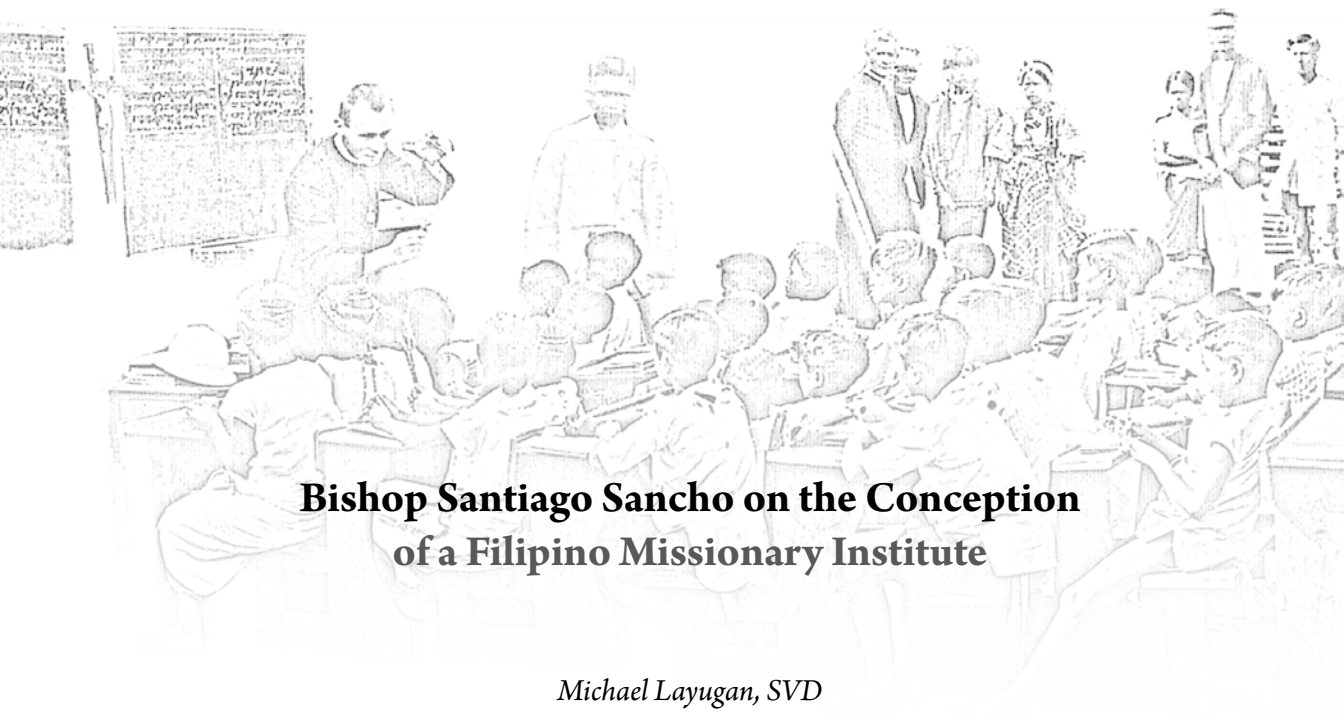




Bishop Santiago Sancho on the Conception of a Filipino Missionary Institute

Michael Layugan, SVD

The article looked into the exchange of letters between Bishop Santiago Sancho of the Diocese of Nueva Segovia and the missionaries of the Society of the Divine Word concerning the idea of establishing a Filipino missionary institute. Extracts of these letters, which were written mainly in German and in Spanish, were translated into English and were quoted extensively to present the positions of the proponents. Furthermore, the author argued that the establishment of a Filipino missionary institute was already conceived by the Bishop and was also talked about, through correspondence, among members of the Society who expressed different points of view. The reluctance of the Society to immediately engage in the project was due to the fact that there were various aspects of the undertaking that needed to be resolved that would be crucial for its continued existence. While Bishop Sancho's dream, the *Instituto Misioneros Filipinos*, was not realized during his lifetime, the idea that a Filipino missionary institute should be founded and supported by the bishops of the Philippines – which was proposed by the provincial superior of the Society of the Divine Word – conveyed a prophetic significance.

Keywords: *history, missionary, church, correspondence, institute, Filipino, foundation*

Introduction

This article presents the exchange of correspondence between the bishop of the Diocese of Nueva Segovia and the missionaries of the Society of the Divine Word concerning the establishment of a Filipino missionary institute.¹ The letters and reports of the SVD missionaries – which are often replete with graphic and extensive narrative – enable one to look at the facts of historical significance as they are. Lengthy quotations from these documents which have been translated into English are incorporated into the text to bring the focus on the protagonists to let them speak for themselves and enter into a conversation with the reader.

Upon the invitation of Bishop Dennis Joseph Dougherty of the Diocese of Nueva Segovia, the first German SVD missionaries arrived in Abra in 1909.²

¹ When the Diocese of Nueva Segovia was established in 1595, the seat was in Lallo, Cagayan. At the request of Bishop Juan de la Fuente Yepes, the see was transferred to Vigan, Ilocos Sur in 1758 where it remained to the present. During this period, the Diocese of Nueva Segovia comprised the provinces of Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, Abra, La Union, Pangasinan, five towns of Tarlac and Mountain Province. The Society of the Divine Word was founded by Arnold Janssen in 1875 as Germany's concrete response to the missionary activities of the Roman Catholic Church during a period of religious turmoil known as the *Kulturkampf*. Since it was not possible for him to establish a mission in his own country, he went to the Netherlands and started a mission house in Steyl along the Maas River where many SVD missionaries underwent their formation in preparation for their work in the missions around the world. While the *Kulturkampf* made it difficult for Janssen to establish the mission house in Germany, the arrival of the SVD missionaries to the Philippines was not due to the *Kulturkampf* in the sense that they had to go to the Islands because they were being persecuted in their own country. The abbreviation SVD stands for *Societas Verbi Divini*. The members are known as Divine Word Missionaries or SVDs. Today more than 10,000 sisters, brothers and priests of the Arnoldus Family come from Europe, America, Africa, Asia and Oceania. Fr. Antonio Pernia, SVD, the incumbent Filipino Superior General has mentioned in his report to the XVIth General Chapter of the Society of the Divine Word in 2006: "With a total number of 6,102 members in the Society, we now constitute the seventh largest male religious congregation in the Church. This number includes all members, that is, members in final vows, members in temporary vows and novices. Of the then largest male religious congregations in the Church, the SVD is the only congregation that is growing in numbers. All the others report a decrease in numbers... If the comparison is made among those congregations which are considered 'properly missionary congregations' (the so-called *ad gentes* congregations), then the picture looks even better. We constitute the biggest missionary congregation of men in the Church today." See Niels Johansen and Tom Ascherman, *SVD Mission 2006: Province Reports for the XVI General Chapter* (Rome: SVD Publications-Generalate, 2006), 475-476. The bulk of the letters are found in the *Archivio Storico* (AS) of the *Archivum Generale Societatis Verbi Divini* (AGSVD) of the Society of the Divine Word in Rome.

