

THE AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECTS IN THE PHILIPPINES: TURBULENCE AND EXPANSION IN THE 19TH CENTURY

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Preliminary remarks

For the history of the Augustinian Recollect Order in the Philippines, the 19th century was very important. It is the century when its presence in the Islands was most widespread and intense. In previous centuries, the number of Recollects working in the country had been relatively small—around seventy in the 17th century and about a hundred in the 18th century—and their activity was reduced to frontier or marginal territories like Zambales, Palawan, Mindanao, Romblon and Mindoro.

Only in the second half of the 18th century, after the expulsion of the Jesuits, has the Recollect Order taken over some more promising territories, like Bohol, and at the end of the same century they began to get closer to Manila with the foundation of Las Piñas and Imus in 1795.

The situation in the 19th century was quite different. The number of Augustinian Recollects increased incessantly, and this growth, without betraying their historical commitment to the Christian communities of the Visayan Islands, allowed the Order to strengthen more and more its presence in the leading provinces of Tondo, Cavite, Laguna and Batangas.

Three different periods

However, it would be misleading to regard the whole century as a monolithic unit. Rather, it can be divided at least into three quite different periods. The first would embrace its first twenty-five years, from 1800 to 1826. It is characterized by a continuous decrease in the number of religious and the ensuing withdrawal from parishes and missions. First, the Spanish War for Independence (1808-1814) and second, the ruthlessness and instability of Spanish politics as well as the poverty of the State, ruined by the war against the

French, made the recruitment of missionaries in Spain difficult.¹ As a matter of fact, from 1800 to 1825 only a total of twenty-one Recollects arrived in the Philippines: seven in 1805, one in 1815, nine in 1817, two in 1819 and twelve in 1822. These meager numbers could not make up for the losses; and consequently, the Order in the Islands was reduced from around 95 members in the beginning of the century to only 58 in 1820. Year after year, its superiors were forced to cede to the secular clergy some of its traditional ministries, or at best, to have recourse for help from secular priests. This shortage of personnel prompted some religious to think about the possibility of opening the doors to Filipino vocations, but in the end nothing was done.²

In 1808, the Recollects went out of the missions of Mabalacat and Capas in the present provinces of Pampanga and Tarlac. In 1814, the last Recollect friar who was still serving the mission post of Botolan left Zambales. In the same year they had to withdraw from the Marianas Islands and from the province of Caraga, and reduced their presence in southwestern Mindanao provinces to only a handful of religious.

In this dramatic sequence that might be surprising was the taking over of the parishes of Calapan and Naujan in Mindoro in 1805. In 1819 the mission of Irum was added. The acceptance of the new parish of Caloocan in 1815 and the return to Marianas in 1820 took place. But all these decisions had an easy explanation: the province was anxious to get some parishes near Manila and the Spanish government wanted the islands of Marianas and Mindoro better attended to.

In 1820, the 58 religious of the Province were distributed in the following manner: 22 were living in the convents of Manila, San Sebastian, Cebu, Cavite, Mexico (4) and Madrid (1), while 36 were serving as many parishes and missions in Bohol (13), Mindanao (5), Palawan (5), Mindoro (3), Marianas (3), Romblon (2) and Siquijor, Danao, Imus, Las Piñas and Caloocan, with a total of 167,000 souls. In their spiritual administration they were helped by ten secular priests.

The second period, characterized by a slow but constant recovery of the province, lasted only about 16 years. It would have begun in 1826, with the

¹ *Pobreza del Estado en 1818*.

² Nicolás BECERRA, in *Cartas* 3, f. 185: "It is not necessary to give any habit to those of this land, not even to keep the choir wearing the habit and sung masses and by obligation; if it cannot be done that way, it shall be necessary to leave those responsibilities."

arrival in the Philippines of the eight first fruits of the Alfaro novitiate house, and would have finished in 1841. In these years, in spite of the disturbances following the decrees of Mendizábal (1836-1841), the province received 72 new religious. This number allowed her to regain some of the ministries abandoned in the previous decades and to extend her presence to other regions, with the favor of the government that was already mistrusting the political loyalty of the native clergy.

