

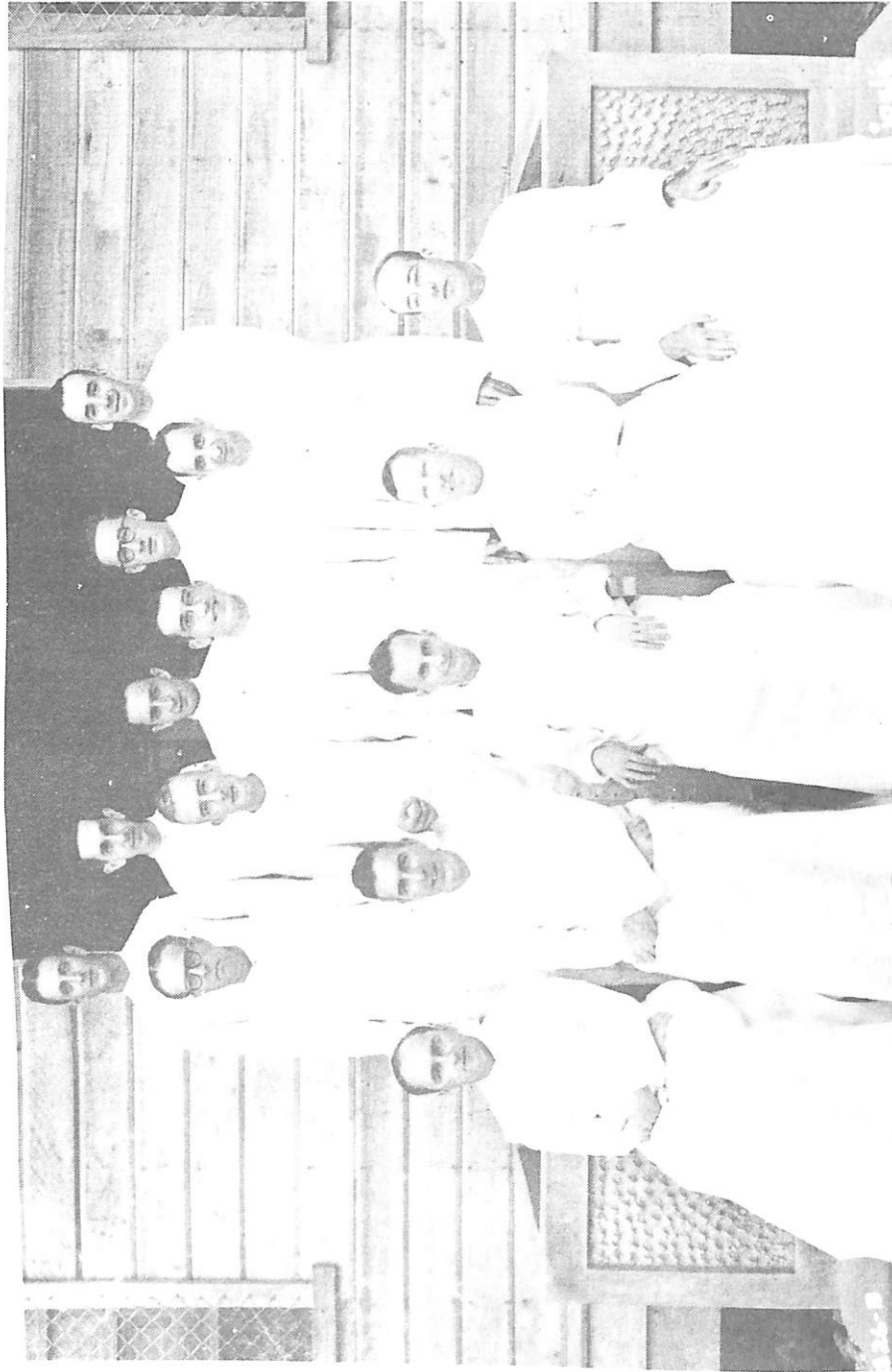
Chapter Three

THE BUILDING OF THE LOCAL CHURCH OF DAVAO: 1946 - 1972

The years after World War II were years of dynamic growth for the Davao Region. Each month settlers arrived by the thousands to begin a new life in "the land of promise". These years were also years of dynamic growth for the local Church of Davao. Each year from 1946 to 1973, PME Fathers arrived from Canada to begin the missionary apostolate: some years three came; some years six came; one year, as many as nine came. Gradually, more and more parishes and Christian communities were established, and the local church of Davao grew very quickly,

When the Jesuit Fathers left in 1938, the PME Fathers became primarily responsible for the evangelization of the Davao region, and they responded marvelously to the challenge. At one time in the late 1960's, there were more than 80 PME Fathers in the Davao region. However, other religious congregation and missionaries came to help in the evangelization effort. The Maryknoll Fathers arrived in 1958 to take responsibility for the building up of the Church in Davao del Norte and Davao Oriental. The Jesuit Fathers returned in 1948 to open the Ateneo de Davao which became instrumental in forming many of the Christian leaders in the Davao region. The Redemptorist Fathers arrived in 1956 for parish ministry and parish missions. The Sacred Heart Brothers arrived in Digos, in 1959 for the apostolate.

