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REMEMBERING DAMASO

Ateneo de Manila High School's Portrayal of the Late 19th-Century Philippine Church (1980–1999)

Franz Jan S. Santos

In 2010, the late popular tour guide and activist Carlos Celdran protested against the Catholic Church's opposition to the Reproductive Health Bill by interrupting an ecumenical service at the Manila Cathedral while holding a placard that said "Damaso." Appealing his case years later, Celdran said, "The time of Damaso is not yet over.… As a matter of fact, Damaso is flexing his muscles to get back."[1]

That instance reminded this author of similar sentiments heard in the past as an educator in secondary and tertiary education and as a teacher-trainer. I have heard many times during classroom discussions or teacher trainings both students and teachers describe the 19th-century Philippine Church by citing the friars found in Jose Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere*[2] and *El Filibusterismo.*[3] It was quite a surprise

[1]T. Arceo-Dumlao & E. Sauler, "Celdran found guilty in 'Damaso'," *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (January 29, 2013), http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/348713/celdran-found-guilty-in-damaso (accessed July 14, 2020).

[2]J. Rizal, *Noli Me Tangere*, trans. V. Almario (Quezon City, Philippines: Adarna House, 1998).

[3]J. Rizal, *El Filibusterismo*, trans. V. Almario (Quezon City, Philippines: Adarna House, 1999)

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for me to find out how such a characterization has endured not just in popular memory but even in formal education. It reminded me of how misrepresented the Philippine Church was in discussions related to the Spanish colonial period.

This lack of accurate Church representation in both academic circles and public discourse was also noted by J. Schumacher, S.J. whose works brought to light the Church's role in the formation of the nation.[4] In part, this paper aims to validate Fr. Schumacher's observation on the level of basic education, focusing in particular on Ateneo de Manila High School (AHS). In this study, I look at how 19th-century Philippine Church history was discussed in *Araling Panlipunan* or Social Studies and in Filipino subjects during the 1980s and 1990s, and argue that the 19th-century Philippine Church was largely—yet understandably—misrepresented in classroom discussions, reflecting mostly its characterization in Rizal's novels. This in turn contributes to a larger misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the Philippine Church in popular knowledge.

For this study, I relied heavily on interviews with Filipino and Social Studies teachers who taught in Ateneo de Manila High School during the period studied, as well as textbooks and references used by these departments.

Background: Rizal Law and Nationalist Education in the Philippines

The image of late 19th-century Philippine Church in the popular mind is heavily influenced by two factors: the widespread reading of Rizal's novels and the type of nationalist education in the Philippines during the postwar decades.

[4]J. Schumacher, *Revolutionary Clergy: The Filipino Clergy and the Nationalist Movement, 1850–1903* (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1981). In the preface to his book *Revolutionary Clergy: The Filipino Clergy and the Nationalist Movement, 1850–1903*, Fr. Schumacher noted that the Church's role in the revolution is often not recognized, with nationalist historians highlighting the perceived anti-friar and anti-clerical sentiments of Filipino revolutionaries.

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The first was brought about by Republic Act No. 1425 of 1956 or what is commonly referred to as the Rizal Law, which mandated educational institutions to include the study of the life and works of Jose Rizal and especially of his two novels, *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, in their curricula.[5] From its inception, the bill faced great opposition from the Catholic Church hierarchy and several Christian lay organizations for a number of reasons, ranging from accusations that it violated freedom of conscience and religion to branding it as the work of communists.[6] One of the issues brought up in the debates had to do with how the late 19th-century Catholic Church was depicted, especially the portrayal of friars who figured heavily in the novels.

Even the defense of the bill touched on friar depiction. Among those who criticized the Church for its opposition to the bill was former Philippine President and revolutionary Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, who said that the Church remained "under the yoke of the old Spanish friars, against whom the Filipinos of 1896 had risen in arms for their tyrannies."[7] Sen. Claro M. Recto also criticized the Church hierarchy, saying that it was more intolerant than the friars in Rizal's time.[8] Given that the Rizal Law required all Filipino students to study the *Noli* and *Fili,* the novels became popular references for information on the late 19th-century Philippines in general, and even on the late 19th-century Philippine Church.

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[5]See the Rizal Law of 1956 (Republic Act No. 1425) at http://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1956/06/12/republic-act-no-1425/ (accessed July 14, 2020).

[6]R. Constantino & L. Constantino, *The Philippines: The Continuing Past* (Quezon City, Philippines: Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1978), 297–298.

[7]T. Agoncillo, *The Revolt of the Masses: The Story of Bonifacio and the Katipunan* (Quezon City, Philippines: University of the Philippines, 1956). As mentioned also by T. Locsin in his article "The Church Under Attack" (*The Philippines Free Press* [May 5, 1956], available at https://philippinesfreepress.wordpress.com/1956/05/05/the-church-under-attack-may-5-1956/).

[8]More details about the debates around the bill can be read in S. Totanes, "The Historical Impact of the *Noli Me Tangere* and the *El Filibusterismo*," in S. Reyes, ed., *The Noli Me Tangere: A Century After: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* (Quezon City, Philippines: Phoenix Publishing House, 1987), 22–25.

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Another factor that played a significant role in how the Philippine Church was portrayed was the type of education Filipinos received during the postwar decades. Decolonization gave rise to a resurgence of nationalism that would figure not just in the political landscape but in different academic fields as well. In the field of history, there was an intellectual battle for what type of nationalist framework the country should adhere to, and many politicians and intellectuals looked back at the late 19th century for guidance.[9]

Arguably the most influential of these nationalist historians was Teodoro Agoncillo who rose to prominence after the publication of *The Revolt of the Masses: The Story of Bonifacio and the Katipunan*.[10] He set the tone and direction for writing Philippine history, claiming that his work presented history from the perspective of Filipinos. Following the same trend was Renato Constantino[11] who launched a scathing attack on the neocolonial nature of the Philippine educational system and called for the application of more relevant ideologies and frameworks in the study of Philippine history and society. He also wrote two influential textbooks in the 1970s: *The Philippines: A Past Revisited*[12] and its sequel, *The Philippines: The Continuing Past*.[13]

[9]In his article "Heroes, Historians, and the New Propaganda Movement, 1950–1953" (*Philippine Studies* 58:1/2 [2010]: 223–238), R. Ileto discussed three efforts by several groups in crafting a postwar framework for Philippine nationalism: the Communist "Huk Movement" and its offshoots, the "New Propaganda Movement" led by Elpidio Quirino's writer Jose Lansang, and the Catholic-nationalist perspective led by Fr. Horacio de la Costa, S.J.