In 1833 the Recollects resumed their work in the parishes of Caraga and in 1836 those of Zambales. Both territories were remote and poor and the authorities, civil and ecclesiastical, were worried about their administration.³ At the same time, a number of new parishes began to be created in Bohol (four in the 1831-1833 biennium), Siquijor (Canoan, 1836) and Misamis (Jasaan, 1830). By 1837, the total number of the Recollects in the Philippines had reached eighty-one. Twenty-four religious resided in the convents of Manila (20), Cavite (2), Cebu (1) and San Sebastian (1). The remaining fifty-seven, assisted by ten secular priests, served as many parishes and missions with a population of 278,137 souls.

The third and last period began in 1842 with the arrival of twenty-four new religious in the Philippines and covered the rest of the century until the very end of the Spanish Regime in the Islands. This period was a brilliant one, at least in some aspects. The members of the province increased from 86 in 1837 to 97 in 1842, 203 in 1850, 250 in 1867, 460 in 1891, and 560 in 1898, not including the sixty-five religious who were sent to Colombia for the restoration of Candelaria Province. Surely, not all these religious were active in the Philippines. More than one third of them were still students in the convents of Montegudo, Marcilla and San Millán, while a group of about 25 to 35 priests and lay brothers was in charge of their education or employed in administrative activities in Rome and Madrid. Notwithstanding all this, the number of Recollects working in the Philippines was really high (330 in 1897) and permitted a great expansion of its apostolic endeavors. For the first time, the Recollects were able to develop a systematic evangelization of the dwellers of mountains and innermost districts of Mindoro, Bohol, Negros, Palawan and Zambales.

To better understand this expansion, it is necessary to take into account at least three circumstances:

³ June 1831 visit of the archbishop: "I went at once to the miserable and far-off province of Zambales."

1) The increase of religious vocations after the opening of two new seminaries in Spain—Marcella (1865) and San Millán de la Cogolla (1878).

2) The demographic increase of the Islands by leaps and bounds, which surpassed all expectations. The hardly one million and a half Filipinos at the beginning of the 19th century had become three million and a half in 1850, and would become more than seven million at the end of the century.

3) The ever-increasing suspicion of the colonial government officials and the Spanish community towards the Filipino native clergy. Quite evident also was the growing suspicion of the native clergy on the Spanish community. Already in 1827, Manuel Bernáldez had cast serious doubts on the loyalty of the Filipino clergy to Spain.

He who knows the active and leading part played by this class—the native clergy—in accomplishing the independence of America will not be surprised in the establishment of the Constitution of the Philippines. Native parish priests have almost all been directors of the elections in their villages and distinguished themselves by their officiousness and their pretensions against the legitimate government of the islands.⁴

Through the rest of the century, these accusations would be repeated by others, although rarely with any supporting evidence beyond the analogy with what happened in America. However, the recommendation of Bernáldez that “by mild and discreet means the vacant parishes of the secular priests be conferred on religious” became increasingly the keynote of the Spanish policy toward the Filipino.

Improvements in traditional territories

The expansion began with the foundation of new parishes and missions in the territories already administered by the Order. From their return to Caraga in 1833 until 1861, when they were ordered to cede all their Mindanao ministries to the Jesuits, the Recollects restored or created twenty new parishes, while the Christian population attended by them in the island increased from 71,589 souls in 1838 to 125,861 in 1861, an increase of 55,000 Christian believers in twenty-three years. A very similar expansion was experienced by the provinces of Bataan and Zambales. When the Recollects went back in 1836 to these most beloved provinces they found solely eight parishes: Mariveles in Bataan; and Iba, Masinloc, Santa Cruz, Botolan in Zambales; Bolinao Balincaguín (Mabini), Sarapsap (Alaminos) part of the actual province of Pangasinan. By 1843 they

⁴ BR 51, 182-273; BN, ms. 20.325.

had already restored the old parish of Subic, and created that of Agno. In the subsequent years they went on to establish new parishes in order to attend to the increasing population, due, among other factors, to a massive immigration of Ilocanos. No less than eighteen new ministries were established between 1843 and 1897.

The island of Bohol which at the beginning of the century was already the favorite apostolic field of the Recollects continued to be regarded with special predilection. In the 1820s, the Recollects supplied a major contribution to its complete pacification, successfully integrating into the municipal life of the northeastern towns of the island no less than 22,500 Boholanos who lived scattered in the mountains and who were a constant threat to the security and normal development of the whole island. Between 1852 and 1885 they established and organized fifteen new parishes throughout the island.⁵

New mission stations also appeared in Palawan, Marianas, Mindoro and Romblon.

