Pro Tutela Fidei: St. Paul of Chartres's Missionary Zeal during the American Colonization of the Philippines(1904–1946)

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ABSTRACT

The United States' benevolent assimilation of the Philippines in the 1898 Treaty of Paris led to a huge backlash against the three centuries of Hispanic Catholicism in the country. Consequently, Protestant missionaries and the Aglipayans flourished in the archipelago while a huge number of Filipinos started to deflect from the Catholic faith. This colonial transition entailed protecting Catholicism and the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres (SPC) were among those who responded to the call of evangelization, dedicating themselves to education, care of the sick, and Catholic ministry among the underprivileged. The SPC Sisters were the first of European congregations to come to the Philippines with their missionary efforts during the American rule, forging a collective narrative of how the Church struggled and grappled with the social issues of the times. This study utilized interviews and dutifully examining the archives of the congregation to trace SPC's journey in that period, chronicled the congregation's odyssey as it relentlessly displayed evangelical zeal, courage, and valor while taking on the challenge of *Pro Tutela Fidei* (for the protection of the faith).

Keywords: Pro Tutela Fidei, Congregation of the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres (SPC), American Colonization, Missionary Zeal

Historical Background

After a long struggle against the Spanish rule, without respite, the Filipinos had to face a new colonizer. On December 10, 1898, the Treaty of Paris was concluded and signed by the plenipotentiaries at Paris, France. Although the treaty desired to end the state of war between the United States of America and the beleaguered Spain, this also signaled the occupation by the United States of the territory of the Philippines as stipulated in Article III. Spain ceded the Philippines to the United States for twenty million dollars ($20,000,000) payment within three months after the exchange of the ratifications.

At the onset, the Americans tried many strategies to "pacify" the natives. The Spaniards used education as an instrument of evangelization during their colonization of the country, while the Americans adhered to the principle of the separation of the Church and State. During the American regime, starting from the military governors, the Americans introduced a secular public system patterned after that in the United States which brought both the military and civil governments into conflict with the representatives of the Catholic Church (Gowing, 1969).[1]

[1] In 1910, the Director of Education in the Philippines, David P. Barrows concluded that with the organization of civil government by the Taft Commission, education was made the main feature of the administration (Barrows, David P. (1910). What May Be Expected from Philippine Education? The Journal of Race Development, Vol. 1 No. 2 (Oct. 1910), p. 160.

As early as 1900, the Philippine school system changed dramatically when the Americans established the public schools. Although this was not entirely new because even during the Spanish regime, Philippine education had also undergone several innovations, (Sunga, Santos, & de Jesus, 1999)[2] the Public School System changed the landscape of the academe. Private School System including Catholic schools, and other educational institutions established by other denominations and private entities were allowed to put up and operate schools, (Layugan, 2012) but most of the population were served by the public school system which did not advocate any religious instruction. Many of the Catholic educational institutions founded or administered by various religious congregations were in response to the call of Catholic bishops during a time of crisis in the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines (Layugan, 2012). American bishops such as Bishop Dennis J. Dougherty and Bishop Frederick Z. Rooker called on the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres (SPC) to establish schools in their respective dioceses in Dumaguete, Vigan, Tuguegarao, and Manila.

Collective Memory

The Filipino Jesuit historian John N. Schumacher believes that one aspect of the history of the Philippine Church that has been badly neglected is the valuable role of religious women in shaping the nation's history (Schumacher,1979). The contribution of religious women in transforming Philippine society seems to have been overlooked for the most part. Education was the sole apostolate of many of these religious congregations, and the work continued growing despite the many obstacles throughout the decades. An in-depth research on the magnanimous work of these Sister-educators in the Philippine society will give them due credence and honor their decades-long commitment.

