

“A Look into the Histories of Some Religious Orders in the Philippines in the 20th Century”

by Fr. Nestor Impelido SDB

1.

Writing Their Histories

The study is in conjunction with the aim of the actual seminar on the state of Salesian historiography in the East Asia-Oceania Region.

Its aim is to study the histories written by some religious orders that are actually at work in the Philippines. These histories can, in fact, reveal the state of the historiography of these religious orders: what they have written regarding their presence in the Philippines, why and how they have written their histories. Moreover, these histories can show whether these religious orders have conserved documents and maintained archives to preserve documents useful for the future writing of their histories. But the study also can reveal if the religious orders have people prepared to write their histories.

This paper is limited to the study of the histories written by religious orders that came to work in the Philippines in the first half of the 20th century, in a period from 1910 to 1960. Moreover, the study is a very tentative one since there has not been any attempt so far to study the historiographies of the religious orders.

The study deals with ten religious orders, even if there are more than a hundred religious orders who are actually at work in the Philippines. The criteria for the choice of the religious orders are rather pragmatic: on the accessibility of the archives or province houses of the chosen religious orders; on my acquaintance with religious belonging to the selected religious orders; on the availability of histories written by these religious orders.

The study will present the histories written by the religious orders and will try to evaluate them.

For the study, I have contacted the various archivists of the religious orders chosen; and I have tried to obtain copies and indications of histories they have written. At the same time, I have tried to procure copies of these writings for a closer study and reading of the materials.¹

2.

A Situation of the Church of the Philippines in the 20th Century

In 1898, with the war against Spain, the *Patronato Real* of the Spanish monarchy finally ceased that also affected the local Catholic Church in the Philippines. In 1907, as articulated in the acts of the First Provincial Synod of Manila (1904), the Roman Catholic Church took final control of the Church. The acts of the Provincial Synod, convoked by the Vatican's second apostolic delegate to the Philippines, Archbishop Giovanni Battista Guidi (1902-1904), finally materialized with his successor, Archbishop Ambrose Agius OSB (1905-1911). The Provincial Synod, in fact, confronted three issues related to the Catholic Church in the Philippines: (i) the proselytizing work by the Protestants in the Philippines with

¹ For this study, I am grateful to Miss Leah Castro, a member of the ADMA Council of the FIN, who helped to get copies of the histories of the religious orders concerned.

the arrival of the United States of America; (ii) the decrease in the clergy with the exodus of Spanish religious; and (iii) the schism created by separatist diocesan priests of the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente*.² During the same period, 13 non-Spanish religious communities came to the Philippines in a span of only eleven years. The fact was that there was a need for foreign missionaries to come to the Philippines and to help in the task of rebuilding the Catholic Church severely debilitated by revolution, schisms, and proselytism. For this, from 1904 to 1915, new religious orders (seven for men and six for women) arrived beside those who were already long at work (Augustinians, Franciscan, Jesuits, Dominicans, Recollects, etc.). Only sometime between 1862 and 1895 did a few other religious congregations (Benedictines, Capuchins, Vincentians, Daughters of Charity, etc.) arrived to work in the Philippines “to initiate apostolic, educational, and charitable endeavors throughout the islands”.³

The next group of Catholic missionaries came within the framework of the relationship between the Catholic Hierarchy and the American colonial government. Upon his arrival in Manila, Archbishop Placide Louis Chapelle (1900-1901), first apostolic delegate to the Philippines, had secretly convoked the four remaining Spanish friars-bishops in the Philippines to a conference and discussed with them on the possibility of inviting other European religious to come to the Philippines. Those present during the conference readily agreed that other religious congregations from Europe could send members “for the sake of the gospel”. Archbishop Chapelle had, in fact, proposed two religious congregations: the Congregation of the Sons of Mary and the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.⁴ Indeed, in a meeting between Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) and Governor-General Howard Taft (1901-1903), the Vatican agreed to the proposal “to introduce in the Philippine Islands religious of other nationalities”.⁵

Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) promulgated his encyclical “*Quae Mare Sinico*” (1902)⁶ that proposed several structural measures to reform the local church in the Philippines. Meanwhile, Archbishop Guidi had tried to pave the way for the coming of new Roman Catholic missionaries to the Philippines. He had approached Pope Pius X (1903-1914) to request the Assumption Sisters to come to the Philippines; but he was also approached by the superior of the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres in 1904 through the French Consul in Manila.⁷ His successor, Archbishop Agius OSB had also requested for the Superior General of the Redemptorists, Fr. Matthias Raus, to send members to the Philippines. Moreover, Bishop Frederick Rooker of Jaro Diocese (1903-1907) had advised the Sisters of St. Paul Chartres to go to Dumaguete (Negros Oriental) to start a school there and to contrast the growing Presbyterian managed Silliman College. Bishop Thomas Hendrick (1903-1909) had also invited the Irish Redemptorists to his Cebu Diocese.⁸

Archbishop Agius made further efforts to summon more European religious to come to the Philippines: the members of the Missionary Society of St. Joseph. He invited the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing who arrived in September 1906 in Manila. He worked out the establishment of five more

² Cf. CRUZ Reginald, “To Preserve the Faith: The Arrival of the Third Wave of Catholic Missionaries Within the Church-State Relations of the Philippine Insular Government (1900-1915)”, in *MST Review* 3 (1999) 22.

³ Cf. CRUZ, “To Preserve the Faith: The Arrival of the Third Wave of Catholic Missionaries Within the Church-State Relations of the Philippine Insular Government (1900-1915)”, 22-23.

⁴ The first finally came to the Philippines in 1947 and the second only in 1990.

⁵ Cf. CRUZ, “To Preserve the Faith....”, 3.