Beside this increased presence in their traditional apostolic fields, the Recollects began to work also in new territories entrusted to the Order by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Two of them—Cavite and Negros—require a more detailed treatment.

The Recollects in Negros

The arrival of the Recollects in Negros is a major event in the history of the island. Their arrival would soon come to bear on all the aspects of her life. The enthusiasm of the Recollects would contribute decisively toward the creation of a climate of optimism and progress that would soon place Negros at the forefront of the Philippine provinces.

One fact suffices to show how quickly the island developed. Whereas in 1848, it was a semi-abandoned island with no bearing on the country's economic context, in 1892, hardly forty-four years later, it came to hold the first place in the country's exports. The exports of Negros sugar amounted in that year to 20% of the total value of the Philippine exports. Simultaneously and strongly intertwined with this fact, other factors came up, such as the multiplication of the population by four times, the massive foundation of new towns and parishes,

⁵ Emmanuel Luis A. ROMANILLOS, *The Augustinian Recollects in Bohol, 1769-1937*, in *Recollectio* 21-22 (1998-99) 83-114.

the immigration of Spanish and Ilonggo farmers and Chinese traders, and the improvement of the primary schools, health and communications. In 1896 the Recollects even were able to open in Bacolod a high school for the children of the emerging middle class of the island.

These changes were the happy result of a combination of circumstances, each of them contributing in its own way. The fertility of the soil and the mildness of the climate laid the foundation. Then came the high prices for sugar in the world market, the liberalization of trade, the opening of the port of Iloilo to foreign shipping, technical progress, peace and order, the insight and tenacity of a handful of men, such as Fr. Fernando Cuenca, the English merchant Nicholas Loney, and the *hacenderos* Eusebio Ruiz de Luzurriaga, Agustín Montilla, Leopoldo Gastón, Miguel Pérez, and Diego de la Viña; the abundance and cheapness of land and labor, the incentives given by some provincial governors and the enthusiasm and experience of a number of parish priests.

For long, both the civil and ecclesiastical authorities had wanted to replace the secular clergy with a religious order. They believed that the regular clergy, being better trained and more zealous, would take the island out of its paralysis and would stimulate the development of its immense natural resources. This belief plus the scarcity of priests in the Diocese of Cebu and a clear mistrust on the political loyalty of the native clergy brought about the turnover of its spiritual administration to the Augustinian Recollects.

On May 27 Governor General Narciso Clavería passed to the provincials of the four religious orders, then in the Archipelago, a request of the bishop of Cebu for the spiritual administration of the island by any of them. Two days later the Recollect prior provincial replied and accepted the island of Negros and promised to send there six priests within six months. On June 20 General Narciso Clavería accepted the offer and entrusted “the spiritual administration of Negros to the Recollects that they may occupy those parishes and missions that may be vacant and those that as time goes on would become vacant.”

Amlan and Siaton in the eastern coast and Kabangkalan and Himamaylan in the western were the first four parishes turned over to the Recollects between 28 August and 28 October 1848. The first three were then newly created parishes, separated from Tanjay, Dauin and Himamaylan, respectively.

As to Himamaylan, it had a parish priest since 1842, the well-known peninsular priest Jose María Pavón, who was transferred to the nearby parish of

Hinigaran which had been founded as a parish in the previous month of February.

In the following decades the Recollects brought about an ambitious plan which changed the religious map of the island with the creation of a great number of new parishes and missions. From 1848 to 1861 no less than seventeen new parishes were founded. After five years dedicated to their consolidation, in 1866 began what we may call the second chapter in the parochial organization of Negros, which can be extended until 1890. In these 25 years, eleven parishes came into being and the Recollects took over the five parishes that were still in the hands of the secular clergy. These were Tanjay (1866), Bacolod (1871), Silay (1881), Bago (1882) and Ilog (1889). All of them were transferred to the Recollects only when their secular priests passed away. In this manner, the spiritual administration of the island became homogenous.

The third chapter of the pastoral organization of Negros goes back to 1889, when the Recollects submitted to the government a mission plan which foresaw the simultaneous opening of ten new missions, but actually it did not begin until 1894-1895, when, after much debate and major changes, the government approved the foundation of no less than 29 missions, and the Recollects began to appoint their respective pastors. This project is the most ambitious pastoral plan ever cast by the Recollects in the Philippines. In it, we can see summarized all their deep concern for the poor and abandoned people. The Recollects were aware of the difficulties the plan entailed. Most of the proposed missions would rise in regions still unexplored with hundreds of deserters, robbers, murderers and every kind of undocumented people. But they were likewise conscious that among them were also thousands of simple people deprived of any civil and ecclesiastical services. Some of them were still pagan, and they wanted to come to their help.