Many religious congregations of women also responded to the requests of Msgr. Thibault to help in the evangelization of Davao. The RVM Sisters were already in the Davao Region. They had opened schools during the time of the early Jesuit missionaries. The year 1946 witnessed the arrival of the Immaculate Conception Sisters to administer the school in Mati, Davao Oriental. The Dominican Sisters of the Trinity arrived in 1948 to open San Pedro Hospital. The Carmelite Sisters established a contemplative community in 1952 in Bankerohan. St. Peter's School in Toril was taken over by the Presentation of Mary Sisters in 1953, which was the same year the St. Paul Sisters arrived for the communication media apostolate. The



The PME Fathers in 1950 after their retreat in front of their new Regional House.

following year, 1954, saw the arrival of the Assumption Sisters to staff the school in Nabunturan. These were the early communities of religious who helped the PME Fathers in the task of building up the Davao Church. Many other congregations were to follow later in the 1970's and 1980's.

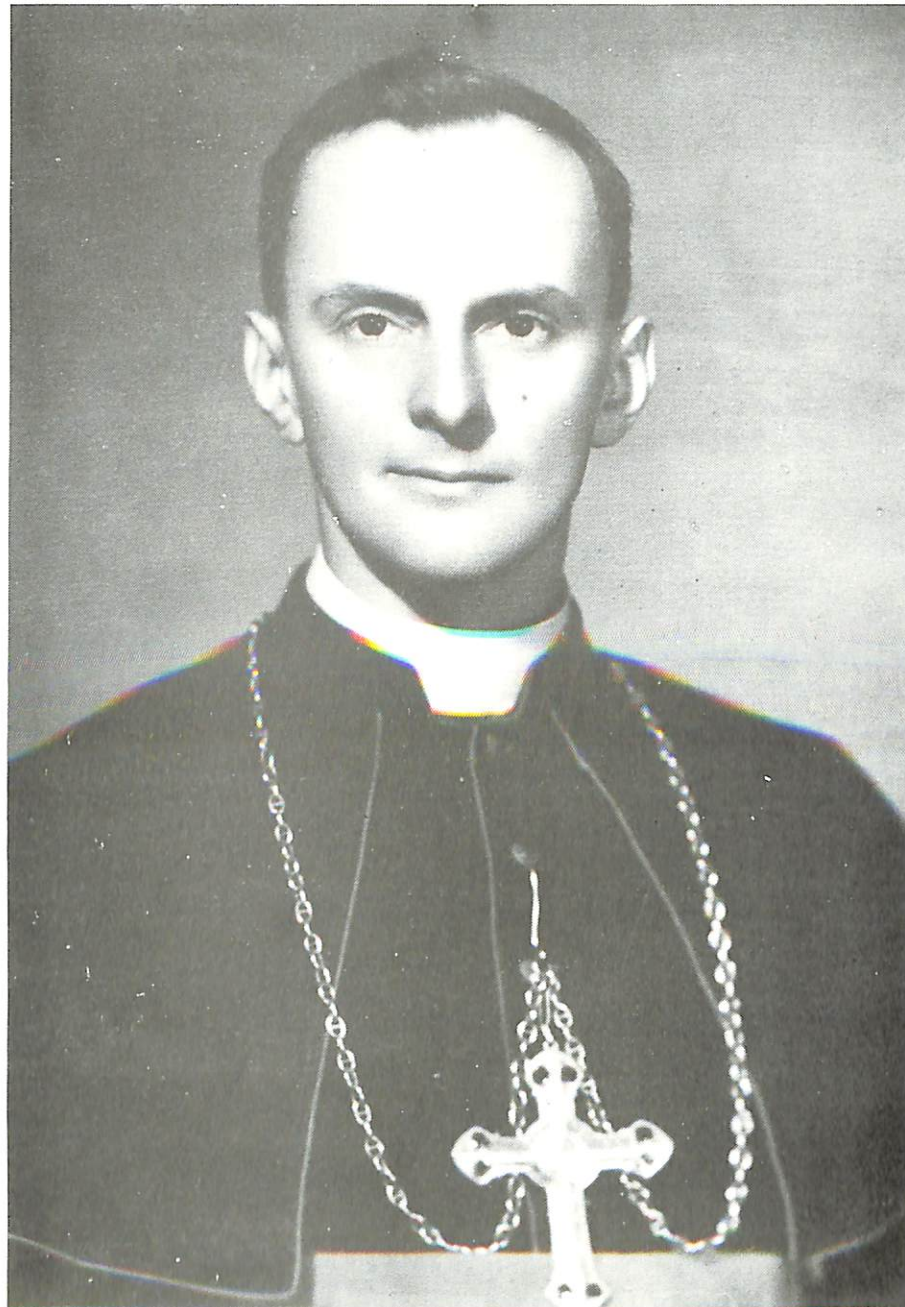
All the while, the nurturing of vocations to the priesthood and religious life was being fostered among the young people of Davao as part of the missionary mandate to build up the local Church and turn it over to the native clergy and religious.