[10]Agoncillo, *The Revolt of the Masses*.

[11]R. Constantino, "The Mis-education of the Filipino," in *The Filipinos in the Philippines and Other Essays*, ed. R. Constantino (Quezon City, Philippines: Malaya Books, 1966), 39–65.

[12]R. Constantino & L. Constantino, *The Philippines: A Past Revisited* (Quezon City, Philippines: Tala Publishing, 1975).

[13]Constantino & Constantino, *The Philippines: The Continuing Past*.

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Since a key idea in the Filipinization of history and the social sciences was the breaking away from colonial narratives, the movement resulted in a marginalization—and sometimes malignment—of perceived colonial ideas and institutions. This was especially true for the Catholic Church and its clergy of the late 19th century. These developments in Philippine historiography would have a profound effect on education from universities down to basic education. Prominent historians of the postwar decades would influence not just a generation of students and future educators but also be the basis for textbook writing for decades to come.

While Agoncillo and Constantino proved to be two of the most influential figures of the time, there were other notable historians who adhered to a different nationalist framework, one that would be more accommodating to the role of religion and Catholicism in nation-building. First among them is Jesuit historian Fr. Horacio de la Costa, S.J., who served as the "Catholic voice" in the nationalist debates of the 1950s and was even consulted by a committee of bishops during the heated debates on the Rizal Bill.[14] He was followed by fellow Jesuit Fr. John N. Schumacher, S.J. and Nicholas Cushner. Despite being heavily involved in Ateneo de Manila at different points in their lives, these historians were not the most cited sources by Ateneo de Manila High School educators during the period studied in this paper.

The Late 19th-Century Philippine Church in Ateneo de Manila High School in the 1980s and 1990s

Before beginning this section of the study, it is important to note that teachers of the humanities and social science subjects of the Ateneo de Manila High School have always been liberal in their approach in teaching, and this was especially true prior to the late 2000s. Individual teachers were allowed to teach their subjects with

[14]Ileto, "Heroes, Historians, and the New Propaganda Movement, 1950–1953," 233–237; J. Schumacher, "The Rizal Bill of 1956: Horacio de la Costa and the Bishops," *Philippine Studies* 59:4 (2011): 529–553.

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a considerable amount of freedom as long as they followed the curriculum prescribed by the Department of Education. Since the task of balancing teacher individuality and compliance falls on department chairpersons, I decided to interview them for this study. Based on their curricula, two departments have deliberate discussions on the late 19th-century Philippine Church: *Araling Panlipunan* and Filipino.

The Late 19th-Century Church as Discussed in *Araling Panlipunan*

Philippine history is usually discussed during the first year of high school in what is known as Social Studies or *Araling Panlipunan*. Prior to the late 1980s, AHS students were not provided with a common textbook for studying Philippine history in their classes. Based on my interviews with certain social studies teachers and those who served as department chairpersons in the 1980s and 1990s, the most popular reference material used by teachers during that period was Teodoro Agoncillo's *History of the Filipino People*,[15] his most published and widely-read work.[16]

Like Agoncillo's previous books, *History of the Filipino People* was nationalist in orientation and largely anti-Church. Despite undergoing eight editions, the book's theses and themes remain the same. Since Agoncillo's book was written primarily to give "Filipino history"

[15]T. Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People* (Quezon City, Philippines: Malaya/R. P. Garcia, 1967–1986). Various editions of Agoncillo's book had co-authors: O. Alfonso (1967 edition) and M. Guerrero (1970, 1973, 1977, 1984, and 1986 editions). The first edition was published in 1961 with the title *A Short History of the Filipino People*.

[16]V. Totanes, "'History of the Filipino People' and Martial Law: A Forgotten Chapter in the History of a History Book, 1960–2010," *Philippine Studies* 58:3 (2010): 317–322. I was able to interview two former department chairpersons of the Social Studies department—Mr. P. Meris and Ms. M. Olavides-Correa—as well as Social Studies teachers Mr. J. Hernando and Mr. M. Macaventa. In those interviews, Agoncillo's *History of the Filipino People* figured considerably. V. Totanes also gave a good discussion on the history of Agoncillo's *History of the Filipino People* in his article "'History of the Filipino People' and Martial Law."

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more attention, he did not devote much discussion to the country's experience under Spain. As noted by V. Totanes,[17] Agoncillo dedicated only three chapters—out of thirty—of the entire book to discuss the entire Spanish colonial period. A more detailed and nuanced approach to studying Spanish colonization was—as may be expected—not presented.

As may be expected as well, Agoncillo was critical of the Philippine Church of the late 19th century. In his discussion on Spanish colonial education, for example, he wrote that the civil government attempted to secularize the colony's educational system after "realizing the detrimental effect of its abandonment of the field of education to friar control." He added,

> The narrowness of its policies and the obvious slant of the various curricula toward religion, however, seriously handicapped the educational system.…
>
> It was not until late in the 19th century that the friars reluctantly gave primary instruction to native children in makeshift classrooms in their stables. The children were daily subjected to physical and mental tortures so that shame and fear of corporal punishment forced them to drop out of school.[18]

Accusations were also thrown at the Spanish friars at large. Agoncillo mentions, for example, that the friars were enemies of progress, opposing any efforts of reform from the Spanish government and consumed by greed as shown by "arbitrary increases in land rents, [the] unjust eviction of farmers and fraudulent land measures that disposed many small farm owners."[19]

Aside from Agoncillo, Renato Constantino was also commonly cited, especially his book *The Philippines: A Past Revisited*. Constantino's materialistic view of history was evident in his analysis and evaluation of

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[17]Totanes, "'History of the Filipino People' and Martial Law," 318.

