606, founded the first church, a crude structure, in which they placed the image of San Nicolas of Tolentino, now patron saint of the city of Manila, which they had brought from Spain. Here they also established their first monastery. They struggled on amid great hardships and in most abject poverty. Don Bernardino del Castillo, the leading Spanish executive of Manila, and his wife, Doña Maria Enriquez de Cespedes, moved by the poverty-stricken state of the good friars, bought the present site and erected a church on it at a cost of ₱100,000. In 1645 an earthquake destroyed most of the original building and it had to be reconstructed as funds became available. The present façade dates from 1781. The earthquake of 1863 destroyed the roof which had to be

rebuilt. The façade is rather more elaborate than that of the other churches, being adorned with Doric pillars and niches holding statues. The bell tower, with its numerous openings and niches, makes a picturesque feature of the exterior. It has five bells.

The architectural style of this church is Spanish Romanesque with touches of Renaissance. The interior is typical of the Spanish churches of Manila, except that it has a large distinguishing cupola. The reredos or altar screen, is particularly noteworthy because of its numerous sacred paintings and statues and its beautiful and intricate carvings. To the left of the high altar is a large chapel surmounted by a cupola. An old and quaint organ in the choir loft is worthy of inspection. In this church are buried Captain General Fajardo, who died in 1617, and his wife, as well as other distinguished Manilans of the early days.

#### FRANCISCAN CHURCH AND MONASTERY

In close proximity is the Church of San Francisco with its Chapel of the Third Order of San Francisco, both facing a large stone court. The two churches are separated by the convent, one of the largest in the city. The front of this square is located at the intersection of Potenciana and Solana streets and also faces San Francisco street.

The First Franciscan monks to reach Manila arrived in 1577 and erected a small nipa house of worship. This was destroyed by fire in 1583 and another of wood was constructed at the expense of Marshal de Rivera and Don Martin de la Rea. In 1602, Marshal de Rivera built a rubble church and convent, donning the gown of the order shortly afterward. In 1739 this group of buildings was destroyed by an earthquake and the present structure was erected. The tower was demolished in 1824 and rebuilt. The southern part of the main chapel and the roof of the church also suffered severe damage from an earthquake in 1863.

This church owes much of its popularity and repute to a miracle which is reported to have occurred on October 3, 1603, when during the Chinese uprising Saint Francis is said to have appeared upon the city walls, defending the capital with a sword of flame. So impressed were 400 of the Chinese prisoners by this miracle that they immediately asked to be baptized and each and every one of them assumed the Christian name of Francisco. This story is taken from the annals of the Franciscan fathers published in 1863.

The Franciscan Church is of rather massive outside appearance, the architecture being of a mixed style, with the Romanesque and Renaissance elements predominant. Greek pillars of the Ionic and Corinthian orders embellish the front. The effect is to make the church look larger than it really is. The altar screen, resplendent in silver, is truly impressive. The whole interior effect is one of massive simplicity. One of the images in front of the high altar, that of San Francisco de las Lagrimas, has an interesting history. It was originally

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Franciscan Convent Church in the Walled City of Manila. Franciscans are the patrons of the Sta. Clara nuns, whose cloister in the walled city dates from 1621. Franciscans built many missions in the Bicol region and Samar.



Oldest Christian fame in the Philippines: Augustinian Convent Church of St. Paul and St. Peter, in the walled city. Terms for America's occupation of Manila in 1898 were signed in its sacristy.

## Manila, City of Churches

(Continued from page 8)

in the suburban home of one Alonso Cuyapit, a Filipino, who had it standing on a small stand mounted on wheels. In 1645, so the story goes, the city was shaken by a series of earthquakes beginning on November 30. Soon after the seismic disturbance began, tradition says, this image of its own accord moved from its accustomed place to a window facing Manila and began to shed tears. Four times Sr. Cuyapit brought it back to its place and four times it returned to the window and wept copiously, until the earthquakes ceased. This is set down in the Franciscan annals above referred to. Since then the event is celebrated annually on December 4.

The organ in this church is over 200 years old and has always been considered a gem by antiquarians.

There is nothing of very great interest in the Third Order church or chapel, its exterior being a rather bizarre mixture of Italian Renaissance and Greek styles, though the effect as a whole is quite pleasing. Only the lower portion of the façade is of old construction, the upper portion being modern. This chapel is popular among the people of the district as a place of special devotion.

### DOMINICAN CHURCH

Proceeding down calle Solana, we come to the Dominican Church and Convento, in front of which is a spacious and well-kept yard planted with trees and shrubs. At the side of the church is the beautiful Santo Tomas Plaza. We at once note the fact that this is the only Gothic church building in the Walled City, and it is of a particularly pure Gothic type.

This is the fifth building of the Dominican Church. The first was put up in 1675 and was of wood. It was destroyed by fire and in its place was erected an edifice of strong material, which, in turn, was destroyed by an earthquake. It was succeeded by a third building at the beginning of the last century, which was also demolished by an earthquake. The same fate visited the fourth structure, erected in 1863. The present church was finished in 1888 and is probably the second largest in Manila, the first being the Catholic Cathedral.