⁶ Cf. DE CASTRO Antonio SJ, “The Church in a Period of Transition: *Quae Mari Sinico* and the post-Hispanic Church”, in *Walking through the Development of the Local Churches after the Spanish Regime. A Historical Reflection with the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines*, Manila, 20-21 January 2010, 1-39.

⁷ Cf. CRUZ, 32-33.

⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 37-39.

congregations in different parts of the country: the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, 1907; the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, 1908; the Society of the Divine Word, 1909; the Missionary Canonesses of St. Augustine, 1910; and the De La Salle Brothers, 1911.⁹

In spite of almost 333 years of work of evangelization by the missionaries who were mostly Spanish, the Philippines, nonetheless, remained not entirely Catholic in as much certain areas of the Philippines were not yet Christianized. In the beginning of the 20th century, the country was particularly assailed by masonry that was certainly anti-religion and anti-clerical. Moreover, the U.S.A. government in the Philippines imposed a separation of Church and State that was definitely prejudicial to the Church that dominated the Philippines. It intentionally sought to reverse the dominant position of the Church where Spanish nationals were forced to give up their ministry resulting into neglect of the pastoral care of many who sought to be faithful to their Catholic faith; where schools mostly administered by the parishes were closed; where the colonizers had constructed new schools and had prohibited the teaching of religion, but at the same time had brought in new teachers who were mostly Protestants and who proselytized while they educated. The result was in the Philippines, there came about a growing immorality and indifferentism.¹⁰

In Manila, just before World War II, there were 42 religious orders in Manila, 20 for men and 22 for women.¹¹ World War II temporarily stopped the arrival of new religious orders. Sometime in 1946, Archbishop Michael O'Doherty (1916-1949) reported that there were 62 religious priests in the Archdiocese engaged in the pastoral ministry, 20 religious houses for men with members numbering 283 and 47 religious houses for women with about 750 members.¹² Between 1980 and 1990, there were 16 new arrivals of men congregations; there instead were 64 new arrivals of women congregations, of which 44 were of Italian origin. By 1983, there were 86 religious institutes in the Archdiocese with a combined membership of 3,157 religious men and women.¹³

3.

The Religious Orders

For the present study, I have chosen ten religious orders, of which six are female: (i) the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master (PDDM, 1924), (ii) the Daughters of Saint Paul (FSP, 1915): Italian (Giacomo Alberione); (iii) the Religious of the Assumption (RA, 1839): French (St. Anne-Eugenie Milleret de Brou); (iv) the Augustinian Sisters of the Our Lady of Consolation (ASOLC, 1883): Spanish/Filipino (Mother Rita Barcelo OSA); (v) the Daughters of Charity of Canossa (FdCC, 1828): Italian (St. Magdalene of Canossa); and (vi) the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMM, 1877): French/Indian (Helene de Chappotin/Mother Mary of the Passion).

Instead, the four male religious orders for the study are: (i) the Society of Saint Paul (SSP, 1914) Italian (Giacomo Alberione); (ii) the Congregation of the Passion (CP, 1741): Italian (Paul Francis Danei/St. Paul

⁹ Cf. Reginald D. CRUZ, "To Preserve the Faith: The Arrival of the Third Wave of Catholic Missionaries Within the Church-State Relations of the Philippine Insular Government (1900-1915)", in *MST Review* 3 (1999) 41-43 [21-47].

¹⁰ Cf. Leonardo Z. LEGASPI OP, "The Church in the Philippines since 1900", in *Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas* 39 (1965) 339-352.

¹¹ Cf. DE JESUS Armando, "The Archdiocese of Manila: 1945-1995", in YALUNG Crisostomo (ed.), "The Archdiocese of Manila. A Pilgrimage in Time (1565-1999), vol. II, Manila 1999, 332.

¹² Cf. DE JESUS Armando, "The Archdiocese of Manila: 1945-1995", II, 333-334.

¹³ Cf. *ibid.*, 334. Cf. also GUTAY Jose Femilou OFM, "Catholic Education and Church-State Relations until the Sixties", in *Walking through the Development of the Local Churches after the Spanish Regime. A Historical Reflection with the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines*, Manila 20-21 January 2010, 71-80.

of the Cross); (iii) the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (CSsR, 1732) Italian (St. Alphonsus de Liguori); and (iv) the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament (SSS, 1856) French (St. Peter Julian Eymard).

The majority of these religious orders are Italian in origin: the three male religious orders SSP, Cp and the CSsR, as well as the PDDM, the FSP and FdCC. Three are of French origin – the female religious orders RA and the FMM, and the male religious order SSS.

The SSP, FSP and PDDM belong to the Pauline Family with the Blessed Giacomo Alberione as founder. The ASOLC was an indigenous religious order founded by an Augustinian tertiary, Sr. Rita Barcelo, who was originally from Barcelona, Spain. The FMM was founded by the French Mother Mary of the Passion in Ootacamund, India.

Except for the ASOLC, these religious orders originated outside of the Philippines; they came to the Philippines in the 20th century after the departure of Spanish missionaries and the taking over by the USA of the former Spanish colony; the members of these religious orders who first came to the Philippines were non-Spanish. Mostly were Italian; but there were also French, Irish, Australian or from the USA.

These religious orders have celebrated their anniversaries of arrival and start of apostolate in the Philippines, either their 50th or 75th or 100th year. They wanted to commemorate the various events that transpired from their coming to the present. They all wanted to come up with a story of their coming and of what they have achieved so far.

These religious orders varied in apostolate: education, parish work, mission as dictated to them by their charism. Some of them involved themselves in the educational apostolate, in consonance to the need of providing Catholic education as against the secularizing trend by the presence of the colonial government of the USA. Certainly, one clear aim of their pastoral work was for the maintenance the faith among the majority of Catholics in the Philippines and who were threatened by Protestant proselytism.

4.