[18]Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People* (1977 ed.), 109–110.

[19]Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People* (1977 ed.), 123–136.

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the secularization movement,[20] regarding it as one of the manifestations of the native priest's desire for a higher social and economic status. He also highlighted the economic gains from increased rights and participation by Filipinos in the priesthood.[21]

By the start of the 1990s, AHS started using textbooks from publishing houses that catered primarily to high school students. Textbooks used by the AHS were usually selected by each department through its chairperson and then approved for use by school administrators. An example of the textbooks used by the Social Studies department in the 1990s was *Pilipinas: Kasaysayan at Pamahalaan* [Philippines: History and Government] by Vibal Publishing.[22] This particular textbook is a good example of how the late 19th-century Philippines was discussed in many high school textbooks during the timeframe under study. Since textbooks during that time placed a high value on nationalism, there was a tendency—and sometimes a deliberate effort—to highlight Filipino concepts, deeds, and heroes, and malign people, events, and institutions that were perceived to be in the way of nationalism. Colonizers in general were accused of various forms of abuses, and these abuses were highlighted especially during the late 19th century when the concept of the Filipino nation was being formed.

A good example of this trend in textbook writing can be found in the authors' introductory paragraph to their discussion of the late 19th-century Philippines. The book stated:

> Dahil sa sila ang mga mananakop, kumilos ang mga Kastila na animo mga hari-harian sa Pilipinas. Kontrolado nila ang lahat ng bahagi ng pamumuhay ng mga Pilipino.…

[20]The term "secularization movement" refers here to the demand of the Filipino clergy in the 19th century for the Church to hand over the parishes administered by the religious orders (mostly Spaniards) to the secular clergy who were mostly native Filipinos.

[21]Constantino & Constantino, *The Philippines: A Past Revisited*, 145.

[22]T. Vivar, G. Sobritchea, R. Quiray, E. Viloria, N. dela Cruz, & P. Jacob, *Pilipinas: Kasaysayan at Pamahalaan*, new ed. (Quezon City, Philippines: Vibal Publishing House Inc., 1994).

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> Napakababa ang pagtingin ng mga Kastila sa mga Pilipino noon. Ipinalagay nila ang mga ito na mga mangmang at hindi sibilisado. Kinutya nila ang hangarin ng mga ito na mag-aral at humawak ng anumang katungkulan sa pamahalaan at kahit sa simbahan. Galit sila sa marurunong na mga Pilipino at pinagbintangan nila ang mga ito sa pagtataksil sa Espanya at ipinatapon sila sa ibang bansa. Kinamkam nila ang mga lupa ng mga Pilipino at pinagsamantalahan ang mga kababaihan.
>
> Tiniis ng mga Pilipino ang lahat ng mga pagmamalabis. Yuko ang kanilang ulo sa pagtanggap ng mga alipusta, pananakit at lahat ng uri ng abuso ng Kastila. Dinagdagan nila ang kanilang paumanhin at pagtitiis tulad ng natutunan nila sa relihiyong Katoliko.[23]
>
> [As conquerors, the Spaniards acted like kings in the Philippines. They controlled every aspect of Filipino life.…
>
> They looked down on Filipinos. They considered them illiterate and uncivilized. They mocked Filipinos' desire to learn and hold positions in government and the church. They despised intelligent Filipinos, accused them of treason, and threw them into exile. They stole the land of the Filipinos and abused their women.
>
> The Filipinos endured the abuse. They could only bow their heads in shame in the face of the humiliation and all kinds of abuse which they suffered from the Spaniards. They extended their patience and endured their suffering in accordance with what they were taught in Catholicism.]

Given the limited perspectives and inaccuracies in textbooks prevailing at the time, some *Araling Panlipunan* teachers decided to write their own textbook in 1999 entitled *Lupang Hinirang: Kasaysayan at Pamahalaan* [A Land Chosen: (Philippine) History and Government].[24] Aware of the limitations of current high school textbooks, the authors

[23]Vivar et al., *Pilipinas: Kasaysayan at Pamahalaan*, 95.

[24]M. Olavides-Correa, O. Habana, A. Verzosa, & V. Galvez, *Lupang Hinirang: Kasaysayan at Pamahalaan* (Quezon City, Philippines: Anvil Publishing, 2000). The textbook was written by former Araling Panlipunan [Social Studies] teachers in Ateneo de Manila High School with the help of classmates in Ateneo's M.A. History program. This included Dr. O. Habana, faculty member and former chairperson of Ateneo de Manila's History Department. Dr. Habana was also primarily responsible for the discussion on the 19th-century Philippines in the textbook and was interviewed for this study.

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deliberately avoided using them as references and utilized mostly primary sources and more recent literature for the different topics in Philippine history.

Lupang Hinirang's discussion on the late 19th-century Church showed its intended departure from the narrative that was dominant in texbooks during that time. In the beginning chapter on the rise of Philippine nationalism, for example, the authors noted the important role of the Church in keeping peace in the colony:

> Ang mga pari ay madalas nakikiusap at humihingi ng amnestiya para sa mga nag-aalsa. Madalas din sigurong ginagamit nila ang kanilang impluwensiya at kapangyarihan upang pigilin ang pagsali ng mga tao sa armadong pag-aalsa. [Priests often mediate and ask for amnesty for natives who rebelled. They might have also used their power and influence to prevent people from joining armed rebellions.][25]

The book also provided a more nuanced discussion of the causes of unrest in the Philippines during the 19th century. For example, accusations of land grabbing were not solely pinned on Spaniards and the Church; it was noted that even wealthy Filipino landowners robbed fellow Filipinos of untitled lands. It also gave a sufficient explanation as to why the value of lands increased in the first place and how this affected tenant-owner relationships, thus avoiding oversimplifications that usually identified friar greed as the source of the issue.[26] Perhaps more noteworthy was that the book gave a different perspective on the secularization movement by linking it directly to the rise of Philippine nationalism.[27] There was also a conscious effort to discuss the Jesuits' history in the 1800s, noting their contributions and their relationship with Jose Rizal.