One of the noteworthy features of this Church is an image of the Virgin on the center façade over the entrance, in front of which a light is kept burning nightly. This image was brought here from Mexico in 1587 and has been in the same position ever since, with the light burning in front of it. The groined arches, sculptured capitals, stained glass windows and rich but simple decorations combine to give the interior a very artistic and yet deeply religious atmosphere.

This church has one of the finest organs in the Islands. It is a double instrument with a full set of orchestra stops and was brought here from Spain, having been specially constructed.

The chapel of Our Lady of the Rosary is the most famous and most beautiful portion of this church. The image is considered a rare work of religious art and is held in high reverence as the Patron Saint of the Islands. This statue is reputed to have saved the Islands from a Dutch invasion in 1646. The annual fiesta of Our Lady of the Rosary is celebrated at this church and is said to be the greatest in the Philippines. It takes place in the month of October.

When the present church was erected the site was little more than a swamp, the moat surrounding the wall at that time being close to it. The fathers who inspected the site had to make their way in boats.

Adjacent to the church is the Dominican monastery, from which the feminine sex is strictly barred. This institution derives particular importance from the fact that it is the central headquarters of the Order in the Far East. Educational work appears to be the speciality of the Dominican fathers, who, as has already been mentioned, administer Santo Tomas University, as well as many other institutions of learning such as San Juan de Letran College for boys and Santa Catalina College for girls in Manila. They also have very strong representation in the more important provinces.

### THE CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL

Walking around the front of the Dominican church, through the beautiful Santo Tomas plaza and past the Ayuntamiento

(Insular government building), we reach the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, the largest and most imposing church edifice in the Islands. It fronts on Plaza McKinley, in the center of which is the statue of Don Carlos de Bourbon. Its architecture is of Byzantine style, with numerous modifications. The three large arched doorways are reminiscent of St. Mark's, Venice. It has a large dome, whose gilt top is one of the first sights that attract the eye of the traveler as he approaches Manila on board ship.

The high arched interior with its groups of quadruple columns, elaborate decorations, exquisite chapels, beautifully painted dome and spacious nave is very impressive. The sacristy is especially beautiful and contains some of the richest vestments and religious paraphernalia to be found anywhere.

The present Cathedral is the fourth since the dedication of the first building on December 21, 1581. This was destroyed by an earthquake in 1600 and was succeeded by a new building, which was opened in 1614. An earthquake destroyed this edifice in 1645 and a third structure was dedicated nine years later, only to be razed to the ground by a seismic shock on June, 1863. The present Cathedral was completed in December, 1879.

### JESUIT CHURCH

Close by, on calle Arzobispo and near the Archbishop's palace, stands the Jesuit Church, a gem among the many beautiful churches of the city. Owing to the close proximity of other buildings and the narrowness of the street, its exterior architectural beauties are not as apparent as they would be were the church viewable from a distance. However, it is its interior that constitutes its main attraction and a most beautiful and pleasing effect does it produce.

In style this church is Graeco-Roman of a most late date and much credit must be given to the architect, Don Felix Roxas, for his exquisite design. The work of construction was begun by Señor Roxas in 1878 and completed by Father Francisco Riera in 1889. The interior is a most harmonious blending of countless artistic features and the effect is very pleasing. To the writer, this is the most beautiful church in Manila, so far as the interior effect is concerned. A number of good paintings by Spanish artists are hung at different points and there is an excellent painted wooden statue of Christ on the Cross executed by a Filipino artist which has been placed in the church recently. The carving in this church is of particular excellence, the pulpit being the best exemplar of this species of craftsmanship.

To the rear and one side of the altar is an underground crypt in which are stored the remains of all the Jesuit fathers who have died in the Islands. A marble floor slab bears the names of the most of the departed and a new slab will be placed in the wall for additional names. Access to the crypt is gained by lifting a floor slab and descending a stairway. The remains are stored in walled-up niches along the sides of the crypt.

In this church can also be seen a fine collection of antique and modern vestments of genuine cloth of gold and silver, as well as many highly artistic and valuable sacred vessels. A monstrance of solid gold studded with precious stones is valued at ₱30,000 alone.

The first Jesuit church was built in 1727 on calle Palacio, then calle Real. It was destroyed by an earthquake in 1852. It was succeeded by the present church. Like the Dominicans, the Jesuit fathers are educational specialists and the Ateneo de Manila, next door to the church, is a famous secondary institution, now headed by Father Francis X. Byrne, an American member of the Order, who is assisted by a staff of American teachers of the Order. Father Byrne is also rector of the church. The museum of the Ateneo is reputed to be the best in the Islands and is well worth a visit.

This completes the round of Walled City churches and they should be visited in the order named if economy of time and effort are desired. The antiquarian or student, however, can find a veritable treasure house of church annals, history, tradition and theology in the libraries of the monasteries connected with most of the churches and the good fathers are only too pleased to furnish whatever information is desired, or assist in its gathering.