

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

The Examination Records of Gregorio Aglipay in the Manila Archdiocesan Archives

Pedro S. de Achutegui and Miguel A. Bernad

Philippine Studies vol. 6, no. 4 (1958): 437–453

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at philstudies@admu.edu.ph.

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>
Fri June 30 13:30:20 2008

The Examination Records Of Gregorio Aglipay in The Manila Archdiocesan Archives

PEDRO S. DE ACHUTEGUI
MIGUEL A. BERNAD

AMONG the papers preserved in the archives of the archdiocese of Manila are the records of the examinations undergone by Gregorio Aglipay during the period 1891-1898. These examinations were in two fields: "*rúbricas*" and "*materias morales y Latinidad*." The term *rúbricas* applies obviously to the ceremonial of the Catholic Church and may be loosely translated "liturgy." The term *materias morales* refers to moral theology and to those allied disciplines (canon law, pastoral theology etc.), the knowledge of which is required for the solving of cases of conscience in the confessional. Since in the Church these matters are generally treated in Latin, an examination in the one involves knowledge of the other. Hence the term: *materias morales y Latinidad*.

In the Catholic Church the hearing of confessions is considered an essentially judicial act, involving as it does the granting (in some cases the withholding) of sacramental absolution. Being a judicial act, it presupposes in the judge the possession of competent jurisdiction over the penitent. The granting of this jurisdiction to a priest by a bishop or other prelate is called the granting of "faculties."

It is obvious that these faculties should not be given to anyone who does not possess the requisite knowledge to exercise the function of judge. But the priest in the confessional is not only a *judex*; he is healer, teacher, shepherd, guide—*medicus, doctor, pastor, dux*. To hear confessions properly he must know his business. He needs professional knowledge as does a physician or a lawyer or a dentist or an engineer. Hence it is that in some places the faculties for hearing confessions are given to the junior clergy for a limited period only, renewable upon the successful outcome of periodic examinations in liturgy and moral theology.

Aglipay took these examinations in April 1891, in April 1893, in March 1895 and again in May of that same year; then again in May 1897. He was due to take them again in May 1898 but he begged for, and obtained, a postponement.

In each of these cases, the records contain four parts. There is, first, a letter from the applicant to the archbishop begging for a renewal of faculties. This is followed by a reply directing the applicant to submit to an examination. Next comes the examiner's verdict. Finally, there is the grant of the desired faculties.¹

The examination marks were of course not the kind found in a modern school boy's report card. The examiner's verdict was expressed in such phrases as "*bien instruido*" or merely "*aprobado*" or even "*suspenso*." How such phrases were to be understood is explained quite clearly in a directive issued by the archbishop of Manila to the synodal examiner Fray Dionisio Ibañez under date of 14 October 1892. The examinees were to be classified into four categories:

(1) *Muy bueno*: for those whose knowledge was outstanding ("*a los sacerdotes que sean sobresalientes*");

(2) *Bueno*: for those who, without being outstanding like those in the preceding category, nevertheless possessed more knowledge than was strictly necessary ("*a los que sin alcanzar la censura anterior posean más conocimientos que los necesarios*");

¹ See for instance Documents 40-44 in the documentary appendix to this article.

(3) *Aprobado*: denoted minimal knowledge required for hearing confessions (“*a los que manifiesten tener la suficiencia necesaria para oír confesiones*”);

(4) *suspenso*: those who did not possess the necessary knowledge and were required, after due preparation, to present themselves for reexamination (“*a los que por no poseer los conocimientos suficientes sea conveniente señalarles algún tiempo para el repaso de los de las materias morales*”).²

We now come to Aglipay's records.

1891

On 7 April 1891, a year and four months after his ordination, he presented himself for examination and received marks which, though far from brilliant, were certainly passing:

Rúbricas: “*suficientemente instruído*”;

Materias morales y Latín: “*bien dispuesto*.”

His faculties were renewed for two years, until April 1893.³

1893

In 1893 he received better marks. On 6 April he was found “*bien instruído*” in liturgy. The following day he took the examination in moral theology and received the grade *bueno*. As on the former occasion, the faculties were renewed for two years.⁴

1895

In 1895 he appears to have run into some trouble. On 30 March of that year he took the examination in *rúbricas* and was given a passing grade (“*suficientemente instruído*”). There is no record of the other examination in moral theology; but his faculties were renewed for two months (“*hasta el treinta de Mayo del presente año*”), at the end of which period he took the examination and obtained a passing mark (“*aprobado*”).⁵

² The full text is published below; Document 39.

³ Documents 45-48 and 59 *infra*.

⁴ Documents 49-52 and 59 *infra*.