² Dennis Joseph Dougherty was the first American bishop of Nueva Segovia. He arrived in Vigan on 22 October 1903 bringing along five American secular priests. One of them, Edgar Cook, died within one year. The other four priests eventually became bishops. James Jordan Carroll, his vicar general and financial secretary was his successor in Vigan; John McGinley became bishop of Nueva Cáceres; James Mckloskey became the first bishop of Zamboanga and Daniel Gereke became bishop of Tucson in the U.S.A. The emergence of newly established congregations in Europe sparked a renewed interest towards missionary undertakings. It was within this context that Arnold Janssen founded the

The two missionaries, who were appointed for the Philippine mission of the Society of the Divine Word, were welcomed by Bishop James Jordan Carroll who succeeded Bishop Dougherty who was appointed Bishop of the Diocese of Jaro.³ In spite of the poor living conditions of the region where the SVDs worked and the resistance they encountered, the missionaries stood their ground and continued to extend their jurisdiction to new frontiers in the Abra mission. Before the outbreak of the First World War, the SVD missionaries took charge of the pastoral care of several mission stations in Abra. When the conflagration broke out, several German missionaries were deported to the United States in 1918. Their journey across the Pacific Ocean was an indescribable ordeal.⁴ For the German missionaries, it was a period of uncertainty. Because of the deportation, questions were raised whether to keep the SVD missions or to withdraw the remaining missionaries and give up the Philippine mission altogether. Amid this confusion was a conspicuous indecision of some missionaries who wanted to give up the SVD missions as shown by the correspondence between the Generalate and the missionaries. Nevertheless, there were others who evoked the triumph of the human capacity to be resolute, persevering and optimistic, as shown by those who strongly supported the retention of the missions in Abra, which eventually persuaded the Superior General and his Council to decide in

Society of the Divine Word with a distinctive missionary character, which was to venture to foreign lands, as Germany's contribution to the Catholic Church's missionary undertaking. The scenario that brought the Society to work in the Philippines was a gamut of socio-political and religious events that had tremendous repercussions in all aspects of Philippine Society. While the evangelizing efforts of Spanish missionaries gained success in many parts of the archipelago, there was little or no success at all in the southern region and in the remote mountain ranges where communities flourished with non-Christian inhabitants. The defeat of Spain and the establishment of a new colonial government significantly changed the relationship between the Church and the State as the separation between these two institutions became evident. As many Spanish missionaries left the country, Catholic parishes were without pastors. This situation was exacerbated by the scarcity of the Filipino Clergy, the rise of an independent Filipino national church and the introduction of Protestantism in the country. These events caught the Catholic Church unawares which prompted its hierarchy to seek the assistance of various Congregations in Europe. It was in these circumstances that eventually led the Society to work in the Philippines. The bishops in the Philippines wrote letters to the Founder with an urgent appeal to send his missionaries to the Philippines.

³ Bishop James Jordan Carroll was born on 23 December 1862. He was ordained a priest on 15 June 1889. On 21 June 1908, he was appointed bishop of Nueva Segovia in Vigan, Ilocos Sur and was ordained bishop on 14 February 1909. He resigned on 26 October 1912 and died on 4 April 1913. With regard to the beginnings of the SVD mission in the Philippines, see Fritz Bornemann et al., *A History of our Society*, Analecta SVD 54 (Rome: Collegium Verbi Divini, 1981), 328-344. See also Josef Schmitz, *Die Abra-Mission auf Nordluzon, Philippinen*, Studia Instituti Missiologici Societatis Verbi Divini 3 (St. Augustin: Steyler Verlag, 1964) and Michael Layugan, "Fr. Ludwig Beckert: Fundator Missionis Philippinensis," *Verbum SVD* 51 (2010): 193-226.

⁴ For the report concerning the voyage across the Pacific Ocean see Wilhelm Finneemann, *Von den Philippinen nach Nord Amerika*, "Rome, Archivum Generale Societatis Verbi Divini (AGSVD), *Archivio Storico* (AS), Raccoglitore (R) 730/I.

their favor allowing the missionaries to return to their missions in Abra after the war was over.⁵

The General Visitation of the Superior General, Fr. Wilhelm Gier, between 1921 and 1922 ushered in new vistas in decision making considering the fact that his first hand experience of the missionary situations influenced in one way or the other the decisions that were crucial for the development of the SVD mission in the country.⁶ The willingness of the Society to accept other pastoral work outside of Abra and to venture to new apostolates, the readiness to respond to the urgent needs of the Philippine Church and the increase of personnel over the years played a decisive role in the expansion of the SVD mission in the Philippines during this period. The acceptance of pastoral commitments in other dioceses extended the outreach of the SVD while its administration of seminaries marked its commitment to the formation of the Filipino Clergy.

During the administration of Fr. Josef Grendel, the mission of the Society of the Divine Word in the Philippines expanded geographically.⁷ The SVDs were found not just in the remote villages in Abra but also as far as Cebu in the southern part of the archipelago. Their mission also evolved from the administration of parishes to a greater involvement in the formation of diocesan priests and Filipino SVDs.⁸ Another conspicuous development of their mission was their engagement in the school apostolate. A significant development occurred not just in the mission of the Society but also in its members. With the arrival of SVDs coming from various countries, the Society achieved its international character. There was also an increase in the number of Filipino SVD candidates.