The chapter will focus on the building of the local church of Davao: 1946-1972. Much is owed to the beloved Monsignor Clovis Thibault, PME, the first Archbishop of Davao whose foresight, planning, and vision set the firm foundation of the Davao Church. Critical for the growth of the diocese was the establishment of the seminaries for the development of the local clergy. The solid and steady work of the PME's was the establishment of the parishes and the growing involvement of the laity in the Church, especially through different movements such as the *Barangay sang Birhen*. A key factor of this was the educational apostolate and in particular, religious instruction and the John XXIII Catechetical Center.

Archbishop Clovis Thibault, P.M.E.

Archbishop Thibault is the first father of the local Church of Davao. As a young priest he arrived in 1937 with the first group of PME's; soon after he became the parish priest of San Pedro Church. During the Second World War, he escaped to the east coast and eluded the Japanese soldiers for a while until captured and imprisoned. When the war ended, he immediately returned to Davao City to take over San Pedro parish. When other PME Fathers returned to Davao, he went to Canada, but was recalled within a few years to become the third Regional Superior of the PME's in Davao in 1948.

When the Church in Davao became independent of the Zamboanga diocese in 1949 and proclaimed a prelate Nullius, Fr. Clovis Thibault was named Administrator and Prelate Ordinary. He was ordained Bishop in February 1955. In 1966, when Davao became a full-pledged diocese, Monsignor Thibault became the first Residential Bishop of Davao. In 1970, the diocese of Davao was created an Arch-



Msgr. Clovis Thibault, p.m.e., soon after his ordination as bishop in 1955.

diocese and Msgr. Thibault became the first Archbishop of Davao, with Msgr. Antonio Ll. Mabutas, assigned as the first coadjutor bishop. Both were installed in September 1970. When Msgr. Thibault resigned in 1972, Msgr. Mabutas was installed as Archbishop of Davao.

Perhaps, the best way to describe Msgr. Thibault is to let Msgr. Mabutas, his successor do so:

Archbishop Clovis came to us thirty eight years ago as a pioneering missionary from Quebec; we remember him wearily trudging the forest and the swamps that was then the big Davao region which now became a City and three provinces; we see him bearing the heat of the day and the brunt of the pastoral ministry as far as Caraga in the eastern coast and then as parish priest in the Cathedral. We envision him now as he went along those 38 years asserting his dynamic and dedicated spiritual leadership leading to the erection of the Prelature, the Diocese, and the the Archdiocese of Davao in swift succession. His obsession for the upliftment of his flock led to the erection of many parishes, seminaries, Catholic schools, hospitals and clinics and other charitable institutions.

Yes, we remember our beloved Archbishop, and we can think only of the things we can never have again from him – his wisdom which comforted us, his hands which blessed us, his kindness which strengthened us.

He loved the Filipino people, particularly the good people of Davao. As a matter of fact, he was a Filipino in everything except perhaps his nose and his French accent. He was simply one of us and passionately in love with us. And the Davao people know him and love him and treasure him. So in 1972 he was made an adopted son of the City of Davao, and shortly afterwards, the Province of Davao del Sur claimed him also as an adopted Son. Not content with this, the City of Davao gave him the highest award it could give to a highly-meritorious son – the Datu Bago Award.¹

When Msgr. Thibault became Administrator of the Prelature of Davao in 1949, there were 13 parishes, 31 PME's, half of them less than 30 years old, about 40 religion men and women, 400,000 Catholics, 100,000 Muslims. There were approximately 3,000 marriages and 20,000 baptisms a year, and only one seminarian at that time studying in Manila.² It was a time of great promise and challenge.

¹Msgr. Antonio Ll. Mabutas, J.C.P., D.D. "Final Tribute to the Late Archbishop, Clovis Thibault, PME," *Sentire Cum Ecclesia: Selected Addresses, Sermons, and Writings*. (Davao City: Tambara, 1986), p. 93

He was a man of great intellectual ability gifted with excellent judgment and vision. He set the goals of the new Prelature and set about implementing them. He wanted the PME Fathers to concentrate on the parishes building up Christian Communities. He asked the religious congregations to take care of the schools. He was able to attract many religious congregations to come to Davao. He set a high priority on developing the local diocesan clergy, building the college seminary and Regional Seminary for Mindanao. He was concerned about the social situation and sent prospective leaders abroad for further studies, fostering the role of the laity in social involvement. All these he did despite being afflicted with a severe asthmatic condition which often debilitated him. He was ably assisted in running the diocese by gifted and competent Vicar Generals and Chancellors; among them: Msgr. Maurice Michaud, Fr. Gilles Ouellet, Fr. Viateur Allary, Fr. Patrice Picard, and Fr. Jacques Paquin.

Msgr. Mabutas expresses very well the loving memory the people of Davao have for their beloved Archbishop on the occasion of the death of Msgr. Thibault.

Our Archdiocese is bereaved. We are poorer because of his loss. But we can all be better Christians because Archbishop Thibault has passed our way, because he has been our leader, whose character and vision, whose optimism and courage will forever linger to inspire us in the days to come.

Beloved Archbishop Thibault, let me address you for the last time: please do not leave us alone. We ask you to continue praying and interceding for us, your orphaned children. No, we will never say goodbye; we want to keep you in our midst. So your people have built a crypt in this your Cathedral so you will always be with us. So long, then; till we meet again. Au Revoir. Alleluia.³

The Development of St. Francis Xavier College and Regional Major Seminary

What struck the PME Fathers upon their arrival in Davao in October 1937 was the scarcity of priests. There were only seven

²Msgr. Gilles Oullet, PME "Bishop Thibault" *Missions Étrangères* Vol. 23, No. 2 (April 1987): 8

³Mabutas, *Sentire Cum Ecclesia*, p. 94.