In five decades the Recollect established in Negros no less than 56 parishes and mission stations: sixteen between 1848 and 1861; eleven from 1866 to 1889; and twenty-nine in the last seven years.

The Recollects in Cavite

Very different were the origin and the development of the Recollect activity in the province of Cavite. Cavite belonged to the archdiocese of Manila. There was neither a dearth of Filipino clergy to administer the parishes, as it was the case of Negros, nor had the parishes whose transfer was now sought, been founded or ever administered by the Recollects, as it was the case with those of Mindoro at the beginning of the century.

The first move came from the Recollect procurator in Madrid Father Guillermo Agudo who in 1848 requested that some parishes in Cavite, belonging to the secular clergy, be entrusted to the Order, for it possessed haciendas in Cavite and needed parishes near Manila in which to place the provincial councilors so that they might be close at hand to act as advisers of the prior provincial. Upon consultation, the Recollect archbishop José Aranguren saw no reason to deprive the secular clergy of parishes which they had administered satisfactorily for the past eighty years. Nevertheless, the governor general of the Philippines, Narciso Clavería, always close to the Recollects, ignored the opposition of the archbishop and on 9 March 1849 the queen, not content with granting three parishes to the Recollects, also gave four to the Dominicans who had not even requested them. Actually, the Recollects received only two parishes: Kawit or Cavite Viejo in 1851, and Silang in 1853. Later on, in 1856, they themselves founded the parish of Carmona.

The entity of the operation seems, therefore, rather limited. Nevertheless, it was to play a great role in the creation of Filipino nationalism. The Filipino clergy, led by Fr. Mariano Gómez in Cavite and Fr. Pedro Peláez as the overall moving force in Manila, reacted quickly, and for the first time, they were able to organize and put forward a campaign in Manila and Madrid to show both their loyalty to the Crown and the injustice they were undergoing. Their efforts did not attain the desired end, but they were not futile. They were the first test of their real force, and served to increase their Filipino awareness and their possibilities as national leaders. Many of these ideas were to be handled twelve years later by the same leaders in what can be seen as the second stage of this sad affair. In this second stage, rather than actors, the Recollects were victims. They did not seek nor want any confrontation with the secular clergy, but they were driven to accept it by force of circumstances.

The question began with the royal decree of 30 July 1859, which ordered the Recollects to cede the Island of Mindanao with all its parishes—twenty-seven in all—to the Society of Jesus, which by this same decree was allowed to return to the Philippines. Upon receiving this decree, the Recollects remained bewildered. Suddenly, without any previous advice and any possibility of self-defense, were expelled from the land which they considered as the “prettiest flower of their crown,” a land which they had evangelized and cultivated for more than two centuries, at first, along with the Jesuits, and afterwards, from 1768 to 1859, alone. They could not understand the real reason behind this lack of consideration which they did not believe to deserve. After all, in the last twelve years, they had established there eight new parishes and mission posts,

which in 1859 amounted to twenty-seven, while the Christian population had increased from 71,589 souls in 1838 to 125,861 in 1861. Moreover, they felt they themselves were able to cooperate in its future development. At that moment, they were coming out from the years marked with scarcity of personnel that had so heavily hindered their pastoral activity in the previous decades. After all, nobody knew the language and needs of Mindanao except the Recollects; and above all the congregation wanted to continue working for the good of the island.⁶

The passionate defense of its rights drawn up on 4 March 1861, by the Recollect provincial, Fr. Antonio Úbeda, did not reach its goal, which was no other than the cancellation of the disputed decree. But it moved the Spanish government to compensate the Recollects for the parishes they were deprived of in Mindanao with as many parishes in the archdiocese of Manila held by the secular clergy. Between 1863, when the Recollects received the parish of Antipolo in compensation for that of Basilan, and 1884, some twenty parishes, most of them located in the provinces of Tondo, Cavite, Laguna and Batangas, were transferred from the hands of the secular clergy to those of the Recollects as a compensation for as many parishes which the Recollects were forced to hand over to the Jesuits.