A Look into the Histories

These religious congregations wrote their histories as they matured in the number of years of their presence in the Philippines. They tried to write their histories in the attempt to remember their beginnings as well to make others remember, especially their members, of what their religious orders have done and what they have attempted to be.

The histories they wrote were for various commemorations, in particular for their 50th or 75th or 100th anniversaries. These histories took various forms, in particular in the form of souvenir and commemorative programs, as well as books. These all aimed to be historical in content.

A closer look on the histories written by the religious orders can answer some questions that are related with the topic of the seminar. What exactly did some of these histories want to express? Why were they written? Who wrote these histories? How were these histories written?

4.1.

The Augustinian Sisters of Our Lady of Consolation issued two books purporting to their history:

- MIJARES Ma. Luz F. ASOLC, *ASOLC's Journey of the Spirit. Discerning the Movement of the History in ASOLC History*, Quezon City 2009; and
- VENERACION Jaime B., *Journey through the Years. Augustinian Sisters of Our Lady of Consolation*, Manila 1996.

The book "Journey through the Years" was originally written in Pilipino with the title "Paglalakbay Sa Iba't-ibang Dekada" and that it was supposed to contain "with all pertinent data on Philippine history and the history of the Congregation comprehensively researched for accuracy and systematic presentation",¹⁴ intending thus to write a serious history of the ASOLC. The purpose of translating the book was in order "to enable a wider sphere readership in the local setting (non-Tagalog speaking regions) possibly to serve as linkage with international congregations, institutes, organizations whose love for history continue to make us one people of God".¹⁵ The Augustinian Sisters had commissioned a professional writer of history, Dr. Jaime B. Veneracion, a professor at the University of the Philippines who wrote the history in Pilipino.

However, the history was translated into English with the assistance of a "Kasaysayan Committee" composed of sisters of the ASOLC so that the book might have a wider readership that should include the non-Tagalog speaking population of the Philippines as well those from other nations. The book covered the years from the arrival of the Spanish Augustinian Terciaries in the Philippines (1883) to the year 1991. The author of the original version used archives and libraries found in the University of the Philippines and the Arzobispado de Manila, as well as those found in the ASOLC's convent and in the Philippine National Archives.

However, the second book, "ASOLC's Journey of the Spirit" was written by a member of the religious order, who was a member of the historical committee that earlier translated the "Journey through the Years" and who was a historian by formation and studies. Sr. Ma. Luz Mijares described the book as "a pneumatological study of ASOLC with a historical approach", that attempted to review "the history of the Augustinians Sisters of Our Lady of Consolation from the viewpoint of faith" that "the Holy Spirit has always been its guide and companion" through the years of its existence.¹⁶ She dared to define who the Holy Spirit was for the ASOLC: "It is the Spirit of ASOLC's roots and liminality, and thus for the Congregation, its Frontier Spirit."¹⁷ For this, the book is not a historical book in the truest sense. The rest of the title certainly marked a "spirit-filled" book: "ASOLC's Journey of the Spirit: Discerning the Movement of the Spirit in ASOLC History".

The author expressed the pneumatology in the book in its last chapter:

"As I hope I have illustrated, the events that happened within or surrounding ASOLC's life were not simply a series of event that happened randomly or as a matter of pure accident bereft of any rhyme or reason. On reflection, they become coherent and intelligible as we know and believe that God is the God of history; He is 'God already at work in history'."¹⁸

¹⁴ VENERACION Jaime B., *Journey through the Years. Augustinian Sisters of Our Lady of Consolation*, Defining the Roots of their Life and Mission within the womb of Philippine History" Manila 1996, iv.

¹⁵ VENERACION, *Journey through the Years*, Manila 1996, vii.

¹⁶ MIJARES Ma. Luz F. ASOLC, *ASOLC's Journey of the Spirit. Discerning the Movement of the History in ASOLC History*, Quezon City 2009, xiii.

¹⁷ Cf. *ibid.* Some of the titles of the chapters of the book indeed showed its pneumatological element: "The Birthing of the ASOLC Spirit" (chapter I); "Journey of the ASOLC Spirit: 1883-1904" (chapter II); "The Spirit of Change: 1954-1971" (chapter V).

¹⁸ MIJARES, *ASOLC's Journey of the Spirit*, 176.

4.2.

The Religious of the Assumption came out with a commemorative book regarding their 100 year presence in the Philippines:

- REYES Maria Carmen, *Sing for Joy! In Grateful Remembrance*, (edited by Clarita TAMBUTING ORDOÑEZ), Manila 1992.

The book “Sing for Joy!” was written by a Religious of the Assumption but was also edited by a layperson. It was written to commemorate the 100 year presence of the religious order (1892-1992), “a vibrant chronicle of an institution’s journey through triumphs and crises” whose 100-year history was a witness “of God’s continuing ‘Kagandahang-loob’”,¹⁹ a “simple family history.”²⁰ The author considered the story as “still unfinished”; that it was still to be “completed only in eternity.”²¹

The Superior General of the Assumption Sisters described what Sr. Maria Carmen wrote: that it “chronicled the beginnings, growth and expansion of the Assumption in the Philippines, the participation in Southeast Asia as well as the participation of Filipinas in the missions abroad.”²² For Sr. Clare Teresa defined the history of the province of the Assumption Sisters in the Philippines as “the history of a relationship of love: the outpouring of God’s Love and the return of love which never says: ‘I have done enough.’”²³

For the author, telling the story is a way of looking back for the re-foundation of the Assumption Sisters in the Philippines in a manner that was Filipino.

