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The East Asian Pastoral Institute

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Rizal and the Dipolog Church

Those who remember the old San Ignacio Church of Intramuros and have seen the church in Dipolog, Zamboanga del Norte, have been struck by the close resemblance. And it has always been understood that this likeness was no accident.

In 1878 Father Francisco de Paula Sanchez sailed for Spain and, passing through Rome, presented for the approval of the General of the Society of Jesus the plans of San Ignacio Church.

In that year Father Jose Vilaclara was a missionary in Dipolog and confronted with the task of building a church. He knew Jose Rizal very well, having been his professor the previous year in philosophy at the Ateneo. He turned to Rizal for help.

While recovering from illness in Cebu, Vilaclara acknowledged a letter of young Rizal, which had been received in Dipolog. He expressed his desire to have Rizal pass a vacation in Dipolog and hoped to get from him some sketches of altars for his church. The local artists, though not lacking in talent, were poor in ideas. Meanwhile, he asked Rizal to sketch some of the better altars in Manila and "to copy the plan of our future church". Rizal could give the results to some Jesuit who would get them to Vilaclara in Cebu, with which city communications were easy and rapid.

It is not known definitely that Rizal satisfied this desire, but it seems altogether likely in view of his friendly relations with Father Vilaclara and the fact that the church does indeed look like San Ignacio Church.

Father Nicasio Patangan, the present parish priest of Dipolog, when he was a boy, actually saw the model of the Dipolog Church based on Manila's San Ignacio. Father Vilaclara began the construction but, although he remained in Dipolog many years, the church was not completed by him, but by Father Francisco Garcia.

If the foregoing speculations are well-founded, Rizal helped place a memorial to himself in northern Mindanao many years before his exile in neighboring Dapitan.

LEO A. CULLUM

The East Asian Pastoral Institute

In 1961 the former Institute of Mission Apologetics, which has been working out of Manila for some years, changed its name to the

EAST ASIAN PASTORAL INSTITUTE in order to stress the fact that the Institute's purpose is specific concentration on the catechetical problems of the Far East region. The Institute offers practical service to the bishops and their clergy and to all missionaries, religious or lay, engaged in the biblical, liturgical and catechetical apostolate in this area.

As in Western countries, the spreading and deepening of the pastoral renewal takes place through publications, meetings, conferences, training courses and informational exchange with similar pastoral centers in other East Asian countries. Members of the Institute are at one time or another working through all of these channels towards the constant improvement of catechetical instruction. For example, the Institute collaborated with Sister Maria de la Cruz, H.H.S., in the preparation of the *On Our Way* series, considered by many currently the best set (in English) of catechisms for children. Again, knowledge of the whole program of modern catechetics is continually spread through frequent lectures and conferences; and special "formation" courses have been set up for the professional training of teachers and catechists themselves, where the preferred "source books" are the Bible and the Liturgy. These last courses vary in length according to particular needs and circumstances, the complete course running from thirty to forty lessons.

Such a training course has been given over the past three years at St. Scholastica's College in Manila to Sisters of different religious communities and will again be offered beginning in January of 1962 with the stress this time on Biblical Catechetics. Members of the Institute also taught in the Manila Archdiocesan Confraternity of Christian Doctrine's Summer Institute at Loreto College, under the direction of Monsignor Justino C. Ortiz, archdiocesan director. This Institute lasted five weeks and prepared lay catechists destined to teach over 5,000 first-year students in fourteen of Manila's public high schools. Courses in doctrine and methods were given and practice teaching engaged in in demonstration classes, with criticism and discussion following. Subjects for special lectures were Protestantism, Freemasonry, Aglipayanism and the *Iglesia ni Cristo*. Personal spiritual formation was emphasized and active participation required in biblical-liturgical functions.

A similar but fuller course has been taught by members of the Institute for the past five years at Santa Isabel College in Manila, again in collaboration with the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. The course extends over two years and is scheduled from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, three classes each week for a 33-week period, one hundred classes in all. The first year covers general methods, the Creed, the Sacraments and an introduction to the Bible; the second year practical methods, the Commandments and the Liturgy. The

trainees here are catechists from Manila parishes and private grade schools.

Everywhere not only doctrine and method is treated but ample space given for discussion of the particular problems of the area and of the participants. Thus, for example, the public high-school catechists continue to meet each Saturday morning for supplementary instruction and, most particularly, for discussion of and consultation on their own problems. At this time the plan for the following week's teaching is finalized.

The Institute also conducts a regular Sunday T.V. Mass over Channel 3 at 11 a.m. The program, inaugurated by Father James Reuter, S.J., in September of 1960, is telecast right from the ABS Studio on Dewey Boulevard in Manila. Different parishes participate, the pastor or an assistant celebrating the Mass, the parish choir providing the music, the parishioners in attendance and a member of the Institute acting as commentator. This T.V. Mass is a definite and practical response to the exhortation of His Eminence, Rufino Cardinal Santos, for more active participation by the laity in the Holy Sacrifice in accordance with the Instruction issued by the Sacred Congregation of Rites in September 1958 and, more recently, with the Directives on Participation in the Mass of the Philippine hierarchy.

The headquarters of the EAST ASIAN PASTORAL INSTITUTE are at Chabanel Hall (P. O. Box 1815) on Highway 54 just on the fringe of Manila. From there the members go out, in response to requests, for lectures, conferences, week-end institutes, etc. At present major activity is confined to the Manila area but special arrangements are often made (for example, a week-end institute was held in July at St. Bridget's College, Batangas) for extending the services of the Institute to other areas on Luzon.

PAUL M. SHEEHAN, S.J.