The Bishops of Mindanao at San Augustin Church during the First Plenary Council of Manila in 1953. Seated: Msgr. del Rosario, S.J., Msgr. Vagnozzi, the Papal Nuncio, Cardinal Gilroy of Australia, Msgr. Hayes, S.J., Msgr. Vrakking, M.S.C. Standing: Msgr. Thibault, p.m.e., Msgr. Mongeau, O.M.I., and Msgr. Cronin, S.S.C.



A Pontifical Mass in San Pedro. (from the left) Fr. Sabourin, Fr. Coursol, Fr. Lahaye, Msgr. Thibault, Fr. Lalonde, and Fr. Allary.

Jesuits, some already old, for more than 260,000 Catholics in the whole Province: one priest in Cateel, one in Baganga, one in Caraga and four in Davao City. Since one of the first aims of the Foreign Mission Society is the formation of the local clergy, the PME Fathers made the promotion of the local clergy the first priority of their missionary work in Davao.

Shortly after their arrival they opened a kind of Apostolic School in a rented house on Claveria Street near the old convento. In May 1939 the first group of boys arrived: three from Baganga, two from Caraga, and one from Davao. In January 1941 when the new building of the St. Peter High School for boys was completed, the apostolic school transferred to the second floor of the building. While attending classes at St. Peter's, the boys were taught Latin and prepared to be sent to Cagayan de Oro or to Manila.

The war dispersed the seminarians. At the end of the war only one came back, Raul Labasano, to die of tuberculosis one year later. Not discouraged, the PME Fathers started over again recruiting young candidates for the priesthood. In 1953, Fr. Louis-Charles Sabourin, PME, was appointed first Rector of the Minor Seminary. The seminarians were then living in Matina in a rented house near the Ateneo de Davao High School where they were studying. When the number of seminarians increased, they moved to the old Carmel convent in Bankerohan in 1954 vacated by the Carmelite sisters who had transferred to their new monastery in Bajada. After their studies at the Ateneo de Davao, the seminarians were sent to the San Jose Seminary in Manila for Philosophy and Theology. Among the first who studied in Manila and became priests later were Bishop Generoso C. Camiña, PME, Fr. Benjamin Benedicto, Fr. Paul Cunanan, and Fr. Edgar Rodriguez.

However, the sending of candidates to Manila proved very costly. Moreover, many seminarians had difficulties in adjusting to life in Manila. There was a need for a seminary here in Davao that could offer the full formation program for the priesthood. Since the young Prelature of Davao could not afford to carry out such a plan, the Foreign Mission Society of Quebec made it its own project. It provided most of the funds for the construction of the buildings and sent priests for studies to prepare them to staff the seminary.

The Prelature acquired four hectares of land on the top of a hill overlooking the Davao Gulf in Catalunan Grande. In February 1955,

Archbishop Rufino Santos of Manila blessed the cornerstone of the St. Francis Xavier Minor Seminary, named after the Patron Saint of the Foreign Mission Society. In 1956, the new seminary opened its doors to thirty students with Fr. Jean-Bernard Bazinet as Rector. Twenty two seminarians were still in Manila.

In 1970 it was decided to phase out the High School Department and keep only the College Department. In 1973 there were already enough diocesan priests to take over the direction of the College Seminary. Fr. Benjamin Benedicto became the first Filipino Rector in 1974. Since then the PME Fathers continued to help by providing one or two priests mainly for spiritual direction.

Originally planned as a diocesan seminary, the seminary continued to accept students from Tagum and Digos dioceses after their establishment. Tagum opened its own College seminary in 1981. So now the St. Francis Xavier College Seminary of Davao serves the Archdiocese of Davao and the Diocese of Digos.

The Major Seminary

Until 1962, there was no Major Seminary in Mindanao. All theology students had to be sent elsewhere, mostly to Cebu and Manila. When the Apostolic Nuncio heard of the desire of Bishop Clovis Thibault to open a Major Seminary in Davao, he strongly approved of the plan and recommended that Davao be made a center of theology for Mindanao.

In 1962 Rome formally erected the Major Seminary of Davao, and the Foreign Mission Society of Quebec was asked to take charge of the Seminary and to provide the Faculty. The PME Fathers pledged to staff the seminary until such a time when the local church could take over. The construction started in 1963. The seminary opened a year later with 35 students from all over Mindanao. Two years later it already had 75 students.

Although meant to be a Regional Major Seminary for the eleven ecclesiastical divisions at that time, the Seminary started as an Archdiocesan Seminary under the jurisdiction of the Prelate of Davao. It took some years before all the Bishops could agree to a true Regional Seminary and commit themselves to financially support the Seminary and to prepare some of their priests for work in the Semi-



The construction of the Regional Major Seminary, 1963.



Fr. Roland Denis with a group of seminarians in 1965.

nary. In September 1972 Rome elevated the Major Seminary of Davao to the status of a Regional Major Seminary, and it became the St. Francis Xavier Regional Major Seminary of Mindanao.

