

## Genesis of the Real Colegio Seminario de San Clemente, 1702-1712

RUPERTO C. SANTOS

The beginning of diocesan conciliar seminaries for native aspirants to the priestly vocation in the Philippines is traced to the foundation of the *Real Colegio Seminario de San Clemente*, in 1702.

On November 16, 1696, King Philip V of Spain asked the Archbishop of Manila Felipe Pardo if there was a diocesan seminary in the Philippines.<sup>1</sup> The King of Spain wanted to know also the cost of founding and maintaining one, in case there were none established yet. The fourth Council of Toledo, in 633, had decreed that the aspirants to the priesthood "should live together in one house not in order to grow up in luxury but to be formed in ecclesiastical studies, under an exemplary *senior* (student) and a *master of discipline* (teacher) as models." The Council of Trent required that there should be a seminary for every diocese.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the Tridentine decree of July 15, 1565, stated that each diocese should put up a college for boys destined for the service of the Church and that "that college for the ministers of God could be a perpetual seminary."

Likewise, on November 28, 1697, the King asked the Governor-General of the Islands and President of the Royal Audiencia in Manila Don Fausto Cruzat y Gongora, the same question.<sup>2</sup> Also the reigning

---

<sup>1</sup> Ma. Lourdes Díaz-Trechuelo, *Arquitectura Española en Filipinas (1565-1800)*, (Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1959), p. 272. The Archbishop of Manila in 1696 was Felipe Pardo. Don Diego Camacho took possession of the Archbishopric on November 13, 1697 (*Guía Oficial de Filipinas, 1884*).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*; Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson, *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898*, Vol. 28, p. 117. (Hereinafter to be referred to as BR).

Pope at that time, Innocent XII, in his bull of 1697 to the Archbishop of Manila Don Diego Camacho, reminded him of the obligation to have a conciliar seminary in the Archdiocese.

The answer of Archbishop Diego Camacho y Avila came by June 1, 1700: There was no diocesan seminary established yet; and the construction of a seminary would cost from 6 to 8 thousand pesos. The Archbishop even suggested a suitable place for it: a lot near the Cathedral and in front of the *Hermandad de Misericordia*.<sup>3</sup> Don Diego Camacho felt that the seminary should be solely for *indios* who desired to pursue a priestly training. The reason was that the existing seminaries (the Jesuit *Colegio de San Jose* and the Dominican *San Juan de Letran* and *Santo Tomas*) would serve for the training of Spanish aspirants. The prelate offered the King two options which he thought would be economical in the establishment of such seminary. The first one was to build an apartment adjacent to the *Colegio de San Jose* where the seminarians could reside. The second option was to apply the *encomienda* being enjoyed by the *Colegio de San Juan de Letran* and which was intended for *mestizos*. In that way the seminarians could study Grammar in the said college and still continue with Theology and Arts in *Santo Tomas*. The Archbishop also proposed that twelve scholarships could be created should this scheme be adopted.<sup>4</sup>

But the Governor-General replied differently to the King of Spain. On June 13, 1700, Don Fausto Cruzat y Gongora answered that there was no need to establish a seminary. He reasoned out to the King that the three institutions: *San Juan de Letran*, *Santo Tomas* and *San Jose* were sufficient. In fact the three of them had few students.<sup>5</sup>

The Fiscal however intervened. He looked into the matter and decided to recommend to the King the establishment of a diocesan seminary for *indios* in the Islands.<sup>6</sup> Thus, on March 18, 1702, the *Concejo de Yndias* (the Council of the Indies) met. And they resolved to order the Archbishop and the Governor-General in Manila to prepare a cost estimate for the establishment and maintenance (*fábrica y*

---

<sup>3</sup> Díaz-Trechuelo, *op. cit.* (Original manuscript at the *Archivo General de Indias*, Spain).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 272-273.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 273.

*manutención*) of a new seminary attached to the Metropolitan Church of Manila.<sup>7</sup>

On April 28, 1702, after the above mentioned proceedings, the King issued the Royal *Cédula* mandating the foundation of a seminary for 8 seminarians. The money for its construction and maintenance would come from the funds accumulated from vacancies in the bishoprics and from titles. And, if necessary, from the funds of the Royal Treasury.<sup>8</sup> The Royal *Cédula* decreed: "We decided that, as the sacred canons and Pontifical Bulls are for having a Seminary for the young in our Cathedral Churches to assist at divine worship and at the same time be imbued with the sciences, [a conciliar seminary] be established and funded by our Royal *Hacienda* in that Metropolis."