⁵ Documents 53-57 and 60 *infra*.

What was the reason for this examination in May? Was he merely granted a postponement? Or did he fail in March and had to submit to a re-examination in May? This latter interpretation would seem to be indicated, in view of the established practice described in the archbishop's directive of 14 October 1892, already quoted above, according to which, priests who did not pass an examination satisfactorily were to be assigned a certain period of time to review the matter, after which they were to undergo another examination.

1897

In 1897 he seems to have run into further trouble. Having obtained on 28 May 1897 a good mark in liturgy ("*bien instruido*"),⁶ he took the examination in moral theology the following day and apparently failed to impress the examiner. He obtained a passing mark, but the examiner took care to emphasize that it was a *merely* passing mark. His verdict was as follows:

*He examinado de Latín y materias morales al suplicoante, habiéndome merecido la calificación de "APROBADO SOLAMENTE".*⁷

The words *aprobado solamente* are underlined and enclosed in quotation marks in the original document. It is as if the examiner were to say: "He gets a passing mark and no more"; or "He just about got by." As a result of this examination, Aglipay's faculties were renewed not for two years but for one, namely, until 29 May 1898:

*Proróguensele al suplicante las lic.s de celebrar y conf.ar hasta el 29 de Mayo 98.*⁸

1898

We know, from our last article, what happened next, Aglipay's faculties were to have expired on 29 May 1898, but

⁶ Document 42 *infra*.

⁷ Document 43 *infra*.

⁸ Document 44 and 61. It will be noted in the case of Document 43 that in the margin, the notation "Dos Años" has been added in another hand. This notation appears to have been a mistake. Both Documents 44 and 61 mention a one-year renewal, namely, until 29 May 1898. See also Documents 36 and 37 previously published in this Quarterly: PHILIPPINE STUDIES VI (June 1958) 208-209.

on 23 May he wrote to the archbishop begging for more time as he had not been able to prepare for an examination. The archbishop replied the following day granting him a renewal of faculties for six months, until 29 November of that same year. The text and photostatic copies of both documents are found in a previous article.⁹

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DOCUMENTS

What picture do these documents give us of Aglipay?

We should remember that at this time Aglipay was in his thirties. He was thirty-one in 1891 when he took the first of these examinations; he was thirty-eight in 1898 when he begged for a postponement because he was not ready for an examination.

We should further remember that this period (1891-1898) belonged to his first decade as a priest. He was ordained in December 1889. Most priests will perhaps agree that they know more of the sacred sciences in the first five years after they leave the seminary than they will know afterwards, unless they constantly increase their knowledge by constant study. For this constant study, however, few priests have the opportunity, except those whose business it is to teach the sacred sciences in the seminaries or universities. Thus, while experience grows, it is quite possible that a minute knowledge of the niceties of the sacred sciences might diminish. Consequently, if a young priest, fresh from the seminary, does *not* show great proficiency in the sacred sciences, there is less likelihood of his showing such proficiency later, when he will have forgotten many things.

And that seems to be the case with Aglipay. In the first two examinations during the first five years of his priesthood (1891, 1893), his marks were mediocre. Later (1895, 1897) his marks were definitely inferior. It is said of some that their knowledge of their science is such that they can submit to an examination at any time without any special previous preparation. That cannot be said of Aglipay in 1898.

⁹ PHILIPPINE STUDIES VI (June 1958) 174-210.

Rather, the picture one gets from these records is that of a priest who knew his priestly business well enough, but who could not be considered a man of outstanding qualities; who sometimes obtained a good mark in an examination, but sometimes managed just to get a passing grade; who on one occasion (1895) appears to have failed an examination in moral theology and had to take it again two months later; and who on another occasion (1897) gave such a poor account of himself that the examiner, while giving him a passing mark, felt it incumbent upon himself to emphasize that it was no more than a passing mark.

That seems to be the picture that these records give—an impression confirmed by the fact that other priests got much higher ratings in similar examinations.¹⁰

This picture (and it is difficult to see how one could deduce any other from the documents) is of course at variance with the one ordinarily depicted in the biographies: of an Aglipay so brilliant in acumen, so superior in knowledge that he awed his examiners and covered himself with glory in academic disputations. Some even go so far as to say that he was offered (or obtained) chairs or lectureships.

One biographer, for instance, adduces the oral testimony of a classmate of Aglipay:

Young Aglipay distinguished himself even from the beginning as a talented student. As a reward he was appointed Reader in Logic and Metaphysics. One of his classmates, the late Professor Mariano V. del Rosario of the University of the Philippines, in later years, reminisced that to him the subject of Logic was so abstruse that he used to seek the help of Aglipay, who was then, according to him, a brilliant student in Letran.¹¹

What is to be said of such claims? Simply that there is no contemporaneous documentary evidence to support them, whereas there are records which paint a less impressive picture of Aglipay as a young priest.