The history of the missions of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres (SPC) in the Philippines has spanned more than a century -- from 1904 up to present. The dedication and determination of the Sisters of the SPC Congregation had surpassed two world wars, economic collapse, martial law, natural disasters and COVID-19 pandemic. Their works deserve to be written as part of the collective history of the Philippine. This religious institution not only imparts the requirements of the curriculum, but also nurtures a culture befitting its mission. As the school grows and develops, society recognizes its varied contributions and relevance to history, and witnesses how it progresses to "a precise economy of time in order to be effective." Thus, to better understand the existence of an institution, one has to know the interactions of human agents with the social structures that were created, re-created, and participated in by men through the years.

Quae Mari Sinico

The colonial transition from the Spaniards to the Americans left many aspects of Philippine society in shambles. For many, it was not easy to dispense the Hispanic culture implanted in their system for more than three centuries. To uproot something that have long been ingrained as cherished traditions was unthinkable, even repulsive.

The world had witnessed how Catholicism and Protestantism clashed in tradition, dogma,

[2] During the Spanish colonial administration of the Philippines, the government issues royal orders for the improvement of education, one of these was Queen Isabela II's Royal Decree of December 20, 1863. The decree initiated the public school system of primary schools in the Philippines; gave detailed instructions for primary schools for boys and girls to be established throughout the Archipelago; established a normal school under the direction of the Jesuits; and created the Board of Public Instruction.

structure, and liturgy and this also manifested itself in many ways in Southeast Asia. When the Americans colonized the Philippines, they found the educational undertaking extremely difficult because of the "deep-rooted differences among the people in language, religion, and customs" (Villarroel, 2012). Thus, the sending of Protestant missionaries in the Philippines by the Americans inevitably confronted the religion implanted by the *conquistadores*. Jacob Schurman, president of the Schurman Commission, listed religion under the motives of the United States for acquiring the Philippines:

> *…(6)religious- to provide new mission fields for American Protestant Christian missionaries.* Of significant interest is the account of Dr. Jacob Schurman, president of Cornell University and chairman of the First Philippine Commission, on the U.S. motives in acquiring the Philippines… (Schurman,1902, p. 465)

American altruism and Protestantism led to a strong resentment against Catholic orders and congregations (Gleeck, 1976). The Americans promoted a public elementary education adhering to the principle of the separation of the Church and State and granting the new Protestant missionaries free reign to operate in schools. In April 1901, the Evangelical Union of the Philippine Islands recommended the arrangement and division of responsibility among Protestant denominations: the United Brethren was assigned in La Union, Ilocos Sur, and Ilocos Norte; while the Methodist Mission was assigned to the provinces of Cagayan Valley, Nueva Vizcaya, and Isabela (Schumacher, 1987).

The wave of Protestantism in the Philippines challenged Catholic education and primed new evangelizers such as Isabelo de los Reyes and Bishop Gregorio Aglipay who separated from the Church of Rome and founded the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* (IFI) in 1902. Indirectly the church of Aglipay-De los Reyes cemented the presence of Protestantism in the Philippines (Schumacher, 1987).

Aside from Protestantism, the Masons who had been persecuted by the Spanish authorities were active and out in the open (Gleeck, 1977). These developments alarmed the Catholic hierarchy. In January, 1904, Archbishop Jeremiah Harty took the helm of the Manila archdiocese, with the mandate of addressing Protestant proselytization and rally the Catholic cause in schools, lay organizations and charitable activities. Protestant leaders complained against the establishment of the 903 Catholic schools between 1903 and 1918, and contested that Catholicism was aimed at supplanting the public school system in which the American government took such great pride (Gleeck, 1977).

In the analysis of the Jesuit priests, Fr. Pedro Achutegui, SJ and Fr. Miguel Bernard, SJ (Achutegui & Bernard, 1961), the influx of Protestantism, Masonry, and Aglipayanism, motivated Pope Leo XIII to send the first apostolic delegate to the Philippines, Louis Chapelle. Pope Leo XIII also "withdrew the Spanish friar-bishops from the Philippines and sent American bishops instead: Archbishop Harty to Manila, Bishop Dougherty to Vigan, Bishop Rooker to Jaro, and Bishop Hendrick to Cebu (Achutegui & Bernard, 1961, pp. 350-351)."