“As Filipinos, our heritage of wisdom urges us to look back, believing as we do that he who refuses to look back at his roots will fail to reach his goal (Ang di lumingon sa pinanggalingan ay di makararating sa paroroonan.) Looking back, therefore, is part and parcel of our refoundation efforts.”²⁴

This coffee table book contains information meaningful to the story of the Assumption Sisters in the Philippines: a list of foundations in its Philippine-Taiwan Province; a chronology of events of the Province.²⁵ It revealed a bibliography that enumerated the sources for the writing of the centennial book: books, publications, newspapers, reference works and unpublished materials that were abundant. The last, as listed, are abundant.²⁶

4.3.

The Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer several histories:

- *Celebrating 100 Years of Redemptorist Mission in the Philippines and in Asia 1906-2006*. (100 years)
- *Redemptorist Baclaran 1932-2007 75 Years*

¹⁹ Cf. REYES Maria Carmen R.A. (edited by TAMBUTING ORDOÑEZ Clarita), *Sing for Joy! In Grateful Remembrance*, Manila 1992, cover page.

²⁰ Cf. REYES, *Sing for Joy! In Grateful Remembrance*, Manila 1992, 9.

²¹ Cf. REYES, *Sing for Joy! In Grateful Remembrance*, 19. [“Time effaces facts, the accuracy of the memory fades, imagination distorts many a story.”]

²² Cf. *Ibid.*, 12.

²³ Cf. *ibid.*, 13. The content of the book, according to its table, reflects the kind of story it wanted to tell: Prelude – Lighting the Flame, Part I: Remembering, Part II: Living, Part III: Envisioning.

²⁴ *Ibid.* REYES, 21.

²⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 308-311.

²⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 316-317.

The “Celebrating 100 Years of Redemptorist Mission in the Philippines and in Asia 1906-2006” is a souvenir program, which according to the Redemptorist Provincial of Cebu served as a testament “of the great things that the Lord had done for the Redemptorists”, and whose meaningful theme was “100 Years of Preaching Plentiful Redemption” that certainly revealed a very spiritual point of view regarding the work that had been done.²⁷

The work recounts the origins and the growth of the Redemptorists in Southern Philippines, identifying the reasons for their valid presence: the departure of the Friar missionaries, the Aglipayan Schism and the arrival of the American Protestant missionaries. It outlined the history of the Redemptorists with pictures to visualize the story and which presented the basics: persons concerned with the foundation; the date of arrival and place where they started. However, the history described was certainly brief, not critical.

But most specially, the Redemptorists in the Philippines wrote about its work and history in Baclaran where the image of Mary as Perpetual Help was venerated.²⁸ The commemorative book “Redemptorist Baclaran 1932-2007 ... 75 Years” revealed a friendly and familiar approach to the writing of the history of the Redemptorists as it wanted merely to tell stories of the Perpetual Help’s devotees. Precisely, devotional, it wants only to show how miraculous the image enshrined in the church could be.²⁹ Indeed, the Baclaran work which was located in Manila the Philippine capital was the most revealing and the more famous of the works of the Redemptorists in the Philippines.³⁰

4.4.

The Franciscan Missionaries of Mary wrote two books on several commemorations of their religious order in the Philippines:

- Autori Vari, *The Franciscan Missionaries of Mary in the Philippines 1912-1966*, Manila 1996;
- FONDEVILLA Emma FMM, *A Flame of Fire. The Story-The Spirit-The Song. Franciscan Missionaries of Mary 100 Years of Presence in the Philippines 1912-2012*, Manila 2012.

The book “The Franciscan Missionaries of Mary in the Philippines 1992-1966”,³¹ printed in 1996, was written to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the approval of the FMM constitutions by the Holy See (11 May 1896), as well as the 30th anniversary by the creation of the FMM’s Philippine Province (May 1966). It was produced by a team of FMM sisters: a group of researchers who looked into the provincial and local archives, as well as general archives; a group of translators; a production staff; and a team of editors that consisted of two FMM sisters and a laywoman, who “gave their best in skill and spirit to this ‘work of love’”.³² The different chapters of the book were written in different convents of the Congregation. The draft of the history was submitted to the General House “for comments and recommendations”.

²⁷ *Celebrating 100 Years of Redemptorist Mission in the Philippines and in Asia 1906-2006*, 1.

²⁸ Early in the 1970’s, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla said mass in Baclaran. Then in 17 February 1981, as Pope John Paul II, he asked to re-visit the Shrine and there dedicated the people of Asia to the Perpetual Help. Nonetheless, the lack of precision with regards Cardinal Wojtyla’s visit perhaps reveals the lack of historical sensitiveness.

²⁹ The shrine became a center of protest during the revolution of the people of Manila against the dictatorship of Ferdinand E. Marcos in 1986.

³⁰ There are other books on Redemptorist history: HECHANOVA Luis G., CSsR, *The Baclaran Story*; FRUTO Ramon CSsR et al., *Being Sent. Redemptorist Mission in Mindanao 1975-2005*, Manila 2006; HODGINS Tom, CSsR, *Redemptorist Missions in Bicolandia 1954-2005*, Legazpi City, 2005.

³¹ Autori Vari, *The Franciscan Missionaries of Mary in the Philippines 1912-1966*, Manila 1996.

³² Autori Vari, *The Franciscan Missionaries of Mary....*, Manila 1996, 512.

The Provincial Superior of the FMM in her foreword to the book, stated that reading the book would allow one “to see more deeply the unfolding of the circumstances and choices, which under the guidance of the Spirit, marked and directed the journey of the Sisters from the early foundation years to the young post-conciliar years”.³³ Referring to the date the book was launched (29 May 1996, Solemnity of Pentecost), she declared:

“But more than the historical import of this month and year, the liturgical significance of this day seals the completion of this historical work with a special grace.”³⁴

According to Sr. Lydia Umipig, the history book took eight years to write, “from the initial efforts at research and translation in 1988 to the final printing in 1996”.³⁵ The content of the book, as listed in its table of contents, revealed an attempt to present the spirituality and not only the history of the FMM,³⁶ or better to see this particular history within the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Book 4 spoke of the many functions of history: that one may read history and be instructed, or one may listen to it and be inspired. It stated that this history was meant to be listened to since it contained direct quotes from the lived experience of the protagonist of the FMM history in the Philippines.³⁷

4.5.