[25]Olavides-Correa et al., *Lupang Hinirang*, 119.

[26]Olavides-Correa et al., *Lupang Hinirang*, 122–123.

[27]Olavides-Correa et al., *Lupang Hinirang*, 125.

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The Late 19th-Century Church in *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*

Aside from Philippine history in *Araling Panlipunan*, the late 19th-century Philippine Church was also briefly taken up with high school students in their Filipino subject during discussions on *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*. To get more information on how the Filipino department in AHS portrayed the Philippine Church through the two novels, I again relied mostly on interviews with former department chairpersons and faculty members of the Filipino department from the 1980s and 1990s.

The late 19th-century Philippine Church was usually discussed in Filipino classes to contextualize the novels. According to Filipino teachers interviewed for this study, a common strategy in discussing *Noli Me Tangere* was to do so thematically. Characters in the novels were lumped together and discussed according to an appropriate theme related to the overall objectives of the topic. The friars in *Noli* were then discussed as one group, with each cleric representing a particular flaw of the Church during that time. Commonly highlighted issues of the Church included greed, immorality, racism, and her influence in the political sphere. Other "good" priests in the novel such as Padre Florentino were viewed as exceptions.[28]

Other important sources for learning *Noli* and *Fili* in the AHS were T. Ongoco's *Mga Tulong sa Pag-aaral sa Noli Me Tangere* [Helpful Aides in Studying *Noli Me Tangere*][29] and *Gabay sa Pag-aaral sa El Filibusterismo*

[28]A former AHS Filipino teacher and current faculty member at the Ateneo de Manila University's Filipino Department, Dr. C. Santos mentioned the theme of a "broken church" when discussing friars in *Noli*. She mentioned, for example, that specific characters in the novels like Padre Damaso and Padre Salvi represented the institution's sins and weaknesses during that time, which included immorality, greed, and the desire for power.

[29]T. Ongoco, *Mga Tulong sa Pag-aaral sa Noli Me Tangere* (Quezon City, Philippines: Manlapaz Publishing Company, 1969).

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[Helpful Guides in Studying *El Filibusterismo*].[30] Both books served as study guides for the Rizal novels and were said to be favorites of students in AHS during the 1980s and 1990s.[31] As the titles suggest, the books aimed to help students understand the novels by giving chapter summaries, defining vocabulary, and expounding on key concepts.

While the books made attempts at explaining the historical context of the novels, the discussions were understandably brief and insufficient for an accurate understanding of 19th-century Philippine history, especially the 19th-century Philippine Church. Ongoco also mostly echoed Rizal's own view of Philippine society, making it difficult to ascertain at times whether the views presented in his books reflected his own or Rizal's.

Given that the discussion on the historical context behind the novels was understandably brief, a more detailed or nuanced discussion on the Church during that time was often not presented. Therefore, the Damaso or Salvi friar stereotypes stuck, with former AHS Filipino chairperson Mr. Gabriel Mallillin even noting that the discussions about the priests were usually "biased"—though not necessarily prejudiced—due to Rizal's context and his objectives in writing the two novels.

The AHS Depiction of the Late 19th-Century Philippine Church: Summary and Evaluation

The portrayal of the 19th-century Philippine Church in AHS classes reflected the general trend in history education during the decades studied. To summarize observations made previously in this study, the late 19th-century Philippine Church was portrayed as an enemy of progress, corrupt, hungry for power, and immoral. In this section, I attempt to explore the reasons for such charges and nuance them based

[30]T. Ongoco, *Gabay sa Pag-aaral sa El Filibusterismo* (Quezon City, Philippines: Manlapaz Publishing Company, 1967).

[31]Filipino teachers mentioned that while students like to use the Ongoco books, teachers rarely used them as reference materials.

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on more recent literature in the hopes of helping fellow educators navigate this controversial topic in Philippine history.

Enemy of Progress

> "Mga Tsino? Baliw ba kayo?" bulalas ni Fray Damaso. "Magtigil kayo! Inimbento iyon ng isang Pransiskano, isa sa aking orden, si Fray … Savalls yata ang ngalan noong siglo … siyete!" ["Chinese? Are you crazy?" Fray Damaso exclaimed. "Just stop it! It was invented by a Franciscan, from my order, Fray … Savalls if I'm not mistaken, in the … 7th century!"][32]

In the opening chapter of *Noli Me Tangere*, Rizal insulted the friars' intellect by poking fun at Fray Damaso's character when the latter stubbornly asserted that a member of his religious order discovered the use of gun powder. The example above is just one of the many ways Rizal and fellow propagandists used sardonic humor in their different anti-friar campaigns, some of which faulted the friars for the Philippines's low intellectual and cultural achievements.[33]

While the *ilustrados*—and postwar historians—branded the friars as the enemies of progress, the Church's perceived aversion to progress must be evaluated based on a sound understanding of the context of 19th-century Philippines and Spain. However, sufficient discussion on this topic is usually not carried out given the limitations of time, and probably due to teacher preference as well.

One must also be specific in defining just what it was that the Church was supposedly against or lagging behind in to merit being branded as "an enemy of progress." For example, the Church being called an enemy of progress can be understandable if one equates progress with liberal ideas prevailing in Europe during that time. The Church's opposition would then be understandable—and expected—

[32]Rizal, *Noli Me Tangere.*

[33]A good source on how Rizal used humor to poke fun of and criticize certain characters in Philippine society is M. Bernard's "Humor and Craftsmanship in the Opening Chapters of the *Noli*," in Reyes, ed., *The Noli Me Tangere: A Century After*, 39–51.