The apostolic constitution *Quae Mari Sinico* issued by Pope Leo XIII supplanted the old laws governing the Church in the Philippines. Signed in Rome on September 17 and promulgated in the Philippines on December 8, 1902, by the new Apostolic Delegate, Giovanni Battista Guidi, the constitution was meant to reorganize and reform the Church in the Philippines (de Castro, 2015). One of its more urgent provisions was the directive to hold a Provincial Council as soon as possible. The Manila Council of 1907 resulted to the creation of new dioceses, and one of those created in 1910

was the Diocese of Tuguegarao. The constitution's six provision emphasized the role of missions in every province that requires one mission house with about eight religious missionaries ((Achutegui & Bernard, 1972). This facilitated the arrival of more Catholic religious women to the Philippines, ensuring the establishment and maintenance of private and religious education in the country. These private schools rendered an invaluable service and served as a formidable foundation against complete Americanization of the islands (Hayden, 1942).

Though the government allowed Protestantism and its missionaries to evangelize, Protestantism was less attractive to the Filipinos than Catholicism had been.[3] Historian Bonifacio Salamanca quoting Frank Laubach observes that rituals and ceremonies of the Protestants were less pompous and did not inspire awe and fear. Thus, says Salamanca, "it is not a mere coincidence that the Methodists, with their emotional-packed revivals accounted for over thirty percent of all Protestant communicants, Protestantism also had to contend with a well-entrenched Catholic Church (Salamanca, 1968, p. 110)."

The Census of 1918 shows that in Cagayan, the Catholics had stronger supporters than the Aglipayans and Protestants. The Catholics had 78.7 percent while the Aglipayans had 16.1 and the Protestants had 1.6 percent (Salamanca, 1968). But as the years went by, Catholic and Protestant schools learned to co-exist with the primary objective of serving the Filipinos through education. In St. Paul University Tuguegarao, during the early years of the American regime, as recalled by Sr. Nilda Masirag, SPC, who was once a student and teacher at the school, based on what the elder Sisters had shared during their Sisters' Forum, said:

> There was a Catholic religion subject then, even if the Americans allowed Protestantism. Later, in the tertiary level, the religion subject became Theology, then to Christian Living. As far as I know, what I've heard, Catholic schools were free to offer institutional subjects like religious education. The Americans were not very strict, so there was a kind of tolerance given to them. I've never heard that the Americans stopped the SPC Sisters from offering religion subjects. Actually, there were even religious activities held in the school during those days. These activities were something different from what the public schools and other non-Catholic schools offered. As far as I am concerned, I am more privileged than those students who graduated from the schools classified as non-Catholic and non-sectarian. The kind of training that I've got from St. Paul University Tuguegarao was not only on the development of my intellect but my whole person. My family was very religious, and my religiosity was enhanced and enriched because of the instruction that I've learned from the school. So, the influence of St. Paul to me was great.[4]

For the Protection of the Faith (Pro Tutela Fidei)

Founded by Father Louis Chauvet in 1696 in Levisville-la-Chenard, a small village in France, the Congregation of the Sisters of SPC is devoted to their

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[4] Sr. Nilda Masirag, SPC is currently the President of St. Paul University Quezon City and Provincial Assistant for Education of SPC Philippine Province.

three-fold mission of education, health care, and pastoral ministry among the underprivileged. Their presence in the Philippines began when Bishop Frederick Z. Rooker, an American Bishop of the Diocese of Jaro, Iloilo, from 1903 to 1907, invited them to work with him in his diocese. As a reply, seven SPC Sisters from Saigon arrived in Dumaguete, Negros Oriental on October 29, 1904, and eventually established a school (Santiago, 2003, pp. 31-35). Bishop Rooker told the Sisters that their mission was, "for the religious instruction of the children and protection of the faith *(pro tutela fidei)* (Ang, 2011, p. 11)."[5] The bishop knew that part of the missionary work of SPC was to establish Catholic private schools for the furtherance of Catholic education Sunga, Santos, & de Jesus, 1999). Months before the arrival of the SPC Sisters in Dumaguete, Bishop Rooker wrote a letter to Mo. Candide, SPC, explaining that the SPC Sisters are needed in his diocese to counter the presence of Protestantism:

> Dumaguete on the eastern side of the island of Negros Oriental, the most lovely corner that I have seen in the islands. The people are good, devoted, and generous. Your presence there is necessary because the Presbyterians are there to stay and very active. You could start with an elementary school for little girls and little boys up to the age of ten. Afterward, if you desire to extend into other fields of endeavor, I assure you of my encouragement all the time (Deza & Quitoriano, 2004, p. 32).