Thus, a Royal Conciliar Seminary was established in Manila. The date was April 28, 1702.

### The Idea of Building and Maintaining the New Seminary

The project of building and establishing the new diocesan seminary was pursued through the coordinated efforts of the Archbishop and the Governor-General of the Islands. The construction begun in 1704. Captain Francisco Ponce was assigned the task of designing the new seminary for eight seminarians.<sup>9</sup> He was the superintendent of the

---

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* *Fabrica* is a technical term in church administrative usage. The ordinary and common meaning is the material building or edifice, which (technically) includes repairs, improvements changes, etc., as well as the necessary expense for caretakers of it, as watchmen, beadles, sweepers, etc.; these people are paid from the funds of the *fabrica* —which might be renders "building funds" except that in ecclesiastical usage *fabrica* usually presupposes that the building is already reared, while the English phrase "building fund" includes the idea of constructing it. (Yet in Latin, Italian and Spanish the term *fabrica* is also used to include money for the erection of the church edifice, in cases where it has not yet been built; where it has been completed and paid for, *fabrica* is restricted to the meaning first given above, the "keeping" of the building). Cfr. BR, Vol. 47, p. 130.

<sup>8</sup> *Testimonio de la Real Cédula dirigida al Governor para que en esta ciudad se funde con Colegio Seminario con el número de 8 seminaristas por ahora y que su coste salga de las rentas eclesiásticas que se señalan.* Madrid, 28 de Abril 1702, *Cedulario 1700-1709*, Philippine National Archives. (Herein after to be referred to as PNA); BR, *op. cit.*.

<sup>9</sup> *Idea y costo que puede tener la fundación de un Seminario, 8 de Febrero 1704, Cedulario 1700-1709*, PNA.

royal works and fortifications in the city of Manila. Captain Ponce's design proposal had specified a medium-sized house for eight seminar-ians—including also one President or *Preposito*, one Master or *Maestro* and some servants—, with a sala, and oratory. The building would involve carpentry and masonry works amounting to 10,500 pesos. The materials used in the construction would be wood, bricks, tiles, nails and buggies for the materials.<sup>10</sup> A Dominican, Fray Sebastián del Castillo, was consulted on the project. Fray Sebastián was at that time the president of *Colegio de San Juan de Letran*. Archbishop Camacho asked him to help in preparing a budgetary estimate for the maintenance of the new diocesan seminary. It was in line of the Dominican's long experience in maintaining the orphan boys or *niños huérfanos* of San Juan de Letran.<sup>11</sup>

The Archbishop requested Fray Sebastián to prepare an estimate of the expenses for the support of the seminar-ians and of the personnel required in the seminary. The following were the listed personnel: one President (*Prepósito*), one Master of seminar-ians (*Maestro*), eight seminar-ians, one *mayordomo*, one *cosinero*, four servants—who would bring water or hoard rice and perform other related duties in the seminary—, one steward (*portero*), one *lefitolero*,<sup>12</sup> one buyer, one errand boy and a boatman (*piloto*) with five or six rowers. The Archbishop determined thus the salaries of the personnel: The 16 young servant boys would each receive one peso per month; the cook would have three pesos every month, whereas the boatman three *tostones*<sup>13</sup> every month.

Fray Sebastián del Castillo submitted on April 7, 1704, his own estimate budget for the maintenance of the seminary for 31 persons:<sup>14</sup>

1. It is necessary to have 350 cavan of rice with the cost of 3 *reales* per cavan. And for this year it reached 131 pesos and 2 *reales*

---

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Decreto de ruego y encargo al Reverendo Padre Fray Sebastian del Castillo por Diego Camacho, 8 de Febrero 1704, Cedulaario 1700-1704, PNA.*

<sup>12</sup> The word "*lefitolero*" in the manuscript may refer to *refitolero* which means one who takes care of the refectory.