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given how the Church suffered under liberal governments in Spain. Liberal ideas like secularization and freedom of religion were therefore perceived by some clerics as threatening the very survival of the Church in the Philippines.[34] An appreciation for this context is necessary to understand why the friars—and the Church hierarchy—acted the way they did in the late 19th-century. Given time constraints in many high school syllabi, however, not much time was allocated for the discussion of this important context.

Another issue used to substantiate the charge of incompetence and intellectual backwardness against the Church was the description of the poor state of education in the Philippines, which was almost entirely under Church administration. As Agoncillo wrote,

> As deterrents to progress, they undermined the administrations of liberal governors like Basco and de la Torre. While they were responsible for the "civilization" and "Christianization" of many towns, they were major stumbling blocks to the education of the Filipinos.[35]

This supposed failure of the Church in educating Filipinos also figured in Rizal's novels. A schoolteacher's lament to Crisostomo Ibarra, for instance, showed the supposed sorry state of Philippine education under the friars.[36] While it is understandable why such a perception permeates popular imagination, facts show otherwise. It is rarely discussed, for example, that the Philippines was the most educated colony of Spain, with its literacy rate rivaling that of Spanish cities in

[34]J. Schumacher, *The Propaganda Movement, 1880–1895: The Creation of a Filipino Consciousness, the Making of the Revolution*, rev. ed. (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1997), 305. The effects of the political turmoil in Spain and its implications for the Church were detailed by R. Herr, "Flow and Ebb, 1700–1833," in R. Carr, ed., *Spain: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 173–204 and R. Carr, "Liberalism and Reaction, 1833–1931," in Carr, ed., *Spain: A History*, 205–242.

[35]Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People* (1977 ed.), 90.

[36]Rizal, *Noli Me Tangere,* 102. The schoolteacher who was talking to Ibarra narrated how the friars encouraged rote learning, taught through fear and intimidation, and opposed any attempt at veering away from traditional pedagogy.

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the 19th-century.[37] Historian R. Mojares even noted that nowhere in colonial Asia was there such an opportunity for higher learning made available for a colonized race.[38]

Friar Lands and Material Greed

> Pinalawak ng mga prayle ang kanilang mga lupain sa pamamagitan ng mga donasyon ng mga Pilipino. Sa ilang mga pagkakataon, kinuha nila ang mga lupain ng mga katutubo. [The friars expanded their landholdings through the donation of Filipinos. In some cases, they stole the lands of the natives.][39]

One of the most salient criticisms against the Church in the 19th century had to do with the issue of friar lands, which critics—then and now—associate with friar greed. But while it was a fact that some religious orders owned vast amounts of land in the Philippines, the details regarding the purchase and use of these lands were usually not included in high school textbooks and classroom discussions. It hardly mattered, for example, that these lands were legally obtained by way of royal grants, legacy, or outright purchase.[40] It was also hardly mentioned that not all religious orders owned vast lands in the 19th century. The Jesuits and Franciscans, for example, did not own

[37]Schumacher, *The Propaganda Movement, 1880–1895*, 303–304.

[38]R. Mojares, *Brains of the Nation*: *Pedro Paterno, T. H. Pardo de Tavera, Isabelo de los Reyes, and the Production of Modern Knowledge* (Quezon City, Phippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2006), 418–419. Schumacher (*The Propaganda Movement, 1880–1895*) argued that institutions of higher education in the country were at par with those available in Spain in terms of curricula offered and quality of instruction. He also stated that even if unintended, these institutions became venues where nationalist thoughts fermented. This high quality of education was also thoroughly discussed by R. Mojares (*Brains of the Nation*), an education that would produce an enlightened generation that was more than capable of working in the very institutions that the Spaniards built in the Philippines.

[39]Vivar et al., *Pilipinas: Kasaysayan at Pamahalaan*, 71.

[40]N. Cushner, *Spain in the Philippines: From Conquest to Revolution* (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University, 1971), 213.

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haciendas in the 19th century—the former due to circumstance and the latter due to principle. It was also not usually discussed how these lands were used and managed. Some textbooks do not even define concepts like *inquilinos* and *kasama,* which are crucial for understanding the land disputes of the 19th century.

Most importantly, rarely was there any discussion on how the profits from haciendas were used by the religious orders—not in Agoncillo, Constantino, nor in any other Social Studies textbook used in Ateneo de Manila High School. It was never mentioned that income from these lands was used to fund missions and educational ministries in the Philippines and overseas.[41] In many ways, the income the Church received from these lands was used for education and social services which should have been financed by the State in a modern society.

Lastly, while historians like Agoncillo cited vast Church lands as part of the abuses of the Spaniards and the friars, it is also questionable just how much of a factor the land issue was in the minds of the propagandists and revolutionaries. Studying the works of prominent *ilustrados*, Schumacher noted that the friar land question was "but of secondary importance to Rizal and of none at all to Del Pilar."[42] The founding documents of the Katipunan were also silent on the issue of friar lands.[43]

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[41]Cushner, *Spain in the Philippines*, 212. As N. Cushner noted, Dominican holdings in Biñan, Santa Rosa de Malabon, and Navotas supported a rector, five lecturers, and fifty students in the University of Santo Tomas. He also noted that haciendas of Pandi and Lolomboy supported missionaries in China. Other colleges supported ministries that included orphanages and hospitals.

[42]Schumacher, *The Propaganda Movement, 1880–1895*, 302.

[43]J. Richardson, *The Light of Liberty*: *Documents and Studies on the Katipunan, 1892–1897* (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2013), 1–40. The 1892 document *Casaysayan; Pinagcasundoan; Mga daquilang cautosan*, for example, did not mention any issue related to the friar lands despite enumerating other grievances in detail.