The SPC Sisters were impelled to do charity works and to counter the Organic School Act (Act No. 74), enacted in 1900 by the Americans, which prohibited the teaching of religion in public schools (Deza & Quitoriano, 2004). This American ordinance continued up to 1910.

> I9I0: Period of Organization and Orientation. Public schools were established with curricula of instruction based on the American pattern and, in the main, with American books, and with English as the medium of instruction. Religious instruction was prohibited in the classroom. The object was to prepare the people for self-government, with strong initial emphasis on training personnel for the government service (Orata, 1956, p. 160).

The influx of religious Catholic women congregations in the Philippines can be traced back to the reign of Spain in the Philippines but it continued until late 19th century (Deza & Quitoriano, 2004).

> …in addition to the contemplative nuns of Santa Clara, the Beaterio of Santa Catalina and the Beaterio dela Compañia – and somewhat later, the Recoleto-directed beaterio – began to be more active in education. They were joined by new European congregations, particularly the Daughters of Charity (1862),

[5] Pope Leo XIII in his previous encyclical Spectata Fides in 1885 addressed to the Venerable Brethren, Henry Edward, Cardinal Priest of the Holy Roman Church, of the Title of SS. Andrew and Gregory on the Coelian Hill, Archbishop of Westminster, and the other Bishops of England, emphasized in paragraph four that "…in the present condition of the world, when the tender age of childhood is threatened on every side by so many and such various dangers, hardly anything can be imagined more fitting than the union with literary instruction of sound teaching in faith and morals." The pope explained the importance of the Catholic schools as he exhorted that "For it is in and by these schools that the Catholic faith, our greatest and best inheritance, is preserved whole and entire."

> who took over the various hospitals of the church and some of the older schools for women; as well as the Augustinian Sisters (1883), and the French Assumption Sisters (1892) (Schumacher, 1979, pp. 344–345).

Many religious women workers continued to be assigned in the Philippines.

> The arrival of the new religious congregations in the country with the purpose of either establishing works of charity or assisting their brother congregations here also ushered in the founding of more Catholic private schools. The role of religious women during this period in the light of the furtherance of Catholic education should be cited such as: the ICM Sisters (1910) who joined the CICMs, the Holy Spirit Sisters (1912) who joined the SVDs, the *Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres* (1904), the Benedictine Sisters (1906), the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (1912), and the Good Shepherd Sisters (1912). Their schools eventually opened aided greatly in promoting and strengthening the Catholic faith among the youth (Sunga, Santos, & de Jesus, 1999, p. 271).[6]

The SPC Sisters in Vigan and Tuguegarao

At the turn of the 19th century, Bishop Frederick Z. Rooker of Jaro called the SPC Sisters to establish a school in Dumaguete. At about the same time in Vigan, the Aglipayans were flourishing in the Ilocos region and Republic Act No. 74 was already being implemented. Bishop Dennis Dougherty, then Bishop of Nueva Segovia requested the Principal Superior of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres for the Extreme Orient, Mother Candide, for missionary Sisters to be assigned to Vigan, Ilocos Sur. On 5 June 1905, SPC Sisters arrived in Vigan and began their mission. Bishop Dougherty was well pleased with the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres and in less than two years of their zealous work, the SPC Sisters' dedication in educating the youth was beyond any doubt. Bishop Dougherty's next move was to bring the Sisters of St. Paul to Tuguegarao, a region located in the eastern side of the vast diocese of Nueva Segovia.