¹⁰ For instance, Father Pedro Adoptante of Lipa. See Document 63 *infra*.

¹¹ T. Fonacier *Gregorio Aglipay y Labayan: a short biography* p. 10.

BIOGRAPHERS VS. DOCUMENTS

It is regrettable that, despite diligent search, Aglipay's scholastic records while a student at Letrán, at Santo Tomás and at the Vigan Seminary have not been found. From the documents however, that have been published in these pages, it is possible to correct some misinformation that has hitherto been current. We append a list of these errors, listing what the biographers say in one column and the evidence of the documents in the other.

WHAT THE BIOGRAPHERS SAY

1.—Aglipay was born "about 1864" (*Encyclopedia Americana*); on 7 May 1870 (*Espasa*); on 7 May 1860 (*Foreman, Retana*); on 8 May 1860 (*de los Reyes Jr., Fonacier, Galang, et al.*); on 9 May 1860 (*Osias-Galang; Ruiz, et al.*).

2.—Aglipay lost both parents when he was a child. (*de los Reyes Jr., Fonacier, et al.*)

3.—His mother supervised his early education. (*Osias-Galang*).

4.—He was imprisoned with his "only brother" Canuto (*Mandac*). Aglipay "was the younger of two children" of whom the elder was Canuto (*Fonacier*).

5.—He entered the "Dominican" seminary in Vigan (*Osias-Galang*).

6.—He entered the seminary in 1888 (*Mandac*); in 1889 (*Galang*).

7.—He was ordained in 1890 (*Directorio biog. filipino*); in 1899 (*Osias-Galang*).

THE EVIDENCE OF THE DOCUMENTS

1.—Aglipay was baptized on 9 May 1860 when he was "five days old." He was therefore born on 5 May 1860.

2.—His father was "gravely ill" in 1895: therefore he was still alive when Gregorio was 35 years old.

3.—His mother died in 1861, when he was one year and seven months old.

4.—Aglipay had a brother Benito; hence Canuto, if he existed could not have been an "only" brother.

5.—The Vigan Seminary was not Dominican. Aglipay studied under the Dominicans in Letran.

6.—He was ordained in 1889. He had begun his seminary training much earlier. The most probable date is 1883.

7.—He was ordained on 21 December 1889.

- 8.—His ordination was aided by the fact that Archbishop Nozaleda of Manila had been his teacher at Letran (*Wise*).
- 9.—He was ordained in Ilocos (*Artigas*).
- 10.—He was ordained in Manila by reason of the intervention of his "*padrino*", Sánchez-Luna (*de los Reyes Jr.*).
- 11.—He became "successively" coadjutor of Indang, San Pablo, Bocaue, San Antonio, Victoria (*Fonacier; aliter de los Reyes Jr.*).
- 12.—At the outbreak of the Revolution (Aug. 1896) Aglipay was in prison (*Calderon*); he was coadjutor in Victoria, Tarlac (*Foreman, Robertson, Fonacier, Evangelista, Wise*).
- 13.—In 1898 he "feigned" an eye defect in order to get permission to come to Manila; his arrival in Manila "coincided" with the coming of the Americans in May of that year (*Fonacier, et al.*).
- 14.—On 15 (or 16) May 1898 he left Manila on an errand for the archbishop and the governor to the insurgents (*Aglipay ipse; Fonacier*); and did not come back to Manila until August (*Aglipay*); from this errand he returned to Victoria (*Fonacier*).
- 15.—He was endowed with extraordinary brilliance and superior knowledge. (*Almost all.*)
- 8.—Nozaleda did not become archbishop until after Aglipay's ordination. He was out of the country when Aglipay was ordained.
- 9.—He was ordained in Manila.
- 10.—He was ordained in Manila because there was no bishop in Vigan, that see being vacant.
- 11.—The correct sequence is: Indang, San Antonio, Bocaue, San Pablo, Victoria.
- 12.—He was coadjutor in San Pablo, Laguna. He was not transferred to Victoria, Tarlac, until 15 December 1896.
- 13.—The eye defect is attested to by two physicians of standing, and hence could not have been feigned. He arrived in Manila long before May; he was in Manila from February onwards.
- 14.—On 23 May 1898, eight days after the supposed departure from Manila, he wrote a letter to the archbishop, dated *from Manila*. The letter gives no indication of any mission being undertaken for the archbishop. The archbishop replied the following day, also dated from Manila.
- 15.—The examination records given to Aglipay as a priest between 1891 and 1898 do not seem to bear out this claim.