⁵ See Michael Layugan, "The Deportation of the German SVD Missionaries during the First World War," *Verbum SVD* 52 (2011): 47-77.

⁶ Fr. Wilhelm Gier was elected the third superior general of the Society of the Divine Word on 28 September 1920, for a term of twelve years. He was general assistant from 1932 until 1943. He died in Steyl on 18 November 1951.

⁷ Fr. Josef Grendel was born on 6 January 1878. He was elected the fourth superior general of the Society of the Divine Word during the General Chapter in 1932. It was during his tenure that the question concerning the foundation of a Filipino missionary institute was dealt with. He died on 10 February 1951.

⁸ During this period, the SVDs administered the *Seminario de la Inmaculada Concepcion* in Vigan, Ilocos Sur and the Mary Help of Christians in Binmaley, Pangasinan. Christ the King Mission Seminary for SVD candidates was also established in New Manila in 1934. For the history of the foundation of Christ the King Mission Seminary see Manfred Müller, *Die Gründung des Christkönigs-Missionshauses in Manila*, Analecta SVD 45 (Rome: Collegium Verbi Divini, 1979).

Bishop Santiago Sancho's Dream

Bishop Santiago Sancho⁹ had been contemplating to erect an institute which would be established in his diocese. In his request to the Superior General of the Society of the Divine Word, he made known his intention in these words:

Some five years ago, I have been planning to start a work which, according to the views of reliable people, is a necessity during these times when missionary work has reached its great intensity. During this lapse of time, fervent prayers have been offered in order to attain enlightenment from the Lord and the strength and the encouragement to be able to begin the organization of an 'INSTITUTO MISIONEROS FILIPINOS' in this Diocese. It seems that it is already the right time to start this work so that after asking for more illumination from the Holy Spirit, I have decided to take the necessary steps to ask the required permission from Your Reverence for Fr. Arthur Malin, SVD, an American, who is currently in the novitiate at Christ the King Seminary in New Manila to help me in the beginning of this work, since it is a work whose primary purpose is to engage in the missions.¹⁰

In order to persuade the Superior General about the significance of this venture, the Bishop contended:

The Philippines, through the mercy of God, is a Catholic country in the midst of many heathens of the Orient, and it is already the time to reciprocate this so great and invaluable gift of radiating faith, hope and charity among brethren who still groan under the shadows of paganism and infidelity. It is true that this task is quite enormous for a small group of generous souls to realize it, but we trust that with the help of several small groups of missionaries, little by little, it will rise further off into a great venture. It is also true that some religious congregations have begun to admit indigenous missionaries into their ranks

⁹ Bishop Santiago Caragnan Sancho from San Vicente Libmanan, Camarines Sur was born on 23 May 1880. At the age of 12, he enrolled as an extern at a *colegio-seminario* in 1892 and entered the *Seminario Conciliar de Nueva Cáceres* in 1897. He was ordained priest on 4 October 1903 and was appointed bishop of the Diocese of Tuguegarao on 5 February 1917. Ordained bishop on 6 June 1917 by Apostolic Delegate Giuseppe Petrelli, he succeeded Bishop Maurice Foley, who was the first ordinary of the Diocese of Tuguegarao which was erected in 1910. Bishop Sancho was appointed bishop of the Diocese of Nueva Segovia on 22 April 1927. When the aforementioned diocese was elevated to an archdiocese on 29 June 1951, he became its first archbishop. He died on 12 October 1966. See Friedrich Scharpf, "The Bishops of Nueva Segovia," *The Ilocos Review* 21 (1989): 75-122.

¹⁰ Sancho to Grendel, 28 July 1939, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/IV. The quotation is a translation of the Spanish text. The work of Fr. Malin in the proposed institute according to the bishop was temporary and would only last for a few years. Bishop Sancho wrote: "Al permitirme hacer esta petici[ó]n a V.R. es que estoy seguro de que V.R. aun en el caso de tener alg[ú]n plan de ocupar al P. Malin, en alg[ú]n trabajo especial, no dejará de ayudarme en esta importante empresa, ya que se trata de la gloria de Dios y de la salvaci[ó]n de las almas. Por otra parte, se trata solamente de un permiso temporal y limitado para unos cuantos años." See Sancho to Grendel, 28 July 1939.

like the Jesuits, the Franciscans, the Dominicans and the Society of the Divine Word but they are still few and should be reinforced by another group, a local institute, to attract a large number of priests.¹¹

The Statutes of the Proposed *Instituto de Misioneros Filipinos*

Fr. Arthur Malin¹² was requested by Bishop Sancho to prepare a draft of the statutes of the proposed institute. The draft, which was written in English, was translated into Spanish and was sent by the Bishop to the Superior General of the Society of the Divine Word. Quoted at length, the Statutes stated the following structure and regulations of the proposed institute:

1. While there is no other available building, the parish rectory of Bantay [Ilocos Sur], introducing the necessary improvements, has been chosen in order to accommodate a dozen or more young aspirants to the priesthood with a view to work in the missions;
2. These young people who have completed the seventh grade with grades not lower than 80 as general average and are legitimate children of Christian families of good standing will be admitted *gratis et amore* (board and lodging and tuition fees). They must have a good physical constitution for which they will be examined by the doctor of the *Seminario de la Inmaculada Concepcion*;
3. These chosen young men will attend classes at the *Seminario de la Inmaculada* in Vigan, under certain conditions according to the norms set by the Protector Bishop of this Institute, depending on the availability of resources and means to finish the regular courses for the ecclesiastical career;
4. These young men, if they persevere through the grace of God, before receiving their first tonsure and minor orders or before the sub-diaconate, as appropriate, will enter into a CONTRACT to follow the Rules of the '*INSTITUTO DE MISIONEROS FILIPINOS*' with simple and temporary vows for a period of not less than TEN (10) years or until

¹¹ Sancho to Grendel, 28 July 1939. The quotation is a translation of the Spanish text.