Bishop Dennis Dougherty's jurisdiction as Bishop of the Diocese of Nueva Segovia, with its seat in Vigan, encompassed the provinces of Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Ilocos, Mountain Province, Abra and Pangasinan. He first called the SPC Sisters to perform missionary works in Vigan, and in 1906, pressed Monsignor Ambrose Agius for a new house in Tuguegarao, the capital of Cagayan (Santiago, 2003). On 17 August, 1906, Bishop Agius wrote Mother Candide, SPC about Bishop Dougherty's intention, which Mother Candide, SPC favoured (Santiago, 2003).

In the study of Sister Theresina Santiago, SPC, existing records offer differing information on both the number and the names of the first group of Sisters who were sent to Tuguegarao. Mother Marie Paul Bord, SPC records four French Sisters and a Filipina postulant, Sister Fe del Sagrado Corazon. The four French Sisters were: Mother Ephrem Marie Fieu, Sister Anna de la Croix, Sister Agnes de Sainte Anne Couplan, and Sister Jeanne de St. Louis Bourrelly and Sister Santa Fe del Sagrado Corazon, who was still a postulant (Navarro, 1994). According to the records

[6] *See* also Schumacher, John N., S.J. (1979). *Readings in the Philippine Church History*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University, p. 345. (Emphasis mine)

registered from the Archives of the Mother House, Sister Anna de la Croix arrived in Tuguegarao only in 1909, so it was Sister Suzanne du Sacré Coeur de Cran who was with the first group.

Due to the growing influence of the American public school system and Aglipayans, the people of Tuguegarao requested Bishop Dougherty to commission the SPC Sisters to establish a Catholic school there (Navarro, 1994).

At the time of the arrival of the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres in 1907, Tuguegarao still belonged to the Diocese of Nueva Segovia and the seat was still in Vigan. The five Sisters took a boat from Manila and travelled along the western coast of Luzon, passed by Vigan and then proceeded to Aparri.[7] They received warm welcome from the parish priest, Don Antonio Pablo, and his niece, Primitiva Allam, who was to be their first pupil. From Aparri, they transferred to a barge, known as *barangay*, and sailed along the Cagayan River for two days until they finally reached Tuguegarao. Historical record shows that Bishop Dougherty himself accompanied the Sisters from Vigan to Tuguegarao in spite of the difficulties of travel during those days. Another shows that Bishop Dougherty was at the river landing with the parish priest, Father Estanislao Mendoza, a Dominican, and a delegation of the town of Tuguegarao, to welcome the Sisters. But whichever be the case, the Sisters received warm welcome. With the joyous ringing of the church bells, the people who welcomed them brought the Sisters to the Church for the *Te Deum*.

According to Sr. Navarro (1994), an old abandoned and dilapidated Spanish convent adjoining St. Peter Church became their cloister and school building. Both the church and the convent were built between 1761 and 1768 (Hornedo, 2002). The convent was once called *Colegeio de Santa Imelda* which was founded by the Dominican Sisters of Beaterio de Manila, but this was closed after just a few months of operation when the town was occupied by Col. Daniel Tirona (Santiago, 2003).[8] In 1901, this convent was re-opened by the Dominican Fathers who also established a school for boys and called it *Colegio de San Jacinto*. In 1907, this school was entrusted to the care of the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres . (Santiago, 2003)

The Sisters kept their ground even as natural disasters such as earthquakes and typhoons, hit both the church and the convent. Only the convent's foundation and thick walls survived. They faced the challenges with dauntless *Levesvillean*[9] spirit, Pauline missionary zeal and Christ-like love. The townspeople helped them reconstruct the building. Tuguegarao was a rich supplier of quality tobacco which had a good market, and the supply usually exceeded the demand. So part of the surplus was allotted to the repair of the *convento*.