The Society of Saint Paul SP wrote:

- ALINSANGAN Gil SSP (ed.), *Balik Saint Paul Seminary. A Grand Alumni Homecoming of all former SSP Seminarians. May 27-29, 2011, Silang Cavite and Makati City, Makati 2011.*

The Pauline Fathers produced a souvenir program for the homecoming of its former seminarians. But it incorporated a history of the SSP which was then celebrating the 75th year of its presence in the Philippines.³⁸ The souvenir program certainly was a means to recall the history of the SSP for it tried to tell the story of the SSP Province and Saint Paul Seminary, “interspersed with recollections of former seminarians” who agreed to write on the SSP.³⁹

The souvenir program contained a part entitled “Seminarians of the Society of St. Paul” that listed the members of the SSP Province who were ordained priests. But it also included the names of seminarians and indicated those who persevered.⁴⁰ The part entitled “SSP@75” told the story of the Society of St. Paul in the Philippines and in Macau that included the arrival of the two Pauline priests upon the invitation of the Salesian Apostolic Delegate Archbishop William Piani.⁴¹ It gave space to “Moments of Grace” that outlined events in the history of the SSP related with the jubilee celebration.

³³ Cf. Autori Vari, *The Franciscan Missionaries of Mary....*, 1.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁶ Prologue: A Flame of Fire; Book I: The Story: Foundations and Evolution of Works - Retracing our Steps in the Philippines; Book II: The Substance: The FMM Way of Life – Re-reading our Life with the Constitutions; Book III: The Spirit: A Profile of FMM Charism – Recapturing our Lived Charism with Mary of the Passion; Book IV: The Song: Deo Gratias – Resounding the Echoes of FMM Jubilation and Thanksgiving; Epilogue: Transitus and Transition.

³⁷ Autori Vari, *The Franciscan Missionaries of Mary....*, 484.

³⁸ Fr. Carlo Braga (1889-1971), who was then Provincial of the China Province, used to lodge with the Pauline Fathers when he came to Manila in the 1950s to negotiate for the coming of the Salesians to the Philippines.

³⁹ ALINSANGAN Gil SSP (ed.), *Balik Saint Paul Seminary. A Grand Alumni Homecoming of all former SSP Seminarians. May 27-29, 2011, Silang Cavite and Makati City, Makati 2011, 2.*

⁴⁰ Cf. ALINSANGAN SSP (ed.), *Balik Saint Paul Seminary*, Makati 2011, 7-35.

⁴¹ Cf. ALINSANGAN SSP (ed.), 36.

4.6.

The Daughters of Saint Paul wrote two books related to their history:

- Anna Lourdes BAGADIONG FSP, *A Journey of Faith. The Daughters of St. Paul of the Philippine-Malaysian-Papua New Guinean-Thai Province*, Manila 1998;

This was written for the 60th anniversary of the FSP's foundation in the Philippines.

- M. Cleofe ZANONI FSP, *Faithwatch. The Beginning and Early Growth of the Daughters of Saint Paul in the Philippines (1938-1988)*, (translated by FELIX Gloria FSP), Manila 1988.

The FSP's "A Journey of Faith" was written to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the presence of the Pauline Sisters in the Philippines as a Province that consisted of four countries. The author "gathered the bits and pieces of the Congregation's journey in the past 60 years and wrote down this history".⁴² It had a first edition in which only ten copies were printed in as much as it was not considered final. But after, Sr. Anna Lourdes Bagadiong improved it using archival materials and after published it.

Instead, "Faithwatch" was actually Sr. Cleofe's memoirs regarding the foundation and early years of the FSP in the Philippines. This was originally written in Italian, but it was translated by a Pauline sister "to give the later generations of Filipino Daughters of St. Paul the opportunity to re-live, even just vicariously, the life of faith, hope and courage of those Sisters who pioneered the foundation of the Institute in the Philippines fifty years ago".⁴³ It was written for the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the FSP in the Philippines. The author herself was one of the pioneers of the FSP.

4.7.

The Daughters of Charity of Canossia came up with two histories:

- CALABIA Rosario FdCC, *Filipina Missionaries in the Founding Canossian Mission in Asia*, Manila 2009.

- CALABIA Rosario FdCC (ed.), *Sacred Heart Province Philippines and PNG. Radiant at 50 1954-2004*, Manila 2004.

The "Filipina Missionaries in the Founding Canossian Mission in Asia" is a book on certain Filipinas who became Canossians even before the Canossians finally stayed in the Philippines. Earlier, a certain Canossian Sr. Haydee Librojo started to write a tribute to the first Filipina Missionaries in the foundation of the Canossian Missions in the Far East (1860-1910). Her collections of articles and researches, found in the FdCC archives in Hong Kong and Macau, served as material for the book.⁴⁴ However, the author, Sr. Rosario Calabia, used other secondary sources for the writing of the book: obituaries of sisters translated from Italian to English; History of the Canossian Missions. Nonetheless, the more original part of the work was the brief account of the opening of the Canossian mission in the Philippines since this was lifted from the chronicles of the foundation of the communities.

Instead, the "Sacred Heart Province Philippines and PNG. Radiant at 50 1954-2004" is a souvenir program for the 50th anniversary of the Canossians in the Philippines. Composed by an editorial team of Canossian sisters, it included messages of Canossian superiors, dates of activities related to the jubilee celebration, messages of the bishops where there were Canossian communities, pictures of sisters who were members of the communities. It also contained a photocronaca that provided a pictured time line of events that were considered as milestones related with the history of the Philippine Canossians (first

⁴² Cf. BAGADIONG Anna Lourdes FSP, *A Journey of Faith. The Daughters of St. Paul of the Philippine-Malaysian-Papua New Guinean-Thai Province*, Manila 1998.