¹² Fr. Arthur Malin was born in La Crosse, Wisconsin on 26 March 1902. He professed his first vows in 1926 and his perpetual vows in 1930. He was ordained a priest in 1931. As a missionary to the Philippines, he was engaged in school work. After the Second World War, he was appointed for India in 1947. He founded several organizations for the handicapped. When he returned to the Philippines, he continued to work for the disadvantaged and the handicapped. He also organized the Caritas Manila's Special School for the Retarded. He retired at the *Villa Cristo Rey* in Christ the King Mission Seminary where he died on 15 April 1980. See *Index Defunctorum Societatis Verbi Divini 1875-2010* (Rome: SVD Generalate, 2011).

they will be admitted by the bishop or ordinary of their diocese (Nueva Segovia, Tuguegarao, Lingayen);

5. After ten (10) years, computed from the ordination of the priests, those who want to serve the diocese to which they belong may apply for incardination to the bishop, and if they are accepted, they will be free *ipso facto* from the commitments made to the *INSTITUTO DE MISIONEROS FILIPINOS*; otherwise, they will remain members of and under the Rules or Constitutions and have the rights and duties as members;
6. The priests of the Institute will dedicate themselves to: a) give missions in the diocese of Nueva Segovia, Lingayen and Tuguegarao, during Lent and on similar occasions at the request of the parish priests with the approval of their respective bishop; b) catechize children in the public schools and in the villages close to the house of the Institute so that if possible they should spend the night in that house and not outside of it;
7. The community life of the Institute will consist of: a) the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament according to the manner of the Fathers of the 'ORATORY OF ST. PHILIP' or the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament; b) apologetic studies and preparation of materials for the missions according to the method of the Pauline Fathers in America or the Redemptorist Fathers who already work in some dioceses of the country;
8. In the beginning, they will be supported through donations and alms and later on with what they have already collected from donations and also from a modest compensation of their ministerial work.¹³

The institute would be under the patronage of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The seminarians of the institute would study at the *Seminario de la Inmaculada Concepcion* in Vigan which was under the direction of the SVDs. The Bishop hoped to start the institute during the school year 1940-1941 with ten or fifteen candidates.

The Correspondence: The Exchange of Views

Fr. Arthur Malin supported the proposal of the Bishop to establish a Filipino missionary institute. In this regard, he sent a letter to Fr. Josef Grendel on 5 August 1939 stating his willingness to be involved in the project:

¹³ "Proyecto de un Instituto de Misioneros Filipinos," Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/IV. The quotation is a translation of the Spanish text.

I am heartily in agreement with the objectives mentioned by His Excellency and I hope that his petition to you will merit your consideration and generous approval. I understand that the local Provincial council has also written to you but not in an encouraging way as they do not feel able to spare a father for this work when so many other works are in need of personnel. I do not presume to judge their viewpoint adequately but under the present circumstances of my work I am quite sure that my services are not necessary or irreplaceable. I believe I wrote to you some time in December explaining how important was the work of preaching missions and retreats amongst the student populations here in the Islands. I am now engaged in this work and have been released from teaching duties to do this work almost exclusively. I am no longer teaching and if my desires were asked I should be glad if I never would have to teach again as I find the work of teaching unsuited to my temperament and personal convictions.¹⁴

In order to begin the project, Fr. Malin made the suggestion to go to America and Australia to collect the necessary funds:

His Excellency has sent you the rough outline of the proposed Institute and wishes to have me undertake the work already in June. However, I have made it clear to His Excellency that I would not feel justified in starting the work until I collected at least five thousand dollars from my friends in America and Australia. To do this more effectively and more expeditiously I should like to go personally to America and Australia to appeal for the funds.¹⁵

As regards his role in the institute and his relationship with the Society of the Divine Word, Fr. Malin had this to say:

Since the local superiors of the Society are not acquainted with the ways and means that will have to be used in promoting the work of the Institute and since the Bishop will consider it as a diocesan work there may be cause of misunderstanding and disagreement between the Bishop and the Society superiors if there is no line drawn now in the very beginning as to the limits of jurisdiction in the work. I would suggest that in my private religious life

¹⁴ Malin to Grendel, 5 August 1939, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/IV. Fr. Malin wrote: "Now to preach the word of God has ever been my consuming desire, it being the motive that brought me into the Society and caused me to ask for the work of the foreign mission field. However my increasing knowledge of the Society has brought me up against the fact that the Society is more and more inclining to pure educational pursuits at least here in the Islands. And at one time the teaching work so depressed me that to relieve myself from it I took steps even to leave the Society and to join a stricter contemplative order, which at the time seemed the only door left open to me for leaving teaching work. The Holy Ghost fortunately seems to have prevented that consummation for what it now appears to have been a further design for my unworthy self." Malin to Grendel, 5 August 1939.

¹⁵ Malin to Grendel, 5 August 1939.

I be subject to the rules of the Society and that anything in connection with the administration be arranged between the Bishop and myself, since the rules for the Institute will differ greatly from the rules of our Society.

My position would be something similar to a parish priest who in his private life is subject to the supervision of his religious superior but in his parish activities is subject to the Bishop. This relationship I desire to retain with the Society as long as the proposed Institute has no papal approval or has no perpetual vows, as I desire to remain in the bonds of the holy vows of religion. The bishop has asked for my assistance only for the space of a few years, but I am prepared to devote my whole life to the work if God deigns to permit me and if I may thereby add to His glory by my humble efforts.¹⁶

He further remarked:

I should like to urge upon you dear Father Superior and upon the Fathers of the Council that this is a wonderful opportunity for the Society to show its disinterestedness in any cause for the promotion of God's glory. It is true it would have been more for the glory of the Society if this movement could have been developed within the frame of our dear Society but as this has been shown impossible by experience up to now the Society can still consider it as an unselfish act to help foster this native congregation even if it means that it must be independent and separate in its existence. Still the new fledgling will look up to the Society of the Divine Word as its true mother, without which it could not have come into existence. It will be a heroic act of unselfishness on the part of the Society and proclaim to all that the Society is not only looking for its own glory and expansion but is willing to give way to another if it sees that the glory of God will be served as well.¹⁷

To bolster his proposition, Fr. Malin also mentioned in his letter that the enterprise had the approval of Bishop Constant Jurgens of the Diocese of Tuguegarao and Bishop Mariano Madriaga of the Diocese of Lingayen. The two bishops were willing to take up the project in case Bishop Sanchez was no longer interested to pursue it.¹⁸ In a post script of the letter, he wrote: "I do not know whether it has been made clear to you that the Bishop expects me to be financially independent of him. He will only provide the house and I must collect the funds. This I am willing to do and the sooner that I may be permitted to leave for America the sooner I hope to have that initial obstacle removed by the will of God."¹⁹

¹⁶ Malin to Grendel, 5 August 1939.