SPC Sisters in Manila and Quezon City

The establishment of the Quezon City started with the acquisition of territories and approval by the legislature. Since Old Manila was congested, an establishment of a new home was necessary. This scenario was parallel to the decision of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres to extend the mission of their growing congregation by

[7] The SPC Congregation also established a school in Aparri on 31 May 1924. Originally called Sacred Heart of Mary's Institution (SHOMI), St. Paul School of Aparri was founded as a sister-institution of Sacred Heart of Jesus Institution (SHOJI) in Tuguegrao, in response to the appeal of the prominent families of the locality desiring Catholic education for their children.

[8] On the accounts of the Dominicans' houses in Luzon, in the mission houses of the Dominicans in Cagayan including Tuguegarao *see* Villaroel, F., O.P. (1999). *The Dominicans and the Philippine revolution 1896–1903*. UST Publishing House, p. 268.

[9] Levesville was the first school established by the congregation's founder, Fr. Louis Chauvet in France.

putting up a new Provincial house and Novitiate in New Manila, Quezon City.

As far back as 1911, St. Paul of Chartres in the Philippines opened a formation house for the young Filipinas who sought admission into the Congregation in Malate, Manila (Santiago, 2003). This swampy land was bought by Sister Thérèsa Verdier, the first Provincial Superior in 1911 (Santiago, 2003). In the succeeding years, the Sisters also put up a school in Malate and opened a Kindergarten as requested by the parents of the neighborhood. As the community was growing and the school's enrollees were increasing, the place was no longer conducive for the Sisters to perform their spiritual obligations. The noise coming from the school disturbed the serene life of the novitiate. Hence, a viable solution was to look for a new abode that would suit their needs. That place was New Manila.

Doña Magdalena Ysmael de Hemady operated a realty which practically owned the land in the entire New Manila. She had many houses for rent during those days (Festin-Baybay & Quezon, 2008). In 1930, the SPC Sisters bought a piece of land in Gilmore where their nearest neighbors were the Carmelite Sisters' Convent, a small rest house of Belgian Sisters and the Congregatio Immaculati Cordis Mariae (CICM) Sisters on Fourteenth Street (Sr. Caritas de St. Paul Sevilla, SPC, personal communication, March 24, 2009). At that time, the price of land was low, but to prove this claim with a land title registry is difficult since many documents were destroyed during World War II. However, a comparison could be made through ratio and proportion. According to the daughter of President Manuel Quezon, Maria Zenaida "Nini" Quezon-Avanceña, she saw the land title of their house in Gilmore worth only at least three (3) pesos per square meter (Festin-Baybay, 2008). But they acquired ownership of this lot when Pres. Quezon got well from his lung ailment only after 1940 and paid for this property by installment basis (Festin-Baybay & Quezon, 2008). There was a gap of more than ten years between the acquisition of land by the SPC Sisters and the Quezons in New Manila. Considering that the value of land increases over time, it can be concluded that the approximate price of lot that the SPC Congregation bought was lower than the price of lot that President Quezon bought.

Though St. Paul College in Manila opened as a school in 1912, the Sisters did not set up a school upon their acquisition of a place in New Manila, as this action was inconsistent with the motive of the Congregation to transfer its Novitiate. It is worthy to mention however, that one of the missionary works of Catholic Missionary Congregations was to establish Catholic private schools for the furtherance of the Catholic education (Sunga, Santos, & de Jesus, 1999). Hence, the opening of new schools was a priority.

In 1937, Bill No. 3307 which introduced religious instruction in public schools was filed in Congress. This bill was not against the country's charter since under Article XIV Section 5 of the Commonwealth Constitution, the sectarian instruction was still allowed (Sunga, Santos, & de Jesus, 1999). But Quezon vetoed it. This decision of President Quezon encouraged the religious and lay missionaries to put up Catholic private schools to propagate the teachings of the Church in the Protestant-dominated government. However, the Sisters of St. Paul in Quezon City did not immediately construct a school. An analysis of the social, political, and religious situations that time suggests that the reason why the SPC in New Manila did not immediately construct a school because it was untimely due to the conflict between the Manila Archbishop Michael J. O'Doherty and President Quezon about Bill 3307 (Schumacher, 1979). In addition, President Quezon had a house in Gilmore Avenue near the location of the house of the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres. These were probably

the reasons why the Sisters of SPC in New Manila did not establish a school during the Commonwealth period.

The Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres During the Japanese Occupation

The Provincialate in Quezon City was celebrating a Holy Mass for the Sisters of Perpetual Profession on December 8, 1941, when the Japanese bombed Nichols Airfield and all the guests returned to their houses immediately after the Mass (Sr. Caritas, personal communication, March 24, 2009). Midnight of Christmas Day, 1941 was an unforgettable day for the Sisters of SPC as recalled by a French Sister (Deza & Quitoriano, 2004). Bombs fell incessantly and there was a total blackout. Such proximate danger forced the Provincialate and Novitiate residents in New Manila, the sick, the aged, the convalescent numbering around 75 to flee to St. Paul College Manila, 12 kilometers away.

After the relentless attacks of the Japanese forces in Manila, the United States Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) declared Manila an open city on January 2, 1942. This declaration was a safety measure to prevent further destruction caused by the war. Another preventive action was the act of Archbishop Michael J. O'Doherty to ask the leader of the Japanese Imperial Army for protection of the churches built by the people (Sunga, Santos, & de Jesus, 1999). Lieutenant Colonel Naruzawa, the head of Hodobu, a religious section created by the Japanese to handle religious matters, agreed to the request of Archbishop O'Doherty. He then posted a leaflet prepared by the Kempeitai 'military police' on all churches and all religious buildings to safeguard them from destruction.

However, the protection of the churches will be possible only if the people support the military objectives of the Japanese Imperial Administration. The leaflet issued by the Chief of the Religious Section reads as follows:

> It is the desire of the Imperial Japanese Army to foster freedom of religious worship and it seeks to do everything possible for the protection of the Christian churches and therefore does not anticipate activities harmful to the progress of its task. The Imperial Japanese Army addresses all Christians and asks the full cooperation of spiritual leaders and laymen worshipers in the establishment of that mutually prosperous sphere in Greater East Asia and of a just peace throughout the civilized world (Sunga, Santos, & de Jesus, 1999, p. 245).

The negotiation between Archbishop O'Doherty and Lt. Col. Naruzawa was clear on paper but there were instances that this was violated by the Japanese. The violations intensified in 1944 when the Axis Power was on the brink of losing to the Allied Forces. This situation was like what happened in Germany between Archbishop Eugene Pacelli and the Nazi government of Adolf Hitler. The Nazis promised to protect the religious rights of the people in Germany under Concordat, but violations of the agreement by the Nazis were rampant.

The Japanese Occupation did not dishearten the Church whose vigor to serve was strengthened. Much of that vigor was to be demonstrated in the years of the war, by Priests, Brothers, Sisters, and dedicated Catholic lay person. While numerous foreign priests and religious were interned in prison camps from the beginning, some managed to maintain relative freedom for some time, but eventually suffered the same fate (Schumacher, 1979). There were so many tales of heroism during that time and one of them was the story of Sister Suzanne du Sacré Coeur Cran. Sister Suzanne was the directress of the Novices of

the Sisters of SPC in New Manila during these years of trials. She led the Novitiate to flee to Malate from New Manila. The Quezon City community was able to return to New Manila for only a short while because in May 1944, the Japanese decided to occupy the premises (Deza & Quitoriano, 2004).

The Japanese asked the residents of the Novitiate and Provincialate in New Manila to vacate the building and the once holy place was desecrated by the invaders, who turned it to barracks and stationed Japanese armies to guard the area from the assaults of the guerillas (Sr. Caritas de St. Paul Sevilla, personal communication, March 24, 2009). They even dug up dungeon that passes from the Pacific Avenue (later called Hemady) Gate to the main building (interview with Sr. Caritas). After the war, there were skeletons found in the dungeon.