Before that decree, the Regional Council of the PME Fathers had already written Bishop Antonio Ll. Mabutas pressing for the Filipinization of the Administration and Faculty. The PME Fathers were asking that with the school year 1972-73 the positions of Rector, Director of Pastoral Formation, Spiritual Director, and Dean of Studies be filled by Filipinos, and that as soon as possible the teaching positions be also given to Filipinos. Hence, immediate steps should be taken to prepare qualified professors if some were available. Meanwhile, the PME Fathers were willing to carry on their work as professors.

The PME Fathers who had done pioneer work in both seminaries started a gradual withdrawal from the Major Seminary in May 1974 when the Society of the Divine Word (SVD Fathers) accepted the direction of the Seminary. Fr. Vicente Braganza, SVD, replaced the last PME Rector, Fr. Generoso C. Camiña. At present the Faculty is made up of diocesan priests and religious from different congregations. Among the religious, some are Filipinos and some are foreigners. The Faculty is somewhat international but is becoming more and more Filipino with the dioceses taking a greater share of the responsibilities.

In a span of twenty years, from 1966 to 1986, the Regional Major Seminary of Davao has formed a total of 334 priests. With the fast increase of vocations in Mindanao, one Regional Seminary for the Island soon became insufficient. A second Major Seminary was opened in Ozamis in 1980 and a third one in Cagayan de Oro in 1985.

The PME Fathers consider what they have done for the development of the local clergy to be one of their major contributions to the local Church of Davao.

The Parishes and the Growing Involvement of the Lay People

Originally, the PME Fathers came to Davao to do missionary work among the non-Christians. However, this initial intention was



Arrival of a new group of PME Fathers in October 1952.

quickly changed because thousands of settlers were arriving every month from Luzon and the Visayas to begin life anew in "the land of promise." Most were Catholics, and there was a need to care for them pastorally. As these settlers cleared the land and established towns, there was the call for the setting up of parishes and Christian communities. The PME Fathers were ready and able to respond to the challenge. This vast region that in 1937 had only four parishes, one in Davao City and three on the east coast: Cateel, Baganga, and Caraga, was transformed by the creation of parishes which became the centers of Christian Communities.⁴ The PME's alone established 35 parishes, while the Maryknoll Fathers, Redemptorists, and diocesan clergy also established parishes.

While most of the settlers were Catholic, many were so only nominally, so there was the need to deepen their faith and encourage their involvement in the Church. This was an even greater challenge than setting up parishes. In this effort, Msgr. Thibault was at the center, presenting a vision, encouraging new ventures, giving freedom

⁴See Appendix II for list of parishes established by the PME's.

to his priests to try new apostolates, really serving as a unifying and inspirational force to the efforts of so many.

Different movements helped to deepen the faith and involvement of the people in the Church. In the late 1940's, many of the parish priests promoted the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in homes. This fostered devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Soon after, the Legion of Mary became very active in many parishes encouraging lay activity.

Perhaps, the movement that most fostered the growing involvement of the laity in the Church was the *Barangay sang Birhen*. The key figure for the growth and development of this movement in Davao was Fr. André Pigeon, PME. Recalling those years, Fr. Pigeon said they that the most beautiful years of his priesthood was when they had responsibility for fostering the *Barangay sang Birhen* movement on the parish and diocesan level.⁵



Parish Church of St. James, Cateel.



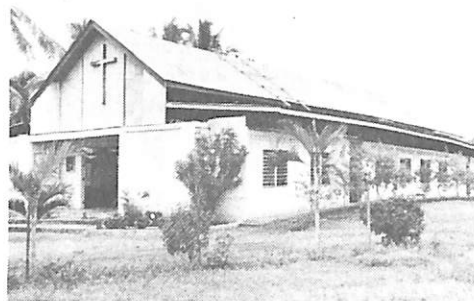
Parish Church of St. Joseph,
the Worker, Santa Cruz.

⁵For a fuller explanation of the *Barangay Sang Birhen* movement see: André Pigeon, PME, "Barangay sa Virhen," *Missions Etrangeres*, vol. 23, no. 2 (April 1987), pp. 10-11.



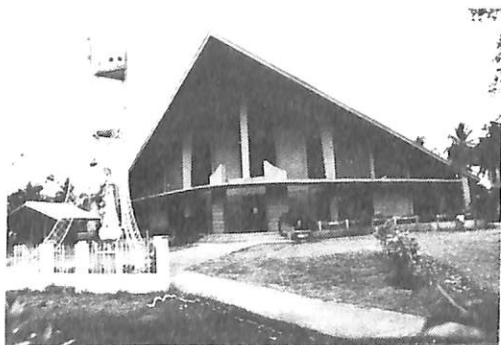
Mary Mediatrix
Cathedral, Digos

Parish Church of
St. Michael, Matanao



Parish Church of
Sto. Niño, Magsaysay

Parish Church of
Immaculate Conception,
Mintal



Procession of Banners, *Barangay Sang Birhen*, Peñaplata, Samal

The *Barangay sang Birhen* was founded by Antonio Gaston, an active Catholic layman from the town of Silay in Negros. He realized how many Catholics did not know their faith and thus could not be involved in the Church. In his own parish there was only one priest to take care of 80,000 Catholics. So he formed a group of laymen to teach catechism which gradually grew into a vast organization giving lectures in religion to the popular masses. The movement became very strong in Negros and brought back thousands to the Church. The *Barangay* grouped together families to pray together, to learn their faith together, and to help one another. It was a forerunner of today's Basic Christian Communities.