⁴³ Cf. ZANONI M. Cleofe FSP, *Faithwatch. The Beginning and Early Growth of the Daughters of Saint Paul in the Philippines (1938-1988)*, (translated by FELIX Gloria FSP), Manila 1988, 7.

⁴⁴ Cf. CALABIA Rosario FdCC, *Filipina Missionaries in the Founding Canossian Mission in Asia*, Manila 2009, i.

provincial superior, first novice master, first Filipina representative to General Chapter, first bishop to welcome the Canossians, first international event held in the Philippines, etc.).⁴⁵ Indeed, the souvenir program was very informative; however, it did not give indications nor references where the information printed had been obtained. Moreover, the book numbered the pages that made it up.

4.8.

The Pious Disciples of the Divine Master produced a souvenir book regarding their presence in the Philippines:

- *Encounters and Transformations in 50 years [1956-2006]. 50 years of presence and service to the Church and Society in the Philippines*, Manila 2006. (Philippine-Taiwan-Hong Kong Province)

The “Encounters and Transformations in 50 years” presented merely the theme of the PDDM for its golden jubilee celebration. The words of the Provincial Superior gave the reason why the souvenir book was written:

“We are celebrating 50 years of God’s faithful love to us.... His love sustained our PDDM life and mission in the Philippine church and society. Fifty years of encounter with the Lord transformed our lives, we the ‘wonderful work of His hands’, and the ‘miracles of God’.”⁴⁶

The souvenir book, whose pages are unnumbered and which did not indicate neither any author nor editor nor writer, contained messages of ecclesiastical and government authorities, as well as the superiors of the religious order. It included the reminiscences of three of its pioneers who were still alive. Moreover, it gave a sketch of the important events of its 50-year history and listed the salient events of its jubilee year that started in August 2005 to August 2006.⁴⁷

4.9.

There are two books related to the history of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament:

- BRIONES Froilan Renato SSS (ed.), *Sacramentinos’ 50 Years in the Philippines (1957-2007) Eymard’s Love for the Eucharist: Guide for Expanding our SSS Mission*, Manila 2007.

- MATITU Joseph SSS (ed.), *Sta. Cruz Parish. Steadfast in Faith, Unwavering in Commitment*, Manila 2011.

The book “Sacramentinos” is a commemorative book of the 50th anniversary of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament celebrated in 15 August 2007 and that guided by the theme -- “Eymard’s Love for the Eucharist: Guide for Expanding our SSS Mission”. The author stated that he tried “to collate and compile all the pertinent materials from different sources”. He also tried to ask and to verify “some updates on the history of the arrival and presence of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament in the Philippines for the past fifty years”. He admitted that it “would be impossible to come up with a comprehensive presentation of the history of the SSS in such a limited time”. Nonetheless, the book was published in order to thank the people who had been instrumental “in the establishment and continued presence of the SSS”.⁴⁸ However, the preparations for coming out with the commemorative book

⁴⁵ The souvenir programs also contained “Fragments of History 1954-2004” that gives some details of the history of the Canossians in the Philippines: the prelude in Hong Kong; the first ten years (1954-1964); after the first ten years (1967-1971); towards new directions (1979-1997); a gift to the third millennium (2000- to the present).

⁴⁶ “Encounters and Transformations in 50 years [1956-2006]. 50 years of presence and service to the Church and Society in the Philippines”, Manila 2006, 3 (my paging).

⁴⁷ Cf. “Encounters and Transformations in 50 years [1956-2006], Manila 2006, 44-51 (my paging).

⁴⁸ BRIONES Froilan Renato SSS (ed.), *Sacramentinos’ 50 Years in the Philippines (1957-2007) Eymard’s Love for the Eucharist: Guide for Expanding our SSS Mission*, Manila 2007, introduction.

started as early as the last quarter of the year 2005. Its first two pages contained the “Historical Milestones of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament in the Philippines”, indicating the more important dates in the history of the SSS.⁴⁹

The History of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament in the Philippines is tied up with its history in Sta. Cruz Church in Manila. The book “Sta. Cruz Parish Steadfast in Faith, Unwavering in Commitment” is a souvenir book edited by an editorial team and published for the feast of Our Lady of Pillar that was celebrated that 17th October 2010. As in many books of this kind, celebrities connected with the religious order were invited to write some words of appreciation or exhortation that usually insinuate some historical tones to the publication.

The souvenir book included a brief history of Sta. Cruz Church for a reason:

“... because it is here where we can see the story line of God’s involvement in the lives of parishioners. It is in the history where we can see the uniqueness of the parish and get a glimpse of its self identity. In a few words many traditions have developed around and within the parish confines....”⁵⁰

Fr. Joseph Matitu SSS, head of the editorial team and parish priest, declared God’s involvement in the publication:

“I am sure the hands that are behind the putting together of the pages of this Souvenir Book that enshrines Sta. Cruz Parish’s interesting history, life and spirituality are that of God’s.”⁵¹

He simply admitted that the parish had very little sources (Church memorabilia, parish records, etc.) to base the writing of the souvenir book in as much as these have not been kept on account of confiscation, transfers, lootings, burnings, and possibly due to disinterest”.⁵² Nonetheless, he also revealed why he agreed in the writing of the book:

“... a parish benefactor, Mrs. Rufina Luy Lim, suggested to me, among other things, the preparation of a Souvenir Book as a good fundraising drive. I agreed right away as we needed more ways to accumulate funds to pay our debts incurred in building our pastoral center.”⁵³

However, the book can truly serve as a source of historical knowledge of Sta. Cruz Church.⁵⁴

4.10.