The Sisters evacuated to St. Paul College in Malate when the Japanese Imperial Army commandeered their New Manila residence. In July, the Japanese also demanded the Malate Sisters and the New Manila evacuees to vacate St. Paul College Institution in Manila (Deza & Quitoriano, 2004). The SPC Sisters from Malate found refuge with the Belgian Sisters at St. Theresa's College in San Marcelino while the community of Sister Suzanne du Sacré Coeur of New Manila went to Baguio in a crowded open truck. Through streets with exploding bombs, in the eerie dark night of cold and sadness, they arrived on foot in Notre Dame de Lourdes in Baguio City (Santiagoo, 2003). The professed Sisters did not stay together but divided into two groups: one in Sta. Lucia's Institute in Ilocos Sur, and the other to the Hospital Español de Santiago in Manila.

In 1945, General Douglas McArthur fulfilled his promise to return to the Philippines. During the Battle of Manila and in many places of the country, the Japanese committed greater atrocities out of desperation hence the joint military force of the Americans and the Filipinos launched a series of offensive attacks to destroy the enemy. Due to these encounters, the Provincialate House in New Manila was burned and was left an empty shell (Deza & Quitoriano, 2004). After the war, the SPC Sisters stayed for one year in Rosary Academy in Vigan while the damaged building was reconstructed.

When the Sisters of SPC returned to their house in New Manila after its reconstruction, temporary additions were added to the existing buildings to provide classrooms for Kindergarten and Grade School in 1946. The school was the response of the Sisters to the request of parents in the neighborhood and in answer to their growing concern over the educational crisis brought about by the destruction of many schools during the war (Manapol and Sevilla, 1991). The new school was considered then a branch of St. Paul College of Manila. Sister Isabel of the Angels, SPC was the principal of the Grade School which had a population of 150 students, from Kindergarten to Grade Six.

The Missionary Zeal of SPC Sisters

For SPC Sisters, their mission to propagate Catholic education in the Philippines began in 1904, during a tumultuous time of the country's colonial transition threatened by the decadence of religious conviction. The SPC Sisters' *fiat* paved way to a concrete act of dedication in establishing schools from different regions of the archipelago. From Dumaguete in 1904 and not long after, three more Paulinian schools were established during the American Period namely, *Colegio San Pablo* (St. Paul University in Tuguegarao) in 1907, *St. Paul's Institution* (St. Paul University in Manila) in 1911, and *San Nicolas College* (St. Paul University in Surigao). In 1946, after the destruction of numerous schools during the war, SPC Sisters founded *St. Paul School of Nursing* (St. Paul College in Iloilo) and St. Paul College in Quezon City.

One of the reasons for the presence of SPC Sisters in the Philippines was to propagate and protect the Catholic faith to counteract the influx of Protestant missionaries that proliferated during the American regime. They were invited by the Bishops from different dioceses to help the Church in teaching the Filipinos on Catholic principles. But the mission was not easy. They needed a place where they could serve God and render compassion to the populace at the same time. With the grace from God, they were able to secure houses in the provinces and one in Malate where they set up a Novitiate and school at the same time. When the population grew, they expanded to New Manila but did not establish a school until 1946. It could be analyzed that it was untimely for the Sisters to put a school because of the religious and political conflicts during those years.

The war years hindered the works of love of the Sisters. Their houses were overtaken by the Japanese Imperial Forces. Even though there was a peace negotiation between the church hierarchy and the representative of the Japanese for the religious, still atrocities were committed and the Sisters were not exempted from experiencing these. The houses that they built were bombed, destroyed, and desecrated during the last encounter of the Allied forces and the Japanese Army. After the war, the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres established a school in response to the request of the people in the community.

Historical memory is very significant because it implies a rich choice of ways of looking at society. It is concerned not only about the past but also the interrelationships of individuals with each other, as well as the factors that affect the interrelationships. The dynamism of religion and politics was very relevant as the two entities went along with the current of time, and one being embedded with the other contributed a lot to their interactions. In the case of the experiences of the Sisters of the Congregation of St. Paul of Chartres in the Philippines, their mission was tested from the moment they responded to the call of the Church to protect the faith up until the end of the American period. Indeed, the SPC Sisters proved their worth and still continuing to be Christ witnesses from France to different countries of the world. And this is the SPC Sisters' historical narrative, this is their legacy.

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