¹⁷ Malin to Grendel, 5 August 1939.

¹⁸ Malin to Grendel, 5 August 1939.

¹⁹ Malin to Grendel, 5 August 1939.

Fr. Michael Anspach, the first provincial superior of the newly erected Philippine Province, also expressed his opinion about the matter to the Superior General:

The Bishop of Vigan has been busy for years with the founding of a local association of priests. He told me last year that he had abandoned the plan because his clergy did not show the right understanding. When Fr. Malin explained to him his ideas, he immediately found the enthusiastic approval of the Bishop because His Excellency thought that the financial foundation will be secured through the collaboration of Fr. Malin. As far as I know Bishop Sancho knows about this very important fact.²⁰

After a meeting with the members of his Council, the Provincial Superior forwarded to the Superior General this report:

The Provincial Council dealt with the matter only yesterday because of my long absence in Manila. The unanimous opinion of the Council was: 1) that Fr. Malin, although the cause is good in itself, deserved to be rebuked because he had been so far involved with the concerned bishops without prior permission. A rejection will certainly create trouble. 2) that Fr. Malin is not the right man to establish and continue this important and difficult undertaking. The reasons given were the lack of the spirit of sacrifice and instability. 3) that the Bishop expects that Fr. Malin will finance the enterprise. Fr. Malin says that the Bishop did not quite understand him. It is clear, however, that he offered to recruit benefactors for the enterprise through a trip to Australia and America. 4) that the proposition, that is, everything is free of charge in the Seminary especially for those applicants, who because of poverty cannot enter in the diocesan seminary, cannot be endorsed because of the given reasons and only slightly because of an inferior element getting into the proposed foundation. 5) the council does not believe that the prospect of the foundation will have a solid development just like the local sister-congregations, although they are under the direction of the Jesuits and the Augustinians, cannot really make progress. 6) it seems that the crucial understanding of the special tasks of the proposed foundation namely popular mission and adoration does not exist in the Philippines although Fr. Malin strangely asserts that the Filipinos are especially called to the contemplative life and therefore also for adoration. The Redemptorists have none of their candidates reached their goal until now supposedly because the task of the order does not agree

²⁰ Anspach to Grendel, 6 August 1939, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/IV. The quotation is a translation of the German text. Fr. Michael Anspach was born on 13 April 1894. He was the Regional Superior of the Philippine Region of the Society of the Divine Word between 1936 and 1938 and was the first Provincial Superior of the newly created Philippine Province from 1938 to 1944. He died on 19 May 1944.

with them. 7) It is not enough to have Fr. Malin as the one responsible or as bread winner for the enterprise. One or other priests should still be added. We, however, do not have an abundance of such people.

With all these considerations put together, the Provincial Council cannot recommend the project. The main reasons concern the eligibility of the person and the apprehension regarding its financial burden on the Society or at least on one of its members and also the reputation of the Society with the eventual failure of the enterprise.

Should the Generalate come to the same decision, we then ask that the reasons for our refusal should not be given in order not to jeopardize our relationship with the bishop which until now has been very good. The simplest solution would be to send Fr. Malin to Australia, as it was intended and also to notify the Bishop.²¹

Fr. Grendel, in his letter to Fr. Malin, spoke in favor of the proposal of the Bishop.²² Nonetheless, he pointed out that since Fr. Malin had been requested to be involved in the undertaking, he would have to face and foresee a life decision with regard to his role in the institute and his membership in the Society. He also observed that the idea of the bishop concerning the institute did not correspond with that of Fr. Malin:

The Bishop further expressed certain thoughts and intentions concerning the nature and structure of the proposed institute. These do not quite agree with those you now hold dear. You must now of course put aside your own thoughts. You should not even be the founder of the institute but only as an agent to execute the thoughts and intentions of the founder who is the Bishop. If you do not have a very clear vision from the outset and adhere to a firm direction, then very serious difficulties can arise sooner or later for you and for the cause.²³

²¹ Anspach to Grendel, 6 August 1939. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

²² Fr. Grendel pointed out: „Die eventuellen Bedenken und Schwierigkeiten sind, um das sofort zu sagen, keinesfalls jene, die Sie vermuten und die Sie in Ihrem Briefe dann zu entkräften suchen. Wenn die Neugründung möglich und aussichtsreich wäre, so würden wir sie gewiß auf jede uns mögliche Weise unterstützen. Am wenigsten würden wir uns daran behindern lassen dadurch, daß etwa diese Neugründung nicht ein Werk unserer Gesellschaft wäre. Gott Dank war und ist in unserer Gesellschaft so viel apostolische und kirchliche Gesinnung und Einstellung, daß wir auch nicht einen Augenblick von den Momenten aus uns irgendwie hindern ließen, etwas Gutes zu fördern, einerlei, von wem es ausgeht. Auch die Einstellung des dortigen Provinzialrates ist gewiß keine andere. So würden wir auch selbst unter eigenen und auch großen Opfern einen Pater dafür zur Verfügung stellen, wenn die dafür in Betracht kommenden kirchlichen Stellen das für notwendig oder wenigstens sehr wünschenswert hielten und wenn die Sache selber alles in allem möglich und aussichtsreich ist.“ See Grendel to Malin, 2 September 1939, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/IV.