<sup>13</sup> One *toston* is equal to half a peso (Mexico). *Decreto de ruego y encargo, op. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> *Sobre la cantidad para menester el seminario para sustento de cada año de treinta y una personas por Fray Sebastián del Castillo, 7 de Abril 1704, Cedulaario 1700-1704, PNA.*

- more. But the price is not fixed because sometimes it costs less reaching from 10 to 12 *reales*.....131 y 2
2. For daily expenditures of beef, pork and all ingredients for cooking the chickens for the president and fish for the men-servants.....732
  3. In any congregation or college, as in our ward of poor orphans, Easter and Christmas and other days of great solemnity, they are given at noon and at night their *colación*, with which for this they are distinguished with something silver and for me it seems that 100 pesos are sufficient.....100
  4. Since the seminarians study, it is necessary to give them oil for studying at night, and there should also be a lamp in the oratory and in the stairs for the men-servants; and at night it is necessary to have candles, and for this 80 pesos.....80
  5. And for the expenditures every year for the refectory and kitchen for plates, kettles, *carajays*, jars, linens and towels...
  6. For the provisions of vinegar, salt, wood, onions and garlic.....25
  7. The salaries of the men-servants and cook.....222
  8. For shoes and interior clothes of the seminarians.....
- Total amount..... 1420 y 2

Fray Sebastián also added that it is requirement that seminarians should have medical attention. So as a whole, a sum of *two thousand pesos* would be sufficient to maintain the new seminary.

On April 17, 1704 Archbishop Diego Camacho wrote to Governor General Domingo de Zabalburu on his plan of establishing the seminary in the sequestered house of the deceased *licenciado* (licentiate) Manuel Suares de Olivera.<sup>15</sup> The house was located at the back of the *Real Palacio* (Royal Palace of the Governor-General). Even if the house was already old and in bad condition, the Archbishop felt that there would not be need many repairs, and that a new structure, more proportioned and effective for their specific purpose, could be built over its foundations.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> *Carta de Diego Camacho a Don Domingo de Zabalburu*, 17 de Abril 1704. *Cedulario 1700-1709*, PNA. The *Suares* of Manuel Suares de Olivera is sometimes spelled as *Suarez*, as in Díaz-Trechuelo.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

## The Arrival of Abbot Juan Bautista Sidoti

In September of 1704 the Patriarch of Antiochia, Cardinal Thomas Millard de Tournon arrived in Manila. He was the papal legate *a latere* to China. Pope Clement XI sent him there to China to investigate the famous controversy on the "Chinese rites." He came with a retinue of clerics, one of whom was the abbot Juan Bautista Sidoti. He was an Italian priest. His birthplace was Palermo. Abbot Sidoti stayed behind in Manila in the hope of finding a chance to go to Japan. But he unsuccessfully tried until, in 1709, a captain of a Spanish vessel smuggled him to the coastlines of Japan.

Meanwhile, Sidoti took upon himself the erection of the new seminary. Full of pastoral zeal and enthusiasm for the new project, abbot Sidoti managed to ask for and collect various donations (alms) for the construction of the seminary.<sup>17</sup>

He obtained from the Governor a sum of 4,000 pesos from the proceeds of the vacancies of the bishoprics. He also obtained permission to start the cutting of wood necessary for the project in the province of Pampanga, whose inhabitants offered the material for the project for 3 years.<sup>18</sup> Abbot Sidoti met antagonism, however, from the Augustinian *doctrineros* of that province. These *doctrineros* opposed the cutting of trees; they preached that such cutting of trees would bring havoc on the common interests of the inhabitants. The Augustinian religious posed great difficulties in the realization of abbot Sidoti's project, which he himself personally supervised.<sup>19</sup>

For the new seminary building, the Archbishop proposed to have a brand new building constructed on the site of his choice. And according to him, it should specifically be located facing the Palace; along the Cathedral but near the house of the Cathedral's Dean.<sup>20</sup>

The arrival of Cardinal de Tournon and abbot Sidoti changed the original plan of the Spanish king for the foundation of the new seminary. The Governor General and the Archbishop agreed on the proceedings. So the original plan of creating a seminary for eight *indio*

---

<sup>17</sup> BR, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-119.

<sup>18</sup> Díaz-Trechuelo, *op. cit.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

aspirants became a project to create a new seminary for 80 aspirants of different nationalities.<sup>21</sup> Don Diego Camacho tolerated abbot Sidoti's plan. The Archbishop should have realized that placing the direction of building the conciliar seminary in the hands of a foreigner was against the rules of the *Real Patronato* (Royal Patronage).