The Congregation of the Passion wrote a small book on its history:

BARDE Gwen CP, *Sprouting the Bamboo Cross: The Story of the Passionists in the Philippines with the Recollections of Fr. Hilarion Walters*, CP, Quezon City 2013.

The book “*Sprouting the Bamboo Cross*” is a very recent work of history of a religious order that first came in the Philippines in 1958. The author of the work executed the mandate of the Provincial

⁴⁹ Cf. BRIONES SSS (ed.), *Sacramentinos’ 50 Years in the Philippines (1957-2007)*, Manila 2007, 1-2.

⁵⁰ MATITU Joseph SSS (ed.), *Sta. Cruz Parish. Steadfast in Faith, Unwavering in Commitment*, Manila 2011, xi.

⁵¹ MATITU SSS (ed.), *Sta. Cruz Parish*, Manila 2011, xiii.

⁵² Cf. *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 31-196.

Legislation that asked for a written history of the Passionist Province of the Philippines ... a response to the desire “to have some formal writings on the beginnings of the Passionists in the Philippines”, the fulfillment of a dream “to have a history on record”.⁵⁵

The Provincial Superior of the Philippine Passionists explained that the book is no ordinary history book, in as much as it contains personal accounts given by Fr. Hilarion Walters, a 65 year veteran missionary who previously worked in China before he came to the Philippines. The fact was that the book was “an invaluable historical narrative as seen in relation to the Passionist religious life and ministry of Father Hilarion Walters”.⁵⁶ For Fr. Julio Villarente, the book was important for several reasons: to know the pastoral conditions that prompted the decision to begin the Passionist foundation in the Philippines; to meet the personalities responsible for the foundation; to feel the missionary zeal of the pioneer missionaries; for new missionaries to realize the need to adapt in the new territories where they find themselves.⁵⁷

5.

Looking at the histories that we have dealt with, we note the following things.

The **authors** of the histories written by the religious orders vary. The religious themselves wrote the histories: Sr. Cleofe Zanoni and Sr. Anna Lourdes Bagadiong for the FSP, Fr. Gwen Barde for the CP. But some asked the help of lay people who were professionally prepared to write the histories of the religious orders: Professor Jaime Veneracion for the ASOLC.

Most of the authors of these histories belong to the religious institutes whose history they wrote. They certainly had in their heart and concern to write the histories of their respective order.

The ASOLC had a “history committee” to translate in English the “Journey through Years”. Instead, “The Franciscan Missionaries of Mary in the Philippines 1912-1966” was written by a team of FMM sisters, just as the FdCC’s “Sacred Heart Province Philippines and PNG” was written by several FdCC sisters.

Some histories were translations from some other language: Sr. Cleofe’s memoirs were translated by another FSP, Sr. Gloria Felix; Prof. Veneracion’s “Paglalakbay sa Ibang Dekada” was translated by an ASOLC “history committee”.

Editors were also involved in writing the histories. Team writing demanded the appointment of one who would serve as editor of the contributions of others involved in the writing; Fr. Gil Alinsangan was editor of “Balik Saint Paul Seminary”; the laywoman Clarita Tambunting Ordoñez⁵⁸ edited the “Sing for Joy” of the Religious of the Assumption; the book on the history of its parish of Santa Cruz was written by an editorial team led Fr. Joseph Matitu.

⁵⁵ Cf. BARDE Gwen CP, *Sprouting the Bamboo Cross: The Story of the Passionists in the Philippines with the Recollections of Fr. Hilarion Walters CP*, Quezon City 2013, viii.

⁵⁶ Cf. BARDE CP, *Sprouting the Bamboo Cross: The Story of the Passionists in the Philippines....*, Quezon City 2013, xv.

⁵⁷ Cf. BARDE CP, viii.

⁵⁸ Clarita Tambunting Ordoñez is really one who was involved in the advertising industry and who was a graduate of the Assumption School and who was then a faculty member of the School.

But some of the histories did not even have authors attributed to them: the PPDM did not identify any author or authors for its “Encounters and Transformations in 50 years [1956-2006]” nor did the CSsR’s “Celebrating 100 Years of Redemptorist Mission” did not identify any author or authors too.

Moreover, some of the histories did not indicate their year of publication: the FMM’s “The Franciscan Missionaries of Mary in the Philippines” and the SSS’s “Sacramentinos”. Thus, one tried to deduce from the content the possible year of publication of the works.

Most of these works served as souvenirs and commemorations more than books of history. The dates of commemorations were certainly known. These programs were for popular divulgation and were not really meant to be scientific.

The histories of the religious orders provided sometimes **bibliographies** (RA, FMM), which listed the sources for the writing of their histories.

The bibliographies that are found sometimes at the end of the book enumerated the sources for the writing of the centennial book: books, publications, newspapers, reference works and unpublished materials. The last, as listed, are abundant. A more detailed study of the bibliographies can help in discovering what might be the status of the historiography of the FMM.

FSP’s bibliographies indicated very limited sources: Pauline Flame-Official News Bulletin of the PMPT Province (1970-1995), Fragments from past news bulletins of the congregation and the Pauline Family (Cose Nostre, Vita Nostra, Notiziario Paolino, Unione Cooperatori, Regina Apostolorum), Merlo Thecla, Sr. “Lettere della Prima Maestra to the pioneers and sisters of the Philippines. v. 1-5; Zanoni, M. Cleofe, Sr, “Faithwatch”.

The **footnotes** of the FMM’s history shows that materials used for the writing of its history are primary sources.

In the “Journey of the Spirit”, we find **appendices** documents related to the ASOLC.

The FSP’s “A Journey” provided appendices that listed the foundations of the religious congregation including those foundations which had been closed, as well as the Filipina missionaries and the governments of the PMPT Province. Moreover, it employed obituaries to write its history.