²³ Grendel to Malin, 2 September 1939. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

Fr. Grendel expressed his reservations because of certain aspects of the proposal that remained vague:

The fundamental character of the institute should be clarified and defined, namely, whether it is also directed to the foreign mission or only the domestic mission. The letter of the Bishop more likely points to the first while the provisional statutes refer only to the second. Compared with these more basic questions, all the details mentioned in your letter turn up such as the possible promotional trip to America or even more time designated for it as well as other personal arrangements for you for the time being. These questions need to be considered when the basic preliminary questions have been really clarified first.²⁴

Fr. Grendel – after receiving the reports on the unsuitability of Fr. Malin for the enterprise – advised Fr. Anspach to inform the bishop as regards his personal views about Fr. Malin.²⁵ He also mentioned: “It is of course of crucial importance whether the Most Reverend [Apostolic] Delegate knows the matter and what he stands up for and the other bishops as well. It all depends whether they really want to promote or join the cause, that is, they do not oppose it and for the rest we wait for the outcome.”²⁶

The letter of Bishop Sancho dated 28 July 1939 was received by the Superior General on 3 September 1939. The Superior General conveyed his views on the matter to Bishop Sancho:

The idea of founding an ‘Instituto de Misioneros Filipinos’ harmonizes so perfectly with the interests of Holy Mother the Church in the Philippines as also with the views and directions of the highest ecclesiastical authorities that we can only rejoice over it. We on our part are gladly ready to do all in our power to help lead this idea to its realization. We therefore beg your Lordship to view all our further considerations in this light, for they are intended solely to clear up all preliminary questions as far as possible and to determine all the prerequisites necessary for a successful issue. If an attempt in this matter should miscarry, it would namely not only lead to immediate unfortunate results but at the same time impede and jeopardize the matter for the future.

²⁴ Grendel to Malin, 2 September 1939. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

²⁵ Fr. Grendel remarked: „Er ist ein Mann vieler und schöner Pläne und sofort für eine Sache begeistert; wenn dann aber eine neue auftritt, läßt er bald von ihr ab. Es wäre wohl gut, wenn Sie auch dem hochw. Herrn Bischof diese mehr persönlichen Bedenken klar und offen sagen würden: früher oder später würden diese Eigenschaften von P. M[alin] ja doch zutage treten und dann würde man allzu leicht einen eventuellen Fehlschlag der Sache auf sein Konto und damit auf das der Gesellschaft buchen.“ See Grendel to Anspach, 2 September 1939, Rome, AGSVD, AS, 730/IV.

²⁶ Grendel to Anspach, 2 September 1939. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

I judge it will be best if I communicate our considerations and questions in this matter to Father Provincial Anspach, so that he can take them up with your Lordship personally. In this manner, I am sure, the matter will be cleared up much more easily and securely than through correspondence. Father Provincial Anspach will then inform me of the outcome of this discussion.

Meanwhile I shall not cease to beg the good God to grant us the grace clearly to recognize His holy will in this matter and to help us to carry it out to the best of our abilities, for the welfare of the Church in the Philippines and, in fact, of the Church in all the Far East.²⁷

Fr. Grendel instructed Fr. Anspach to tell the Bishop about Fr. Malin: "We are now waiting for the outcome of your meeting with the Most Reverend Bishop. You must clearly express to him your concerns about the personal suitability of Fr. Malin. That was not possible for us because we do not know him directly."²⁸

Fr. Malin received the letter of the Superior General on 2 September 1939 which was given to him by Fr. Anspach. In response to the letter, Fr. Malin wrote:

To begin with I must thank you for your encouraging words with which you began your letter and I was very pleased to note that the fears I had in regard to the willingness of the Society to spare a Father for this work were without foundation. It was this I had felt would be the chief difficulty since the superiors here would be pardonably selfish in giving up my services since American fathers are so few. But from your own words I am very happy to learn: 'if the new foundation were possible and promising, then we would certainly support it in any way we can.' And that you have well and thoroughly considered the matter from every possible angle is evident from the difficulties you propose for solution before any further steps can be taken on your side. And I must confess my deep appreciation for the considerate patience with which you have gone into the matter and it gives me the fond hope that we shall be able to overcome all the difficulties with this advance assurance of your generous and broadminded openness in the matter.²⁹

After going through the Statutes of the proposed institute, the Superior General, in his letter to Fr. Malin, raised the question concerning the role of the other congregations in the Institute and he suggested that its foundation should be undertaken by them rather than by the SVD. In response to this remark, Fr. Malin wrote that the proposed Institute would have the combined features of the aforementioned

²⁷ Grendel to Sanchez, 4 September 1939, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/IV.

²⁸ Grendel to Anspach, 7 September 1939, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/IV. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

²⁹ Malin to Grendel, 2 October 1939, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/IV.

congregations with a “background of the SVD.”³⁰ Fr. Malin contended: “None of the above three congregations is working in the diocese of the Bishop and therefore it would be logical for his Excellency to call upon our Society to undertake the work as we are the only religious working under his jurisdiction who have experience in training the Filipino youth and I think we should consider it as a mark of confidence in the SVD that he looks to us first for assistance in this work so dear to his apostolic zeal.”³¹ He further explained: “The SVD background for the proposed Institute was not mentioned in the Statutes as it was considered to be evident enough from the fact that the SVD was to be drawn upon for its deliberation in the person of my unworthy self.”³² With regard to the question regarding its finances, Fr. Malin stressed that the Society would not have any financial obligations in the undertaking.

Fr. Anspach brought up some difficulties with regard to the Society’s involvement in the project: “Our opposition is restricted to two main points: the person being considered for its founder and the proposed financial responsibility of a confrere and therefore of the Society.”³³ The members of the Provincial Council also expressed the opinion that Fr. Malin had a particular influence on the decisions of the Bishop.³⁴

The delays regarding the start of the project prompted Fr. Malin to write to the Superior General concerning the lack of interest on the part of the Provincial Superior with regard to the undertaking: “Father Provincial sad to say has not shown any inclination to settle the matter with the Bishop. The Bishop complained to me about the long delays Father Provincial was causing and when I reported this to Father Provincial he very ungraciously remarked that, ‘I have more important matters to attend to than running about on pleasure trips.’”³⁵ Fr. Malin was also willing to give the task to any member of the Society: “And if the Society thinks another Father would be more fitted to [e]nsure its success I beg you to offer him to the bishop in my place.”³⁶

Bishop Sancho dispatched a telegram to Fr. Grendel informing him that Fr. Malin wanted to begin his work in the institute. Upon receipt of the telegram,

³⁰ Malin to Grendel, 2 October 1939.