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The Church and Its Political Power

> The clergy competed with the civil officials in amassing wealth and, through foul and other means, fought the latter in the drive for more political power in the colony … the parish curates caused much oppression and suffering among the masses.… [They] shackled the masses and their petty tyrannical officials to [their] will. Indeed, in the eyes of the people, the parish priest was the real representative of the king. Many acknowledged the fact that the king had in each parish priest, or any friar for that matter, a captain general and a whole army.[44]

Another common criticism against the Church of the 19th century was that it wielded too much political power in the country as described by Agoncillo in the excerpt above. But while Church encroachment in politics was an undeniable fact, what was lacking in textbooks and classroom discussions was a holistic understanding and discussion of the context of why this was so.

Key to any study of the Spanish colonial period in the Philippines is the concept of *patronato real*.[45] In its most basic sense, *patronato real* was a mutual exchange of privileges and responsibilities between the Spanish Crown and the Spanish Church, with the former being bestowed with the right to appoint Church officials. In return, the King, as the Royal Patron of the Church, was expected to fund and support the Church's mission of evangelization. This is crucial in understanding why there was no such thing as separation of Church and State during the entire history of Spanish colonization in the Philippines. Many of the perceived encroachments of the Church in civil affairs were, in fact, delegated to her by law, and civil officials were also tasked to support evangelization.[46]

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[44]Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People* (1977 ed.), 90.

[45]Cushner (*Spain in the Philippines*, 74–75) gave a good explanation of this concept, along with how it materialized, evolved, and was used in Spain and the Philippines.

[46]Schumacher, *The Propaganda Movement, 1880–1895*, 11; J. Go, "Governmentality and Political Meaning in the Late Nineteenth-century Philippines," in I. Donoso, ed., *More Hispanic Than We Admit: Insights into Philippine Cultural History* (Quezon

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In most textbooks and classroom discussions, however, *patronato real* was usually only loosely defined. In one particular textbook used by AHS, the concept was not discussed at all.[47] On the other hand, the *Lupang Hinirang* textbook showed a better understanding and appreciation for this concept:

> Ang kaharian ng Espanya ay may tampok na katangian: ang pagkakaisa ng simbahan at pamahalaan. Nagmula ito sa patronato real, na nagbigay ng karapatan sa pamahalaan sa pagpili ng mga pari o obispo (ecclesiastic). Ang kapalit nito ay ang pagtustos ng pamahalaan ng mga gastos sa pagbinyag. Sa gayon ang mga kolonya ng Espanya ay nakaranas ng kakaibang pagsakop: politikal at relihiyoso na iisa ang layunin, bagaman kadalasan, ay nagtatalo sila sa paraan ng pagtupad sa mga layunin nila. [The Kingdom of Spain has a distinct characteristic: the union of Church and State. This union originated in the *patronato real* which gave the government the right to choose priests and bishops (ecclesiastic). In return, the Spanish government was expected to fund and support the Church in evangelization. In this manner, the colonies of Spain experienced a different kind of colonization: political and religious institutions had similar objectives, though in many instances, conflict occured regarding how these objectives were to be carried out.][48]

City, Philippines: Vibal Publishing, 2008), 170–172. Schumacher listed some of the tasks of the parish priest in the Philippines, from being the local health inspector to being a consultant for cases of treason, noting that all these tasks were delegated to him by law. J. Go ("Governmentality and Political Meaning in the Late Nineteenth-century Philippines") also noted the intersecting responsibilities of civil and Church officials. He mentioned, for example, that *gobernadorcillos* were also tasked to ensure that town residents attended Mass on holy days of obligation, and that government officials were also expected to sponsor town-wide fiestas and religious celebrations.

[47]Vivar et al., *Pilipinas: Kasaysayan at Pamahalaan*, 74–77. The closest reference to the *Patronato* was a short paragraph that stated, "Batay sa kapangyarihan ng 'Royal Vice-Patron', may karapatan ang Gobernador-Heneral na sakupin ang mga pinuno ng simbahan. Siya ang humihirang sa mga kura paroko" [Based on the power of the Royal Vice-Patron, the Governor-General has the right to rule over church leaders. He appoints parish priests].

[48]Olavides-Correa et al., *Lupang Hinirang*, 98.

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Immorality

> Friars fornicate with women, so that in the provinces it is rare for the majority not to have children, and it is rare, too, that they have not violated the young women. The parents and other relatives of these women who detest this conduct have to say immediately that it did not really happen, because otherwise they will be deported far away.[49]

While the founding documents of the Katipunan were silent on the friar land issue, these mentioned specific grievances related to the alleged immorality of the friars. Rizal's novels and other written works from *ilustrados* like Marcelo H. del Pilar and Graciano Lopez Jaena were also filled with such charges, and these works have always been part of the discussions in basic education both in Filipino and Social Studies classes. This alleged fault of the friars may also be considered the most pervasive in popular culture and memory while at the same time being one of the most difficult to verify due to lack of documentation and the biases of both the propagandists and the friars who wrote during the period. Schumacher suggested that academics today can have an idea of the general moral standing of friars and other members of the clergy by reading observations from foreigners who documented their experiences in the Philippines during the late 19th century. He noted, for example, that impartial observers, and at times the propagandists themselves, agreed that the moral level among the friars was greatly superior to that of most of the Filipino clergy.[50] R. Reyes[51] also noted that while many of the propagandists personally knew cases of friar immorality, the issue was clearly secondary to them. Whatever the case, what seems certain is that while these charges against the friars were not without basis, they must be scrutinized and appreciated with an analytic eye given the context and aim of the propagandists from

[49] *Casaysayan; Pinagcasundoan; Mga daquilang cautosan*

[50] Schumacher, *The Propaganda Movement, 1880–1895*, 303.

[51] R. Reyes, *Love, Passion and Patriotism: Sexuality and the Philippine Propaganda Movement, 1882–1892* (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2009), 117–121.

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whom most students and teachers derive much of their perception of the 19th-century Church.

Possible Additions to the Narratives

This section of the paper points out some possible additions to the narratives, aside from those already mentioned above, that are usually included in discussions of 19th-century Philippine Church history in basic education.