Even so, abbot Sidoti prepared the plans for a big seminary. The plan of the edifice was sent to Spain in 1706.<sup>22</sup> Although the work was left unfinished, the plan showed that the projected seminary was of great magnitude. According to Díaz-Trechuelo, the seminary was a large rectangle whose principal facade faced the Archbishop's Palace. It was bounded at the back by the houses of Don Antonio Enríquez and of the Cathedral Dean. The seminary was divided into two parts: there was the first portion for classes around a large square patio and surrounded by cloisters at three of its sides; the other portion of the edifice was allocated for the large refectory and its storeroom. There was a truck garden and a second patio.<sup>23</sup>

The initial funding came from the various alms contributed by the faithful especially those who were living near the city of Manila. They donated all the lumber necessary for the construction and even paid the 700 men who cut and transported the wood. So by this time a large edifice to function as a seminary was being built near the Church and the Archiepiscopal Palace.<sup>24</sup>

Although the grandiose seminary planned by abbot Sidoti was still under construction, it nevertheless served as a temporary venue for the 8 seminarians. And, acting on the suggestion of Abbot Sidoti, Don Diego Camacho named the seminary the *Real Colegio Seminario de San Clemente*. He named it after the reigning Pope, Clement XI.

The Archbishop displeased the king. The reason was because [the Archbishop] "used at his own pleasure certain ecclesiastical revenues properly in charge of the secular government; and the governor failed to check him, and even to notify the home government of these

---

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 274; BR, *op. cit.*, Vol. 45, p. 190; "San Carlos turns 200," *The Sower*, (1986-1987), p. 13.

<sup>22</sup> Díaz-Trechuelo, *op. cit.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> BR, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

unwarranted proceedings, which were reported to Madrid by ecclesiastical channels." Accordingly, Don Diego Camacho was removed from his episcopal see and he was subsequently transferred to the bishopric of Guadalajara in Mexico.<sup>25</sup>

In the early July of 1706 Don Diego Camacho took possession of the episcopal see of Guadalajara after having left the diocese of Manila.<sup>26</sup> He left Don Francisco Rayo as the administrator of Manila, fact that earned the ire and protests of the chapter-members. The reason was because Don Francisco was not a member of the *cabildo* or cathedral chapter. Thus, on August 19, the *cabildo* declared the see of Manila vacant. But later they chose as its provisor the archdeacon Doctor Jose Altamirano y Cervantes. At first his title was contested by Don Francisco, until finally he gave up his objections. Then by August 28 the *cabildo* remained in peaceable possession of its government and vacant see.<sup>27</sup>

### The Arrival of the new Archbishop Francisco de la Cuesta

In 1707 the galleon *Rosario* arrived in Manila from Acapulco, bringing not only silver but also the new Archbishop of Manila, Francisco de la Cuesta.<sup>28</sup> Archbishop de la Cuesta immediately took upon himself the continuance of firmly establishing the seminary and the final construction of the building.

By October of that same year, the *licenciado* (licentiate) Don Gabriel de Ysturis, presbyter, was named Rector of the *Real Colegio Seminario de San Carlos*.<sup>29</sup> The *bachiller* (bachelor) Don Hipólito del Río was appointed *Maestro* (Master) of the seminarians. He had formerly been a *Sacristan* of San Roque parish, in *Puerto de Cavite* (Cavite City). Gabriel de los Reyes was assigned as *Mayordomo* of the college-seminary. A surgeon, a doctor and a pharmacist from the

---

<sup>25</sup> BR, *op. cit.*, Vol. 44, pp. 143-144.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Nómbrese a Gabriel de los Reyes, Hipólito del Río, Gabriel de Ysturis y Don Martín de Abaurrea para Mayordomo, Maestro, Rector y Administrador del Seminario. Cedulaario 1700-1709, PNA.*

*Hospital Real* were also asked to provide medical care and assistance to the seminary.

On October 24, 1707, Archbishop de la Cuesta wrote to Governor General Zabalburu informing him of the set of statutes or regulations that would govern the Royal College-Seminary of San Clemente with its current 80 enrolled seminarians, as made up of the first eight seminarians and the additional seventy two.<sup>30</sup> The archbishop then sent the proposed set of statutes for its approval by the Governor General.<sup>31</sup> The *Junta General de Hacienda* gave its royal approval or *real acuerdo* for the said set of governing rules and regulations (statutes) for the seminary. That was November 24, 1707. Archbishop de la Cuesta gave likewise his ecclesiastical approval for the observance of this set of rules. The rules and regulations set by Archbishop de la Cuesta specified that only the children of *mestizo* and Spanish parents could be admitted in the seminary. Now this was contrary to Don Diego's original plan and idea of building a seminary exclusively for native aspirants.