³¹ Malin to Grendel, 2 October 1939.

³² Malin to Grendel, 2 October 1939.

³³ Anspach to Grendel, 19 November 1939, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/IV. The quotation is a translation of the German text. Fr. Anspach’s letter to Fr. Grendel on 6 August 1939 which stated the reasons – the “lack of the spirit of sacrifice and instability” – are not clear enough to establish what the former really meant concerning the unsuitability of Fr. Malin. The insinuation that he was being prejudiced because he was an American is unfounded – the sources do not support it.

³⁴ Anspach to Grendel, 19 November 1939.

³⁵ Malin to Grendel, 29 February 1940, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/IV.

³⁶ Malin to Grendel, 29 February 1940.

the Superior General immediately sent a telegram to Fr. Anspach instructing him to notify the bishop that his request to let Fr. Malin start the project was not possible because of the reasons he mentioned earlier. Fr. Grendel, in a letter sent to Fr. Malin, had this to say:

In fact, these are not entirely clear, much less resolved, through your letter. On the contrary, you engage too much in the real concerns. But most of all I wonder about the fact that you have written in your letter on 29 February that you have seen from my letter to the Most Reverend Bishop that all further agreements can be reached between the parties there. The direct opposite is in fact in my letter. I have written to His Excellency that I have informed Fr. Anspach about all our concerns and questions on the matter so that you can personally discuss it with the most Reverend Bishop. In this way the matter can be resolved more easily and reliably than through correspondence. Literally and explicitly, it states once again: 'Fr. Provincial will then inform me about the outcome of this meeting.' It is quite explicit that the decision can be made only by the Generalate which by the way has been clear from the outset because of the importance and significance of the matter.³⁷

On the same day, the Superior General wrote to Fr. Anspach:

Since nothing about the matter came, we thought that it was probably abandoned. Now comes however – albeit belatedly due to bad conditions – a telegram from the Most Reverend Bishop himself in which he asks the permission for Fr. Malin to start with the institute this semester. As the things stand, it seems best for us to inform you through a telegram that together with Fr. [Heinrich] Bürschen, who knows His Excellency very well and who can be entrusted to explain to him that it is impossible for us to comply with his request because of the ambiguities in the structure and legal status of the proposed institute and because of the uncertain financial basis and the unsuitability of Fr. Malin for the task.

We do not want, of course, to interfere with the plans and intentions of the Most Reverend Bishop. He himself has to decide and take responsibility, whether he wants to undertake such foundation. We cannot, however, give him a Father from our Society for it which we are sure in all human probability will end in failure.³⁸

Despite the objections raised concerning the suitability of Fr. Malin, the bishop still wanted Fr. Malin to work for the proposed institute. Fr. Anspach wrote:

³⁷ Grendel to Malin, 26 June 1940, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/IV. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

³⁸ Grendel to Anspach, 26 June 1940, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/IV. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

[The Bishop] asked for Fr. Malin to work for the enterprise. Fr. Bürschen also had the same impression that the Most Reverend Bishop, who discusses all the affairs of the diocese with him, barely mentioned the plan of the foundation with him and especially did not want to hear objections from him. He was told from many sides that the prospective confrere was not suitable for the undertaking, but he did it all with the remark: 'I already know what is said against him, but I am happy if at least he can remain with me for a long time.' He wanted to – he asked recently – at least that Fr. Malin live with the community in Vigan and work for the enterprise which should only be under his and my jurisdiction. I replied that it would be inconceivable that a religious lives in a community but is not under the local superiors; with that he withdrew his demand and wanted him at least to have him in Vigan in order to begin the undertaking next school year. The Society will not be burdened financially since he will bear the responsibility. I promised to present his proposal to Rome once again should the Provincial Council approve it. The local Council could not be prevailed upon because it suspected that it was regarded only to evade the difficulties made earlier but in the end the Society will be burdened with all the financial and spiritual responsibility. Fr. Malin had shown from the beginning that the whole undertaking will be financed through a trip to America and through subsequent correspondence with the benefactors as the bishop assured him with his promises and would rather ignore the views expressed to him; still from another remark of the bishop that he, together with his secretary, will take the spiritual care and the rest of the work which leaves Fr. Malin with minor responsibility. The earlier opinion still holds that Fr. Malin will be needed to provide the financial basis for the undertaking but does not have much concern for the actual organization of the undertaking which he does not allow discussion either.³⁹

The Anspach Proposal

Fr. Anspach further conveyed his opinion about Bishop Sancho and the future of the project:

Moreover, even the Most Reverend Bishop, who is the most interested in the undertaking is no longer young and is sick for a long time. The Council is afraid that should anything serious happen to the Bishop, we should take the responsibility which we have declared not to accept from the beginning. It is highly doubtful whether his successor will devote the same care for this foundation! Furthermore, it is evident up to now that the clergy of

³⁹ Anspach to Grendel, 1 July 1940, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/IV. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

the diocese have no special understanding for this enterprise. Fr. Bürschen even believes that the institute will find more resistance than support from the clergy because among them are sizeable strong opponents who will fight against the favorite idea of the Bishop as an impairment for the other tasks of the diocese.⁴⁰

Fr. Anspach suggested that the other bishops in the Philippines should be involved in the project: "To avoid this danger, since the enterprise is initiated on the interest of one man and is threatened by his own death, I proposed to the Apostolic Delegate as well as to the Bishop [of the Diocese of Nueva Segovia] that the foundation as planned should not be a regional foundation but a national foundation, i.e., the whole local episcopate should regard it as a joint venture."⁴¹