Moreover, most of the histories made very much use of **pictures**. And these that were used certainly helped for a photo-chronicle of the history of the religious orders. They, in fact, were often labeled indicating the places, event, persons and date related to the pictures. These certainly made the information written in the histories as accurate and precise.

Some congregations have made **interviews** of their pioneers that the writers generously used for writing their histories. These served as unpublished sources for the writers, serving as oral histories to be conserved and utilized in the future.

The histories are of various **sizes** ... from size 17.5 cm. by 12 cm. to 22.5 cm by 16.5 cm to 30 cm by 23.5 cm. They were hard bound or paper bound, of elegance or of simple make up, that perhaps reflected the financial capability of the religious institute who asked the writing of its history.

The **forewords** or introductions to the histories revealed the reasons for the writing of the history.

Here it is crucial, the pronouncements of the local superior (or provincial) since his was the stimulus and the order to write the history of the religious congregation he belonged to.

Moreover, the histories offered a **chronology of events** that the authors considered as meaningful and relevant to the religious congregations' history. (RA - The coffee table book contains information meaningful to the story of the Assumption Sisters in the Philippines: a list of foundations in its Philippine-Taiwan Province (308-309); a chronology of events of the Province (310-311).

The histories, being commemorative, had plenty of **messages**. As in many books of this kind, celebrities connected with the religious order are invited to write some words of appreciation or exhortation. These invited writers will usually insinuate some historical tunes or tones to the publication. Important personages were crucial for the religious to boost up its influence and how they have been influential.

With all these, however, the histories are a good source of information regarding the religious orders that produced them.

6.

Some Conclusions

On the Historiography

To write history by the religious orders was certainly not easy. This was very obvious when they did not have people prepared to write history. But the religious orders attempted to do so, within the limits that there were within and outside them. They researched on whatever materials, whether primary or secondary, unpublished or published.

The effort to write the history of the religious congregation is sometimes collective – that is, several members of the religious congregation and non-members of the religious congregation pooled together to write the history of the religious congregation concerned. This certainly helped to involve experts and non-experts of history, of those knowledgeable and non-knowledgeable of history and the method of writing history. However, there were also solo authors of the history who were also prepared to write in as much as they were historians by their own right.

I have found very few real histories, scientifically written because they are based on documents duly kept in archives. This is alarming: it can serve as a measure of the historical sensitivity of the religious at work in the Philippines.

There is the reality of the so-called coffee table books and souvenir programs. Some religious orders believe that coffee table or commemorative books and souvenir programs are enough in order to say that they have written their history.

One gets the impression that the drama of the early years in the history of the religious orders had been spiritualized. There seemed to be hesitancy to recall the real difficulties of the past created by human limitations and difficulties. In a way, this reality has been left to the hands of God but not in the hands of men who perhaps could have corrected the tensions that were really man made.

I consider the histories studied as still very selective in its content and not sufficiently integrated in the context and reality that the religious orders found themselves. For in writing their histories, the religious orders seemed more concerned with the works they were actually doing and not so much on the historical re-construction of what they have started and what they were continuing to do. At the same time, there seemed little preoccupation yet with the care of previous documents the religious orders

have acquired and were actually acquiring. However, in most cases, the production was aimed to divulge but with little documentation. There was seemingly difficulty in distinguishing story from history. Nonetheless, there were also those who were conscious of the risks of losing for always precious materials and pages that would be useful for the knowledge of their history and its future writing. At the same time, there were those who attempted their histories with a critical sense and attentive to their historical contexts.

The histories studied revealed the need by the religious orders for “skilled historians”, or preparing people to study and to write their histories. This, certainly, was more than their efforts to conserve documents in archives in order to have resources in the writing of history. The fact was that there were not so many who were prepared to be historians of their religious orders. On the contrary, the impression was that much improvisation was done in the writing of their histories. The coffee table and commemorative books and souvenir programs, indeed, provided information on the religious orders but with no documentary evidence.

The ones who were more sensitive to the writing of the history of their religious orders were their foreign members. Possibly, these foreign members were the ones who had the culture for history and who had the sensitivity for their congregation’s historical patrimony.

Nonetheless, the books we have studied, in spite of their limitations, contained histories that cannot be disregarded. These histories certainly contained many “fragments of history” that contribute to the knowledge of the religious orders.

However, the sources of the information used for the histories were not recognized nor indicated. Footnoting was certainly and constantly absent in most of these histories.

On the conservation of the cultural patrimony

There was a great concern to create archives and to maintain existing archives. Nonetheless, there was practically no trained archivist for the creation and maintenance of archives. The impression one got was that the work of archiving and maintaining was given to an elderly religious who perhaps have not much to do anymore. Nonetheless, there were some lay people who were put as in-charge of archives, who at the end, were more knowledgeable of what sources there were for the writing of history, as well as what had been written as history of the religious order.

The fact was that some religious orders had started to provide a place “exclusively” for the conservation of documents. These felt need to gather, carefully select and order the documentation, even availing of new technical means to ensure the permanence of the documents gathered.

The religious orders came to the Philippines under various circumstances: the invitation of bishops; the expulsion of their co-religious from China; the desire to continue to provide a Catholic education to the young of the Philippines; the wish to live their charism in a country that has not yet been known to them. But in the writing of their history, there seems not to have been the effort to connect to their past.

The drama of their coming might not have been recalled.

Once more, there seemed really no one prepared to write the history of one’s own religious institute. Moreover, there is not much interest too in the writing of history. A seeming conviction was that a coffee table book regarding the religious order’s foundation was good enough as history.

Reading through the messages, one got the impression that the superiors of the religious were the one who lacked that sense of history so that they perhaps did little to the care for the conservation of the historical patrimony of their religious order.