At this time the first eight seminarians were received by Governor Zabalburu on November 28, 1707.<sup>32</sup>

By 1709 abbot Sidoti left for Japan, as it had always been his utmost desire.<sup>33</sup> He left the seminary building unfinished. And Archbishop de la Cuesta by now did not want to have it finished. It was because of the tremendous cost that finishing such a grand building would entail.<sup>34</sup> The Archbishop thought now of transferring the seminarians with their Rector and Master (*maestro*) into the house of the deceased licentiate Manuel Suares de Olivera, whose properties had been confiscated by the Royal *Hacienda* and which had been ceded for this purpose by Governor General Zabalburu.<sup>35</sup> Very soon, however,

---

<sup>30</sup> *Escrito al Maestro de Campo Don Domingo de Zabalburu del Fray Francisco, Arzobispo de Manila, sobre nuevas ordenanzas para el régimen de los seminaristas en el Colegio de San Clemente*, 24 de Octubre, 1707. *Cedulario 1700-1709*, PNA.

<sup>31</sup> *Fray Francisco, Arzobispo de Manila, al Señor Fiscal sobre las ordenanzas del seminario*, 24 de Octubre 1707. *Cedulario 1700-1709*, PNA.

<sup>32</sup> BR, *op. cit.*, Vol. 28, p. 119.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* p73

<sup>34</sup> Díaz-Trechuelo, *op. cit.*, p. 274.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 275.

the Rector Don Gabriel de Ysturis informed the Archbishop that the house was insufficient. He then proposed to enlarge it "as the lot adjacent to the house of the deceased licentiate could be bought for the expansion of the seminary."<sup>36</sup>

The Archbishop ordered a re-examination of the project which abbot Sidoti had left unfinished. Now the Cathedral Dean Don Domingo de Valencia took charge of the matter. He, together with the chantre Don Juan Gonzalez de Guzman, re-examined the building and the vacant lot. They were assisted by Captain Francisco Afan de Rivera and Dionisio Saplan, a master mason. They found out that the project was left with only its foundation finished, measuring one *vara* and one-and-a-half *varas* high in certain areas. Moreover, their study revealed that it would take around 25,000 pesos—a very large amount—to finish the edifice,<sup>37</sup> while the expansion of the functional seminary would amount to only 4,212 pesos and seven *granos*, inclusive of all necessary materials for the construction.<sup>38</sup>

At this point, on March 3, 1710, King Philip V issued a royal decree to the Royal *Audiencia* in Manila showing his displeasure and even anger at the way his Royal Conciliar Seminary had turned out, based on the reports he had received in Spain.<sup>39</sup>

"In it His Majesty manifested his just anger at... innovations and prejudicial proceedings through the agency of foreigners, when His Majesty had ordained it so long beforehand... He was angry also because this news had come to His Royal ears by other vehicles than his vassals and ministers, and that foreigners had been allowed in these Islands without His Royal consent... Therefore in the said royal order, his Majesty commanded that all the foreign seminarians be taken out of the said seminary, and that only the eight before decided upon be left, since those were his vassals. He allowed at most, sixteen boarders, and all those should enter only by permission of the governor of these Islands, as the vice-patron; and the building of the said Seminary, which His Majesty had before ordered shall be re-activated. If there had been persons who in good faith had aided the new Seminary with

---

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> BR, *op. cit.*, Vol. 45, pp. 187-192.

buildings, incomes, and other gifts it was asked that they consent to apply these on the building of the Seminary intended and ordered by His Majesty. In case they did not agree to that, the just price of whatever could be useful for this desirable end should be paid to them; and what were useless should be given back to their owners, except such buildings... which should be immediately demolished."<sup>40</sup>

In accordance with the royal decree to the Royal *Audiencia* and the decrees addressed to the Archbishop and the Governor, the building begun by abbot Sidoti was demolished. And all other orders of the King in His Royal decree were likewise carried out. By May 6, 1712, the course in Arts was inaugurated in the Seminary-College.<sup>41</sup>

On December 31, 1712, a royal *cedula* was issued ordering to change the name of the Seminary to *San Felipe*.<sup>42</sup> This was to perpetuate the glorious memory of the king of Spain. And during that year the Archbishop reported that the expansion of the Seminary, as the "narrow lodging of the Seminarians," had been accomplished.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> BR, *op. cit.*, Vol. 28, p. 121.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Díaz-Trechuelo, *op. cit.*, p. 275.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*