1. A Tale of Two Nationalisms

> And in the end, he was a Spaniard. The friar had won the Philippines for Spain. He would defend his conquest against heretics, liberals, Masons, Protestants, filibusteros, progressives, intellectuals, separatists, nationalists, or whatever they chose to call themselves.…
>
> But he the friar, for one, would be a true Spaniard to the last, even if he were to be the last Spaniard in the Philippines … this, then, was the great antagonist of the first Filipino.[52]

Another way to study the Church's involvement in political affairs is to view the matter through the lens of friar nationalism.

As was discussed earlier, friar nationalism may be less a product of the Church's inherent love and loyalty for Spain than it is perhaps of self-preservation, with the friars believing that their survival hinged on Spanish sovereignty in the colony. As a consequence, their worth became tied to their usefulness in colonial administration from both their point-of-view and that of the Spanish Crown. Members of the clergy—from the friars to the secular priests like Pelaez and Burgos—were explicit and generous in their pledge of loyalty to the Crown despite their demands for reforms.[53] Unfortunately for the Church,

[52]L. Guerrero, *The First Filipino* (Guerrero Publishing Inc., 2010), xxiii.

[53]Schumacher, *Revolutionary Clergy*, 1–33; C. Sánchez Fuertes, "The Franciscans and the Philippine Revolution in Central Luzon," trans. B. Cadwallader, in F. Rodao & F. Rodriguez, eds., *The Philippine Revolution of 1896: Ordinary Lives*

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this nationalism would clash with another type of nationalism by the end of the 19th century.

More importantly, what textbooks and classroom discussions on the late 19th-century Philippine Church lacked was some recognition or appreciation for how the Philippine Church contributed to the rise of Philippine nationalism. Most of the discussions about the 19th-century Church dealt with the friars and their abuses but did not take into account the rise and role of the native clergy, with the exception of a limited discussion on the secularization movement and the martyrdom of GOMBURZA. Both secular priests and religious orders played crucial roles in the birth of nationalism, whether through the humanist education they imparted in higher education or through active involvement in the revolution and even in the Philippine-American War.[54]

2. The Entrenchment of Catholicism

Any study of the Philippine Church in the 19th century must also take into account the fact that Catholicism had been deeply entrenched in Philippine society after more than 300 years of colonial rule. While this assertion is accepted by most historians and educators in principle, interpretation of this fact varies. Uncritical discussions of Christianization and conquest in textbooks and classroom discussions, for example, often lead to a simplistic understanding of the significant role of Christianity and the Church in the lives of Filipinos, especially toward the end of the 19th century. Despite being maligned by propagandists, friars—and the Philippine Church in general—had figured significantly in the material development of the nation, acted as

in Extraordinary Times (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2001), 211.

[54]That the Philippine Church played a crucial role in the making of the nation was the thesis of Schumacher's book, *Revolutionary Clergy*. Schumacher would argue that the Church had always been a constant guide to the formation and maturity of Philippine nationalism from the time of Fr. Pedro Pelaez to the revolutionary struggles of the Katipuneros and even beyond.

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fiscalizers of the conduct of abusive officials, and been seen by many Filipinos as the champions of their rights for the longest time, even up to the 19th century.[55] The fact that most Filipinos chose to remain Catholic after ousting the Spaniards is also a testament to the success of the Church. The 1918 census, for example, showed that most Filipinos remained Catholic despite aggressive attempts by Protestant missionaries to evangelize and convert the natives.[56]

Lastly, it may be important to contextualize or de-emphasize the anti-friar or anti-Church nature of the Philippine Revolution. A more nuanced analysis would reveal that majority of Filipinos who fought for independence in the late 19th century were not anti-Church nor anti-clergy and were not necessarily wholly anti-friar as well. The fate of the friars and the Church varied greatly depending on geography, the extent of Christianization, and parishioners' relationships with their parish priests, among others.[57]

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[55]J. Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History* (Quezon City, Philippines: Loyola School of Theology, 1987), 233; Sánchez Fuertes, "The Franciscans and the Philippine Revolution in Central Luzon," 224.

[56]Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 402. It must also be noted that the Protestant missionaries were at an advantage during the first few decades of American occupation. Public school teachers were mostly Protestants, the educational system was secularized, many *ilustrados* and American officials who occupied the early government positions in the colony held anti-friar sentiments, and the Philippine Catholic Church was in disarray during this time. However, despite all these and more, only 1.3% of Filipinos converted to Protestantism based on the 1918 census.

[57]D. Doeppers, "The Philippine Revolution and the Geography of Schism," *Geographical Review* 66:2 (1976): 158–177; J. Schumacher, *The Making of a Nation: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Filipino Nationalism* (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1996), 476; Sánchez Fuertes, "The Franciscans and the Philippine Revolution in Central Luzon," 179–216. While Doeppers's analysis focuses more on identifying which geographic areas joined the Philippine Independent Church, his findings also point to the reality that Filipinos did not have a uniform hatred for the Church and the friars and that the fate of the Catholic clergy depended on a number of factors. He mentioned, for instance, that in east central Philippines, 95% of the population remained Catholic and that

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Conclusion

This paper presented a preliminary analysis of how the late 19th-century Philippine Church was studied in Ateneo de Manila High School during the 1980s and 1990s. It looked at the main references used in classroom discussions and sought insights from key resource persons who were part of the Social Studies and Filipino departments during the timeframe studied. In this analysis, it was found that the presentation of late 19th-century Philippine church history in AHS was consistent with the nationalist narrative prevailing at the time. It also showed that due to the context of the time and the constraints in the curriculum, the portrayal of the late 19th-century Philippine Church was largely consistent with how the Church was portrayed in Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, with a few exceptions toward the end of the 1990s. Being a preliminary study, it invites other researchers to expand its analysis to cover other aspects of Philippine Church history.