In 1888 the Recollects were able to put an end to this unhappy affair. Overcoming the opposition of the Jesuits, led by Fr. Pablo Pastells, the famous historian, the Recollects got the partial cancellation of the royal decree of 1859 and were allowed to continue in their parishes of Misamis, while the secular clergy could retain their Manila parishes.⁷

The Revolution

In 1898 the Augustinian Recollects were fully committed to the Philippines and fully identified with the interests of the archipelago. More than the 80% of their active members were working there, and even in 1897, when the Order had already lost seventeen of its members due to the revolution of 1896, the superiors still sent sixteen young Spanish religious to Manila. When the Spanish-American War broke out, there were in the Philippines around 330 Augustinian Recollects in charge of one million and a half souls. They were spread in four

⁶ O. D. CORPUZ, *The Roots of the Filipino Nation* 1, 508: "The injustice of 1861 decree would nourish the seed that would become the roots of Christian Filipino Nationalism."

⁷ *Petition of Fr. Minguella*, July 14, 1887, in M. CARCELLER, *Historia general* XII, 566-568; 663-564.

monasteries and 235 towns or settlements in Luzon, Mindanao, Negros, Mindoro, Palawan, Bohol, Romblon and several other minor islands.

This situation, a consequence of an evident lack of foresight on the part of the superiors of the province, foretold hard days ahead for the Order, which, in the probable case of being forced to abandon the Philippines, had very few contact points in other nations. In the different stages of the Revolution, thirty deaths increased the Order's bloody list in the archipelago and four others died in prison, while 91 fell to the Filipino patriots (forty in Negros and the others in Mindoro, Mindanao, Zambales and other places). The rest were either able to take refuge in the monasteries of Manila, already crowded with Spanish and American troops—the Americans occupied San Sebastian convent from August 1898 to 20 October 1899 for a monthly rent of 150 pesos—or were able to escape to Hong Kong, Macao or Singapore, until they found their way back to Spain. From September 1898 to August 1900 some 202 religious were repatriated.

Many Recollects were already exhausted, sick and discouraged. They felt betrayed, victims of a hatred which they thought they did not deserve and they could not understand. Some of them did not even find meaning in their priestly religious vocation anymore. They had been ordained as priests to go to the Philippine missions and the Philippines had always been the only horizon in their lives. Upon being forced to leave them, they felt uprooted both psychologically and pastorally, without strength and preparation to start new ways, as if "... their mission would have concluded with the loss of the Philippines."

Fortunately, there were some religious more enthusiastic and better prepared who did not break down but managed to overcome the adverse circumstances. On 23 August 1898, Fr. Patricio Adell left Manila with other seven religious, and after a venturesome trip via Hong Kong, Japan, Honolulu, San Francisco and Panamá they landed in La Guaira (Venezuela) on 7 December of the same year. Their example spread out and in the following months it was possible to send more expeditions to Brazil, Venezuela and Panama. At the end of 1899 there were in Brazil around forty religious, and another other twenty divided themselves between Venezuela (13) and Panama (8). In this way, the Philippine Revolution contributed to propagate the Order in America, where at present there are more than 600 religious, and the apostolic character that she had taken on in the archipelago was thus reaffirmed.

At the outbreak of the Revolution of 1898 there would be in the Philippines about 1,400 friars. Around 900 worked in parishes, of whom about 450 were

arrested and held as prisoners for few months. The number of those who died a violent death was forty-seven.⁸ To this figure we can add the twenty-four who perished in prison, out of hunger, due to ill treatments or, simply, to diseases contracted during their imprisonment and being insufficiently taken care of.

Consequences of the Revolution

In December 1899, after the decree of the Philippine President General Emilio Aguinaldo issued on 12 December 1899, most of the friars recovered their freedom and could take refuge in Manila. The remaining captives were set free in succeeding weeks. But to this date, hundreds of friars had already left the Philippines for Spain or for South America: 202 Recollects, 128 Franciscans, about 100 Dominicans, etc. At the end of 1899, more than sixty Recollects from the Philippines were already working in America—forty in Brazil, thirteen in Venezuela, eight in Panama and two in Colombia; and in the next years their presence would not stop growing.⁹

Many of the religious who remained in Manila would have also loved leaving the archipelago. But the Holy See continued relying on them and the first Apostolic Delegate to the Philippines Archbishop Placide-Louis Chapelle, did not authorize their departure.¹⁰ On the other hand, villages and towns began to lose fear and turned to the superiors in Manila for help: they badly needed friars to resume the spiritual care that had been exceedingly neglected in previous years. The reply of the superiors was not enthusiastic and they moved with caution, for the American authorities were rather contrary to the operation.