Fr. Anspach sent a telegram to the Superior General upon the insistence of Fr. Malin who asserted that the Superior General was in favor of the project but the Provincial Council was not supportive and wanted to thwart the foundation. Fr. Anspach scribbled these lines:

My repeated attempts to convince him [Fr. Malin] that Your Reverence – just like us here in the Philippines – are still definitely in favor of the foundation as such but we would like first to make a few essential things clear, were in vain. He kept coming back to the old claim although I often pointed to the fact that Your Reverence would not be influenced by my report which arrived even later, which would have acknowledged the weaknesses of the whole plan. He certainly did not take the opinions expressed with regard to his personal fitness which he had to hear from various quarters. He believed as he once said in an inspiration to act and that I through my opposition hinder God's mandated enterprise.⁴²

Fr. Anspach also reported:

I now had the chance to speak with the Most Reverend Bishop about the content of the telegram. He took the matter very calmly under the grounds that the superiors of their subordinates would know better than outsiders

⁴⁰ Anspach to Grendel, 1 July 1940. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

⁴¹ Anspach to Grendel, 1 July 1940. The quotation is a translation of the German text. A former Vincentian missionary was also interested in a missionary institute in the Diocese of Naga. Fr. Anspach suggested that the proposed institute of the Bishop should merge with this institute. The Apostolic Delegate was in favor of the suggestion while Bishop Sanchez simply dismissed it. The Provincial Council also suggested that the Provincial Superior should make a proposal to let Fr. Malin either leave the Society to establish the institute or seek the permission of Rome for him to start the institute as a member of the Society.

⁴² Anspach to Grendel, 2 July 1940, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/IV. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

but he still could not hold back the blow ‘as if motivos humanos played a part under the roof’. Fr. Malin had somewhat prepared the Most Reverend Bishop about the announcement of his new intention to enter into a contemplative order.⁴³

With regard to the SVD who would help in the foundation of the institute, Fr. Anspach mentioned:

In the same discussion, the Bishop presented the amended request to support him in the execution of his plan to establish an institute for Filipino missionaries and to provide him a confrere. I asked him if he had already a specific confrere in mind, which he denied. The confrere in his view will only lay the spiritual foundation of the institute and keep the spiritual initiation and leadership of the members. He himself with his secretary or another diocesan priest would take care of the rest.⁴⁴

Fr. Anspach further wrote:

I agreed with this proposition because it would be the ultimate responsibility of the bishop. That was also the wish of the Most Reverend Apostolic Delegate who repeatedly told me that we should not withdraw our support to the Institute. On that occasion, I once again put forward the concerns which we had not only against other things but also the proposed organization of the Institute. I found that the bishop had more time to listen and he told me recently that he would begin to study the rules of similar congregations like for example the Mexican congregation which was mentioned earlier, the Mission Institute of Parma and the other ones and he asked me also to provide him with the constitutions of the ‘Discipuli Domini’. So the conditions are now favorable, not only to come to an agreement between the bishop and the Society but also the institute which will bring a viable existence which will be of importance for the Philippines.

To sum it up, I asked His Excellency the following questions: first, the institute will be a purely diocesan institute, second, the full administrative responsibility rests with the diocesan bishop and third, the Society would only accept its spiritual care. All three questions were answered affirmatively by the Most Reverend Bishop.⁴⁵

Fr. Grendel sent this reply:

I received your report of 1 July on the state of the well-known matter concerning the native priest institute yesterday. Our views concur completely that the

⁴³ Anspach to Grendel, 24 July 1940, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/IV. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

⁴⁴ Anspach to Grendel, 24 July 1940. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

⁴⁵ Anspach to Grendel, 24 July 1940. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

matter is too unclear and uncertain and moreover Fr. Malin is not the suitable person to be able to make and keep such a foundation. A failure would affect every relationship in our Society. If Bishop Sancho told you that he would have the responsibility and the Society would not have the financial burden, then that is certainly well intentioned.

If Fr. Malin believes in himself to act under the inspiration from above and you are being accused therefore of preventing the will of God only shows how little he knows of himself.⁴⁶

Fr. Anspach proposed that the establishment of the institute should not just be the initiative of one bishop but by all the bishops in the Philippines. This suggestion was met with approval by Fr. Grendel: "Your proposal that the enterprise will be taken by the episcopacy of the Philippines is a good one."⁴⁷ In another letter, the Superior General gave this directive: "If the Most Reverend [Apostolic] Delegate strongly recommends that we do not withdraw our support then you will of course comply. Only let the Most Reverend Bishop take the lead in everything. Meanwhile you can already look for a Father who can eventually take it."⁴⁸ In this letter, the Superior General was showing some inclination in favor of the proposed institute.

In the meanwhile, the Second World War broke out and later on Fr. Malin was transferred to India. No further communications concerning the proposed establishment of a Filipino missionary institute were exchanged between the Generalate and the bishop of the Diocese of Nueva Segovia and the SVD missionaries in the Philippines during and after the war.

Conclusions

The sources pointed out that Bishop Sancho's desire to establish a Filipino missionary institute seemingly conveyed the awareness of the idea mission *ad extra*. Nonetheless, the concept was at its initial stage, and it was not given much attention since the focus was on questions concerning the establishment of the institute itself, the SVD who would take the lead in its realization, and the involvement of the Society of the Divine Word in the project of the Bishop. The Society of the Divine Word showed interest in the Bishop's proposal as shown by

⁴⁶ Grendel to Anspach, 8 August 1940, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/IV. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

⁴⁷ Grendel to Anspach, 8 August 1940. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

⁴⁸ Grendel to Anspach, 3 September 1940, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/IV. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

the exchange of letters that took almost two years. The reluctance of the Society to immediately engage in the project was due to the fact that there were still various aspects of the undertaking that needed to be resolved that would be crucial for its continued existence. The last letters before the outbreak of the Second World War, however, showed that the Generalate was favorable. What happened during and after the war could not be reconstructed in view of the dearth of sources. While Bishop Sancho's dream was not realized during his lifetime, the idea that a Filipino missionary institute should be founded and supported by the bishops of the Philippines – which was proposed by the provincial superior of the Society of the Divine Word – conveyed a prophetic significance. ■



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