A possible expansion of this study would be to look at how other chapters in Philippine Church history are being discussed in Social Studies classes. A good topic to start with would be the conquest and Christianization of the Philippines in the 16th and 17th centuries since this period is usually covered in great detail in high school textbooks and classroom discussions. However, based on my personal knowledge and experience, teaching about this topic could use some nuancing as well. The usual theme of the "Sword and the Cross" is often oversimplified and sometimes literally interpreted even today.[58] It is also worth noting that the 1582 Synod of Manila is rarely discussed—or

in Panay, the Filipino priests did not even see the need to replace their Spanish bishop due to the good relationship between Spaniards and Filipinos in the area. Sánchez Fuertes also gave a detailed discussion on the different experiences of the Franciscans in Central Luzon during the 1896 and 1898 revolutions.

[58]In the Department of Education's current curriculum guide for Araling Panlipunan, for example, an entire section was entitled "Pamumuno ng mga Prayle" [Rule of the Friars] and friars in particular were equated with the term "conquistador."

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even mentioned—in many high school Social Studies classes or even in Philippine history classes at the tertiary level.

There is still much to discover about how Filipinos remember the history of the Philippine Church. I say this though with the recognition that this is just one small area in the effort to improve historical consciousness among Filipinos through basic education, and I chose this particular topic given the Church's lack of representation in history and because of her critical role in Philippine society from the Spanish colonial period until today. An accurate knowledge of the Church's historical role in nation-building can hopefully provide firmer ground for the Church's mission today, both for its clergy and for Filipino Catholics who claim to profess the faith. It is also timely as we commemorate the 500th-year anniversary of Christianity's arrival in the Philippines in 2021.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Ana Maria Q. Faustino is Assistant Professor at the Don Bosco School of Theology where she has been teaching since 2012. She has also been teaching religious education and values education courses to college students at the St. Paul University Quezon City since 2004. She obtained an undergraduate degree in Industrial Engineering from the University of the Philippines-Diliman in 1982 and worked in the banking industry before shifting to pastoral work in 1992. She then completed with High Distinction the M.A. in Education, Major in Values Education, at the University of Asia & the Pacific in 2000 and the M.A. in Theological Studies (with specialization in Moral Theology) at the Ateneo de Manila University in 2013. Annie received her Ph.D. in Theology with the same specialization and from the same institution in 2021. Her dissertation was entitled *A Theological Investigation of Adoption by Same-Sex Couples*.

Felix Körner, S.J., is the director of the Institute for the Study of Religions and Cultures and professor at the faculty of missiology at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome. His publications include *Revisionist Koran Hermeneutics in Contemporary Turkish University Theology: Rethinking Islam* (2005) and *Kirche im Angesicht des Islam* (2008) as well as numerous articles and essays. Körner holds a B.A. from Heythrop College and an M.A. from Bamberg University. He earned his doctorate from the University of Fribourg for his studies on modern Turkish theologians of the so-called Ankaran School. From 2002 to 2008, he lived in Ankara, Turkey, and had a teaching position at the Philosophical-Theological University of Sankt Georgen in Frankfurt, Germany. He was a delegate-participant to the 2008 and 2011 Catholic-Muslim Forum. In 2012, he was appointed by Benedict XVI to the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with Muslims.

Ramil R. Marcos obtained his Master of Arts in Theological Studies degree from San Carlos Graduate School of Theology, Manila (1996), Licentiate in Sacred Theology (Dogma) from the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome (2000), and Doctorate in Sacred Theology (Systematic) from Loyola School of Theology, Quezon City (2021). His

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expertise is in ecumenical and interreligious relations. He has taught at San Carlos Seminary, Immaculate Conception Seminary, Recoletos School of Theology, Don Bosco Center of Studies, and Silliman University and has published several devotional books and Biblical reflections through St. Paul's Publications as well as theological articles in Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute's *Ecumenical Trends*, East Asian Pastoral Institute's *East Asian Pastoral Review*, and Loyola School of Theology's *Loyola Papers*. He also has ebooks available on Amazon Kindle. For the past twelve years, his blog *ourparishpriest.blogspot.com* has faithfully provided readers with weekly reflections on Biblical readings and Catholic doctrines. He currently devotes time to research, teaching, and outreach to marginalized sectors of society.

Lancy Monteiro, S.J., teaches theology at Karnataka Regional Theology Center, Bengaluru, India. He obtained his doctorate from the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, for his dissertation entitled *Christian Revelation and Non-Christian Religions in Aloysius Pieris, the Catholic Magisterium and Karl Rahner: Hospitality within Catholic Universality and Rationality* (2012) which was later published with the title *Revelation and Religions: Hospitality within Catholic Universality and Rationality* (Bangalore: ATC Publications, 2016). Among his recent scholarly publications are "God's Divinizing Presence: An Adequate Notion of Revelation for a Theology of Interreligious Dialogue," *VJTR* 81:11 (2017): 845–867 and "Adherence to Symbols: A Theology of Faith for Interreligious Dialogue," *VJTR* 82 (2018): 454–473.

Michael C. Porcia, S.J., earned his M.A. in Pastoral Ministry degree with a concentration on family and marriage counseling from Loyola School of Theology in Quezon City, Philippines. He holds a Licentiate in Psychology degree from the Institute of Psychology—Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy and had his clinical training in psychological assessment and psychodynamic psychotherapy for priests, religious, and seminarians from the Institute's *Centro di Consultazione*. His pastoral experiences include diocesan college seminary and religious formation, vocation promotions, prison chaplaincy, and the screening of candidates for the priestly and religious life. Currently, he is the director of the Spiritual Pastoral Formation

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Year (SPFY) program of San Jose Seminary, Quezon City. He is also a registered nurse.

Franz Jan S. Santos is a lecturer at the Department of History of the Ateneo de Manila University. He is also the Subject Area Coordinator for Social Sciences at the Ateneo de Manila Senior High School where he has been teaching for the last fifteen years. He attained his M.A. degree in History from the Ateneo de Manila University. Aside from teaching history, he is also a teacher trainer under different non-government organizations, including the Ateneo Center for Educational Development, as well as a textbook editor and courseware writer for high school and college subjects. His research deals mostly with Philippine Church history and history education.

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