⁸ *The Taft Commission, Report*, 23, speaks of 40 while Cayetano Sánchez, 473, quoting Pablo Fernández, *History*, 314-326, raised them to 243. For the Augustinians, cf. Isacio Rodríguez, Jesús Álvarez, *Papeles filipinos II: La revolución filipina y los prisioneros españoles*, in *Archivo Agustino* 199 (1997) 176-77.

⁹ A. MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *Los agustinos recoletos en América*, in *Recollectio* 18 (1995) 43-84.

¹⁰ In August 1898 the papal nuncio in Madrid had already displayed opposition to the immediate substitution of the regular clergy by the secular priests, cf. *Despacho de Nava a Rampolla*, 13 August 1898, en ASV, AES, *Spagna*, fasc. 303, ff. 21-24. Rampolla must have welcome the opinion at once, since towards the end of October of the same year, he had already expressed his judgment to the generals of the orders, as can be deduced from a letter of the commissary general of the Recollects to the procurator in Rome, Madrid, 28 October 1898: "The provincial asks me to obtain recommendations from His Eminence Cardinal Rampolla; I replied: 'I would not dare,' since in Rome—I do not know if it may be said they are playing the violin, saying: 'Do not let the religious leave the Philippines nor abandon its parishes,'" AGOAR, box 65. On 4 January 1900, two days after his arrival in Manila, Placide-Louis Chapelle asserted this line of conduct, prohibiting the departure of the friars from the Philippines unless due to illness.

The superiors themselves have got acquainted with the dangers and difficulties their religious would find in the provinces. Some volunteers had not been able to master the situation and after some weeks of insecurity, persecution and hardships, they had gone back to Manila putting a hasty end to their experiment.¹¹ But at last, the popular insistence triumphed over the doubts of the superiors who, little by little, changed their minds and started welcoming some requests and sending their friars to the areas deemed quiet and safer.

By the middle of 1902 there were eighteen Recollects in the provinces, notwithstanding the reluctance of the new Apostolic Delegate, Giovanni Battista Guidi, who never believed in the possibilities of the regular clergy,¹² as well as in the poverty of the parishes and the systematic opposition of the Aglipayans. This schismatic group took advantage of the scarcity of Catholic priests. Supported by local leaders, they took over many churches and parish edifices. In 1904 the Recollects grew to twenty-nine, and in 1906 to forty-five.¹³

¹¹ On 8 April 1899 Fr. Tiburcio Fernández was sent to Talisay to accompany Fr. Fernando Cuenca and assess the situation, to investigate whether the Recollects could be accommodated and how many in Negros and if he himself would be allowed to settle in Concepción where he had been pastor before the Revolution (1894-1898). On July 2, he was already back in Manila, AM, leg. 50 (cf. *Necrología del p. Eusebio Valderrama*; also J. L. SÁENZ, 291-292). Valentín Utande, Bernardino García, Calixto Gaspar and Marcos Beltrán were denied permission to go back to Bohol. Juan Ruiz and Francisco Ortuoste were not allowed to remain in Cebu, cf. SÁENZ, 226; neither were those sent to Romblon, cf. SÁENZ, 232.

¹² About the return to the provinces and the reluctance of the Apostolic Delegate Giovanni Battista Guidi, cf. *Letters of Fr. Celestino Yoldi* (31 January 1903): “He always believes that nobody must leave to the provinces because of the dangers there, so much so that those who are in the municipalities are in the same condition or almost better than before: the fear and permission are chiefly found here in Manila,” and Fr. Eleuterio Aranda (13 January 1903) to Fr. Mariano Bernad, AGOAR, caja 76,1 and 15 November 1903: Fr. Celestino Yoldi to Fr. Mariano Bernad: He alludes to a letter from Taft declaring that religious can go wherever they want. He spoke of parishes that could be taken over, AGOAR, caja 76, 2. He gives the list of those parishes that might be administered, AGOAR, caja 76, 1. Also letters of Fr. Eleuterio Aranda to Fr. Iñigo Narro, AGOAR.