Msgr. Thibault first heard about the *Barangay sang Birhen* movement from the Bishop of Bacolod. When the diocese of Cotabato had its first *Barangay* Congress in 1953, Bishop Mongeau invited the Bishop of Davao to send two representatives to hear the lectures of Antonio Gaston. Frs. André Pigeon and Jean Lalonde were chosen. Both became deeply convinced of the value of the movement and convinced their fellow PME's to spread this movement in Davao. Fr. Pigeon became the Diocesan Chaplain of the *Barangay*.

One of the main features of the *Barangay* was the teaching of religion by laymen. This active involvement of men in teaching religion to others not only had a favorable effect of spreading and deepening the faith for many whose contact with the Church was minimal, but it also had a tremendous effect on the male teachers themselves. The change from a passive involvement to an active involvement in the Church encouraged active participation in many areas of Church life.

Fr. Pigeon started publishing a small leaflet *The Apostolate of the Barangay* at a rate of 4,000 a week. It served as a guide for the lectures given at every parish center or sub-center. Many people were attracted to listen to these lectures.

All movements have their time to flourish and time to subside, the *Barangay sang Birhen* was no different. After growing and flourishing for ten years, it gradually diminished. It had prepared hundreds of laymen for responsibilities in different forms of the apostolate and increased the lay activity in the parishes. Truly, it was a forerunner of the present day Basic Christian Communities, in Visayan, *Gagmayng Kristohanong Katilingban (GKK)*.

Other key persons and movements were Fr. Gilles Ouellet, who was very instrumental in promoting Catholic Action in the 1950's, fostering a social involvement on the part of the laity. Then, the growth of the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO), Student Catholic Action (SCA), and Young Catholic Workers (YCW) involved the youth and workers in Church activities. The late 1960's saw the emergence of the Cursillo movement which further activated the role of the laity, especially the men in the Church.

Another important contribution to the local Church of Davao was the work of the Redemptorist Fathers in preaching parish missions. They would spend a week or two in each parish. Beside preaching, they would visit many of the homes of the parishioners. It had a tremendous impact. Many marriages were validated, and many of the faithful returned to the sacraments and active involvement in the Church.

Perhaps, one of the strongest influences on the life of the local Church was the establishment of schools which formed Christian leaders and increased the influence and presence of the Church. The first involvement of the PME Fathers in education was to take over St. Peter's School opened by the Spanish Jesuits in the early 1930's



Fr. Geoffroy with the Kindergarten Class at St. Peter's School: April, 1947.



Immaculate Conception College.

on the first floor of the Convento of San Pedro Church. In 1940, the PME's built St. Peter's High School which stood on the present site of the Ateneo de Davao University. St. Peter's High School was closed during the Second World War and eventually destroyed in a bombing raid. Fr. Rolland Hébert was the Superintendent of Schools from 1951 to 1982. The PME's established 28 high schools, usually attached to a parish. The religious congregations also established schools. Getting the approval from the Ministry of Education was difficult because everything had to be processed in Manila. Usually, Fr. Hébert and the Chancellor of the Diocese would help in the process. They made it easier for the parish priest and the religious congregation involved in setting up the schools. Gradually, the Davao Association of Colleges and Schools was formed to be a coordinating body of the educational efforts in the regions.

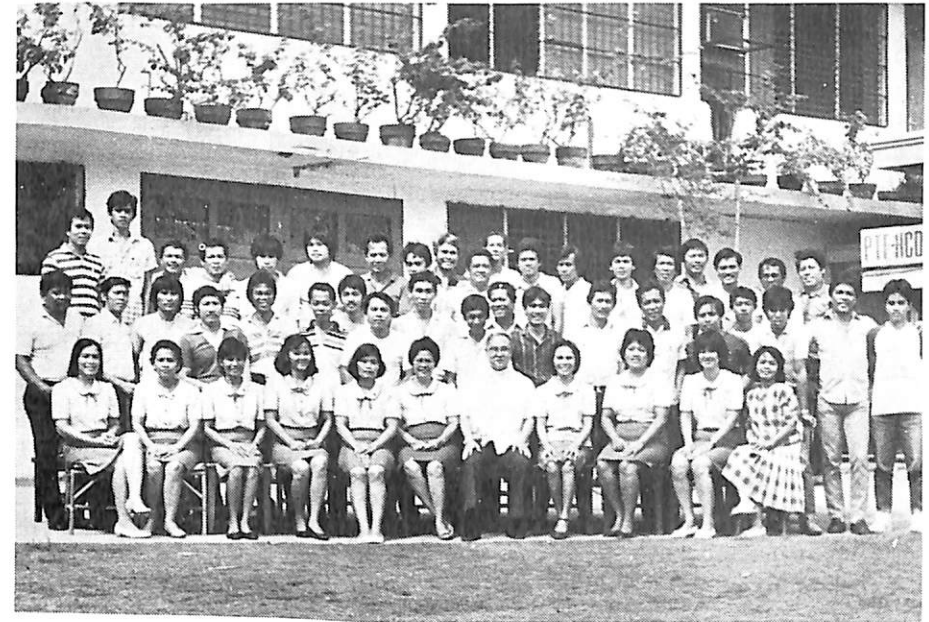
The Ateneo de Davao University started by the Jesuit Fathers has played a key role in the educational effort in the region. Besides a college, high school, and grade school, it also has a law school and a graduate school. Msgr. Thibault requested the Jesuit Fathers to begin a law school in the early 1960's because he wanted Christian witness in the legal profession in Davao. This was a good example of the foresight and vision of Msgr. Thibault. In the late 1960's, the Ateneo de Davao established a Graduate School which has helped in the training and formation of many of the educational leaders in the Davao region.