We have omitted from the above list all claims that are merely trivial, or that are patently false: for instance, such claims as that Aglipay had obtained the B.A. from the local college in his native town (in which there was no college); or

that after ordination he enrolled in the "Rizal University, now defunct," from which he is said to have obtained a degree in laws—which, if true, would have meant that there was a Rizal University in Rizal's own life time, when Rizal was in his twenties or early thirties!

AGLIPAY'S EXCOMMUNICATION

There is one other statement which seems to need correcting. George A. Malcolm, in his book *The First Malayan Republic*, says that Aglipay was excommunicated during the Philippine uprising against Spain. This is inaccurate. Aglipay was indeed excommunicated but during the Philippine uprising *against America*. Spain had ceded the Philippines to America in the treaty of Paris, signed in December of 1898 and ratified on 6 February 1899. The Philippine Republic was proclaimed in January 1899. The Philippine-American war began the following month, in February 1899. It was not until May 1899 that Aglipay was excommunicated.

APPENDIX

The Documents

NOTE.—In our previous article we published the text of thirty-eight documents from the Manila archdiocesan archives. For this reason the documents published below begin with number thirty-nine. On the upper right hand corner of each entry we have noted the place where each document can be found in the archives. Reference is made to docket number (*legajo*), sheaf number (*fajo*), leaf number (*folio*). Orthographical accents, sometimes missing in the documents, have been added.

Document 39

Leg. 195 fol. 174

Octubre 14 (1892)

M.R.P. Fr. Dionisio Ibañez, Examinador Sinodal de este Arzobispado.—Con el fin de tener datos fijos para la concesión de las licencias de confesar y evitar vacilaciones acerca del término para que pueden concederse, creemos conveniente que los Examinadores Sinodales informen sus calificaciones; a cuyo efecto se atenderán a las siguientes: *Muy bueno*, a los sacerdotes que sean sobresalientes; *Bueno*

a los que sin alcanzar la censura anterior, posean más, conocimientos que los necesarios; *Aprobado* a los que manifiesten tener la suficiencia necesaria para oír confesiones.—Y *Suspense* a los que por no poseer los conocimientos suficientes sea conveniente señalarles algún tiempo para el repaso de los de las materias morales.—Lo que participamos... Fr. Bern. Arzpo.

Documents 40-44

Leg. 371 A, fajo A fol. 108-9
Signature and rubric in autograph
See photostatic copy on page 447

40

Excmo. e Ilmo. Sr. Arzobispo de esta Diócesis

Dn. Gregorio Aglipay, Pbro. Secular de este Arzobispado y Coadjutor del pueblo de Victoria, en la provincia de Tarlac, a V.E.Y. (sic) con la mayor consideración y respeto expone: Que estando para terminar sus licencias de celebrar y confesar a V.E.Yltma. humildemente suplica se digne prorogarlas previos los requisitos que estimare necesarios.

Gracias (sic en plural) que no duda alcanzar del bondadoso corazón de V.E.Y. cuya vida guarde Dios muchos años.

Manila, 28 de Mayo de 1897

Exmo. e Yltmo. Sr.

Grego. Aglipay

41

Fol. 108v
Signatures and rubrics in
autograph
See photostatic copy on page 448

Manila, 28 de Mayo de 1897

Pase el suplicamente á examen de latinidad y materias morales, ante el Pbro. de la Congregación de la Misión Dn. Antonio Pérez, despues de haber sido examinado de sagradasrúbricas, por el Maestro de Ceremonias de esta Santa Yglesia Catedral, Dn. José Consunji, quien se servira extender a continuacion su censura y remitirla cerrada a nuestra Secretaría.

SELLO

x—Arzpo. (firma y rúbrica)

Por mandado de S.E.I. el Arzobispo
mi Señor

Tomas G. Feijoo

Srio (firmado y rubricado)

f. 108.
 Encomiendo a V. M. Sr. Arzobispo
 de esta diócesis

En Gregorio Aglipay, Pbro. secular
 de este Archidispato y Coadjutor del
 curato de Victoria, en la provincia de
 Barlas, a V. M. con la mayor conside-
 ración y respeto expono: Que estando
 para terminar mis licencias de
 celebrar y conferir

A. M. J. Encomiendo humilmente suplico a V. M.
 premocionarlas previas los requisitos que
 estimar necesarios.

Gracias que no pueda alcanzar
 el bondadoso corazón de V. M. una
 vida cuarenta dos minutos antes
 de Venida, 28 de mayo de 1894

Encomiendo a V. M. Sr.