¹³ A. MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *Los agustinos recoletos en Filipinas, 375 años de presencia ininterumpida*, in *Missionalia Hispanica* 39 (1982) 36-37. The first Recollects dispatched to the provinces were Fr. Fernando Hernández and Fr. Hipólito Navascués who left for Zambales in May 1901; later on, in December they were followed by Fr. Agustín Pérez and Fr. Alejandro Echazarra. In July, it was the turn of Fr. Marcelino Simonena and Fr. Javier Áriz. The former settled in Talisay with Fr. Cuenca; the latter substituted Fr. Domingo de Pablo in Cuyo where very soon (October 1901) he was joined by Fr. Pablo Manuel García and Fr. Eduardo Abaurrea. In September 1901 Fr. Cipriano Chocarro and Fr. Pedro Jiménez settled in Jimenez (Misamis Occidental); and Fr. Eusebio Valderrama and Fr. Angel Quintana, later replaced by Juan Lorenzo in May 1902 in San Carlos (Negros Occidental).

A clear sign of the renewed interest of the Recollects in the Islands was the official visit of their prior provincial who was then based in Madrid, Spain. From 6 April to 12 June 1906, the provincial Father Tomás Roldán visited the convents of Intramuros, San Sebastian, Cavite and Cebu as well as the parishes of Negros Occidental, refraining from visiting other regions for fear of aggravating the already painful plight of the religious. In the provincial visit, he spoke with the religious, took note of their material and moral needs, gave orders to repair some houses, and decided to open two schools in Manila, the first in San Sebastian for boys and the second in Santa Rita for girls. The school one for the girls was to be entrusted to the religious sisters of the Beaterio de Santa Rita (indistinctly known as Beaterio de San Sebastián).

When the prior provincial returned to Spain, he gave a detailed account of the situation to the provincial council and, in agreement with that, he decided to strengthen the presence of the Order in the archipelago. In November 1906, Father Roldán dispatched eight new religious and, the following year, another seven. Six more religious would arrive in the Philippines the next year.

The life of the missionaries in the provinces was very harsh. The means of subsistence was meager. The government salary was no longer existent. The people were impoverished and had been unaccustomed to cooperate in the sustenance of their priests. In some places, as in Culion and Coron, the missionaries suffered from hunger. The territorial jurisdiction of the parishes was extremely over-extended—the parish priest of San Carlos, for instance, was in charge of half the eastern coast of Negros Island—from Escalante in the north to Tayasan in the south.

Not smaller were the areas covered by those working in Zambales, Mindoro and Palawan,¹⁴—and to top it all, there was hardly a town without a hostile leader who would obstruct their sincere pastoral effort with a thousand tricks.

The superiors did not stop recommending to them patience and prudence. They were to take control of themselves, to avoid rush moods and any act of indiscreet zeal, and to be ready to suffer. For the time being their first occupation

¹⁴ Fr. Fernando Fernández was to distribute his activity as ambulant missionary: he exercised his mission among the residents of Agno—center and base of his missionary sallies—Bani, San Isidro, Dasol, Balincaguín and, sporadically, Zaragoza, cf. SÁENZ, p. 245. Fr. Pedro Pérez took charge of the area from Kabangkalan to Campomanes, 80 miles. There were ten parishes in that part of the province before the Revolution, cf. SÁENZ, 308.

should be to inquire about the situation and, above all, not look back nor do comparisons with the past.¹⁵

Nonetheless, with the fathers gradually securing position and their ability to earn the love of the people, the anticlericalism gradually receded.



¹⁵ Letter of Fr. Vicar Manuel Mateo, 22 September 1903: “Deben formarse la composición de lugar de que van a misionar tierra extraña y sin volver la cabeza atrás (a lo pasado) para no convertirse en estatuas de sal; no deben contar con más influencia que la que les proporcionen los sufrimientos, privaciones, etc.; quiere decirse que si algo más hallare, eso tendrá de más”, en SÁENZ, 244. Letter of Fr. Manuel Mateo to Fr. José Abad, Jiménez, Misamis (5 August 1904): “Today what is really most convenient is to be very calm and to do what good may be possible at the moment; at worse, we are not to take them to heaven,” cf. SÁENZ, 289; “Be equipped with patience, since the quandary on buildings—though how urgent must be its resolution—does not lie in the hands of the bishops” (289-290). This is the same advice given by Msgr. Andrés Ferrero, Recollect bishop of Jaro, in May 1902 to Fr. Pedro Pérez and Fr. Melchor Ardanaz who were going to La Castellana and Isabela, cf. SÁENZ, p. 299, and in 1905 the bishop of Jaro’s letter to Fr. Tiburcio Fernández, cf. p. 309.