The Holy Cross Press was founded in 1961 by Fr. Guy Poupart, the PME Regional Superior at that time, and Fr. Guy Riendeau became the first Director. He was succeeded in 1962 by Fr. Georges Courchesne. Fr. Paul Han became Director in 1963 and has guided the Holy Cross Press through its years of growth and expansion. The Holy Cross Press is now the largest printing press in Mindanao and renders service not only to the Catholic Schools and Parishes of the Davao region but to the entire Church of Mindanao.

The Communications Media Apostolate has been promoted by the PME's and is now carried on primarily by the Daughters of St. Paul. Msgr. Clovis Thibault started the first Diocesan newspaper, the *Davao Sentinel*; the first Director was Fr. Marcel Turcotte. Through the years, Msgr. Antonio Mabutas has supported this apostolate. The name of the diocesan newspaper has changed to *Ang Taboan* and finally to the *Davao Catholic Herald*. The present

Directress is Sr. Eugenia Gornis, D.S.P.

All these efforts helped in the growth of Christian communities and the growing involvement of the lay people in the Church.



Holy Cross Press Administrative Staff and Employees

Religious Instruction and the Pope John XXIII Catechetical Center ⁶

As the laity became more involved in the Church, there was the realization that what was needed was not only an active laity, but a laity that was well formed and knowledgeable in the faith. For this, an adequate program of religious instruction and formation was essential.

The separation of church and state as provided for by the Constitution of 1935 prohibited the teaching of religion in all public schools throughout the country. Consequently, religion could only be taught in the churches or parishes. At the time of the arrival of the PME, the catechetical apostolate of Davao consisted of a few *Damas Catolicas* who taught religion to schoolchildren. The local

school authorities were disposed to allow the teaching of religion within school premises on the condition that it was held outside of the regular class hours. Now, the problem was to train enough catechists for a widespread deployment in Davao schools.

In the old parishes in the east coast a form of a catechetical institute was organized by Fr. Yvon Guérin in Baganga in 1939. This institute provided a month's course of catechetical training. In the San Pedro parish in Davao City, Fr. Eugène Ouellet had prepared a five-week formation program for catechists. With the cooperation of parents and the Catholic Association of the Philippines, the school authorities were on certain occasions persuaded to permit religious instructions to be held even within regular school hours. Fr. Ouellet was able to train 140 catechists before the war broke out.

After the war, when Fr. Gérard Campagna attempted to revive catechetical work he realized that he had to start all over again; securing the signatures of parents, paying visits to school authorities, and following up catechists. Building on the work started by his predecessor, Fr. Campagna organized the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and published the *Confraternity Visitor* to sustain the zeal of catechists especially those who were living in the remote barrios.

Catechetical instruction was given an unexpected impetus in 1953 when Pablo Lorenzo was appointed Secretary of Education by President Elpidio Quirino. During this time the school authorities allowed the teaching of religion in public schools. As religious instruction required more and more teachers, the remuneration of catechists became a serious problem. Funds had to be obtained because only those who could meet the problem of compensation for catechists could continue employing them. Msgr. Thibault decided to systematize catechetical work by setting up a catechetical center in the diocese. In 1968, Fr. Patrice Picard was sent to Lumen Vitae in Brussels, Belgium, to study catechetics and to observe existing catechetical centers around the world in preparation for establishing one in Davao.

Fr. Picard's work started with a survey of parishes and schools in the diocese of Davao to find out the needs of the catechetical apostolate. The results of the survey were studied and discussed in a seminar-workshop which was attended by priests and religious, as well as lay catechists. On May 1, 1971, Fr. Picard, working with one secretary and seven catechists as staff started to operationalize the



The First Formation Seminar for Head Catechists of Children and Animators in Pastoral Zones and Parishes conducted by the JCC, 1970.



Staff of John XXIII Catechetical Center, 1975.

St. John XXIII Catechetical Center (JCC).⁶ The JCC was founded on six fundamental principles:

1. The staff is of the greatest importance.
2. The staff works as a team but each one has a specific area of responsibility. The work of each staff member is evaluated weekly for the purposes of coordination and collaboration.
3. The organizational structure is likewise evaluated regularly depending upon the needs of the parish or school, and the potentials of the team members.
4. Changes must be for the better, removing people or equipment without being able to replace either must be avoided.
5. The JCC is not the monopoly of one religious community or members of the same organization. The whole catechetical apostolate should feel responsible for the Center.
6. Asking for help from outside should only be resorted to after the diocese's own resources are exhausted.

Fr. Picard tried to coordinate the different resources in the Archdiocese of Davao making use of the different religious communities and educational institutions. This enriched the efforts of the JCC. He also relied very much on the team approach at the Catechetical Center. The JCC originally envisioned only the training of catechists as its sole task. However, a growing apostolate has other needs, and now the Center runs various programs in response to these needs. The catechists formation program is now a four year college course. The Holy Cross College offers Catechetics as a major course in either AB, BSE, or BSEED degree program. On the other hand, the training of volunteer catechists was perceived as an equally urgent need.

The image and morale of volunteer catechists, especially catechists of children needed to be improved if only to avoid its telling repercussions on the quality of religious instructions. *Katekista na lang*. (Only a catechist) were words that indicated a low regard for this apostolate. To remedy this, the JCC held a special seminar for catechists of children. The first group of forty was gathered in the

⁶For a good historical presentation of the development of the John XXIII Catechetical Center, its staff, graduates see: The Souvenir Program. John XXIII Catechetical Center: Crystal, 1969-1985.

Cursillo House and received an intensive formation program that lasted for three weeks. The workshop was in effect a trainors program, and the forty catechists who were given the course were later assigned to Pastoral Zones in the parishes of San Pedro, Sta. Ana, Bunawan, Toril, Digos, and Padada. Each Pastoral zone had a group of volunteer catechists who were trained by the former group. A Zone Animator and a Head Catechists were designated for each of the Pastoral Zones and together these two were in charge of the seminars for the training of volunteer catechists.

The 1969 survey also showed that catechesis in high school as well as colleges was not better than that taught in the elementary level. Few religious education teachers, even among religious sisters in Catholic schools were trained catechists. In 1973, the JCC offered catechetical formation to teachers of religious education. More than 200 teachers responded and subsequently attended the Christian Communities Program (CCP) seminar and in-service training.

The JCC had been producing its own training materials e.g. syllabus for catechetical instructions since 1973. Before this the Center had been largely dependent on Manila for its instructional literature. When Martial Law was declared in 1972, the *CCP Guide* was forced to stop operations. All catechetical work and catechist throughout the country at this time were restrained by strict government and military procedures.

Catechesis is not meant exclusively for schools, although the bulk of young people from seven to twenty years are found in these institutions. Catechesis has to reach both young and old alike in order to be meaningful. Until 1982, the JCC was conducting youth catechesis under the Youth Formation Program. When a diocesan youth center was established at the St. Paul parish, the JCC turned over the work of community youth catechesis to this parish.

Similarly, the catechesis of adults within the context of the community became an urgent concern of the JCC. The vision of forming Basic Ecclesial Communities was in the mind of many church leaders especially after Vatican II. In the Philippines the Christian Communities Program was an approach to community oriented catechesis. In 1973 after Martial Law was proclaimed, the *CCP Guide* which served also as material for adult catechesis, ceased publication and the Christian Communities Program was abolished. Consequently, the JCC held a workshop involving both religious and

lay leaders for the purpose of producing an adult catechesis program. The outcome of the seminar was a formation program in four phases:

Phase I – Evangelization Seminar, a course given to parishes and barrios. This Seminar was first given in 1973 by Fr. Roger Begin to priests, religious, and a core group of lay catechists.

Phase 2 – Seminar on Christian Life and Sacraments. The instructional materials for this seminar was available in English and in Cebuano beginning 1978.

Phase 3 – Vision and Organization of Small Ecclesial Communities.

Phase 4 – Formation Seminar of Different Lay Leaders in the Ecclesial Communities.

At the request of Fr. André Pigeon who started the *Kasaulugan sa Pulong* (KSP) in his parish in Sta. Cruz in 1965, the JCC agreed to integrate and coordinate the KSP for the Ecclesial Communities. A *Pangulo sa Liturhiya* (PSL), chosen from among those who have undergone Phase I of the Adult Formation Program was delegated to lead the KSP in the chapel or barrio level. Recently, the PSL was also turned over by the JCC to the Archdiocesan Liturgical Center. In its stead, the Center has initiated the *Pangulo sa Alagad* (PSA) formation for the training of the officers of Basic Ecclesial Communities.

The John XXIII Catechetical Center has embarked upon an undertaking for the promotion of catechetical work as an integral part of the evangelization. In pursuing its mission, the organization works along the framework of subsidiarity. The JCC performs work which other organizations and persons are unable to do; there is regular evaluation of both the staff and its work; there is development of members by theory and praxis; there is a balance between the time given to interpersonal relationships and the demands of the work; and finally, there is the realization of the bishops' and priests' indispensable role in the catechetical apostolate.

Many priests, religious, and laity have been instrumental in the development of the John XXIII Catechetical Center. Fr. Patrice Picard, PME, was the founder and first Director. In October 1978, Fr. Roland Denis, PME took over for 6 months. In 1979, he was succeeded by Msgr. Bonifacio L. Burlaza, who was ably assisted by Sr. Nicolasita C. Villarín, MIC. In 1987, Fr. Jaime Oxales succeeded Msgr. Burlaza as the new Director.