Gregorio Aglipay

Ma

mita, 28 de Mayo de 1898

Para el replicante a exámen de latencia
y madurez morales, ante el Exo. Co. la Congre.
Joven a la Misión D.^o Antonio Ruiz, después de
haber sido examinado de sagradas escrituras por
el Maestro de Catequías, de esta Santa Iglesia
Catedral D.^o José Consuegra, quien se verán estar
de a intimación en censura y remitir la
cerrado a nuestra Secretaría.

Haarlem
1871

1771
 1772
 1773
 1774
 1775

Per mandare De 189
de Archief van de
Sociaal & Liefde

His

Leone & Son

He examined at length the
sagittate, striated plates in the
interior.

42

The whole in autograph
See photostatic copy on page 448

Exmo. e Illmo Sr.

He examinado al suplicante en las sagradas rúbricas y le he hallado bien instruído.

Manila, 28 de Mayo de 1897

Excmo. e Illmo. Sr.

José Consunji

(fdo. y rubricado)

43

Fol. 109
The whole in autograph
Notation in margin. See note 8
above. See photostatic copy page 450

Exmo. e Illmo Sr.

He examinado de Latín y materias morales al suplicante habiéndome merecido la calificación de "Aprobado solamente." Lo cual pongo en conocimiento de V.E. para los efectos que estime convenientes.

Antonio Perez

Manila, 29 de Mayo de 1897

fol. 109

44

Exmo. e Illmo Sr.

Manila 29 de Mayo de 1897

Proróguensele al suplicante las lics. de celebrar y conf.ar hasta el 29 Mayo 98 (sic).

R. No. 1363

Documents 45-48

Leg. 370 A, fajo A, fols. 42-43

45

fol. 42

(Text identical with that of Document 40, but bears date) 6 de abril de 1981 (Aglipay is described as) Coadjutor del pueblo de Indan (and is signed) Gregorio Aglipay.

46

ibid.

(Consunji's verdict in the examination on "rúbricas") suficientemente instruído (and bears date) 7 abril 1891.

47

fol. 43v
The whole in autograph

Excmo. Sor. He examinado al Presbítero Suplicante y le he hallado bien dispuesto. Manila, 7 Abril de 1891.

Santiago Serrallonga.

48

ibid.

Proróguensele....hasta el 9 de Abril de 1953

Sentado Raz. No. 6

Documents 49-52

Leg. 370 A, fajo O, fols. 48-49

49

(Text of petition identical with preceding except) Coadjutor (without indicating place, but bearing date) Manila 5 de Abril de 1853.

50

(Consunji's verdict on 6 April) bien instruído (in "rúbricas").

51

(Santiago Serrallonga's verdict) a mi juicio se le puede dar la nota de Bueno (in the examination in) materias morales y Latinidad (dated) Manila 7 Abril 1893.

52

Proróguensele al suplicante las licencias de celebrar y confesar hasta el 9 de abril de 1895. R. 394.

Documents 53-57

Leg. 372 A, fajo B, fols. 33-36

53

fol. 33

(Text of petition practically identical with preceding with the variant) Coadjutor del pueblo de Bocaue (and dated) Manila 28 de Marzo de 1895.

54

fol. 33v

(Consunji's verdict in "rúbricas") suficientemente instruído.

55

fol. 34

(Faculties renewed) hasta el treinta de Mayo del presente año (and signed) El Arzpo (with rubric and dated) Manila 30 de Marzo de 1895 (and is made in favor of) Sr. Pbro. Dn. Gregorio Aglipay, Coadjutor de Bocaue.

56

fol. 36

(Examination mark) calificación de Aprobado (and dated) Manila 29 de Mayo de 1895 (and signed and rubricked) Antonio Perez.

57

ibid. in left margin

2 años....hasta el 29 de Mayo de 1897. R. 911

Documents 58-62 ..

Leg. 196 Libro de Razon
Begins 11 Febrero 1891

58

Fol. 5v, N. 6

En 7 de Abril (1891) se prorogan al Presbítero D. Gregorio Aglipay las licencias de celebrar y confesar las facultades acostumbradas hasta el 9 de Abril de 1893.

59

Fol. 85, N. 394

En 7 de Abril (1893) se prorogan....D. Gregorio Aglipay.... hasta el 9 de Abril de 1895.

Excmo. e Ilmo. Sr.

He examinado de latin
y materias morales al suplicante
habiendome merecido la calificación
de "Aprobado solamente".

Y ANOY

Cañela, 29 de Mayo
1877.

Encarguese al
Sr. D. J. M. de

Cañela, 29 de Mayo
1877.

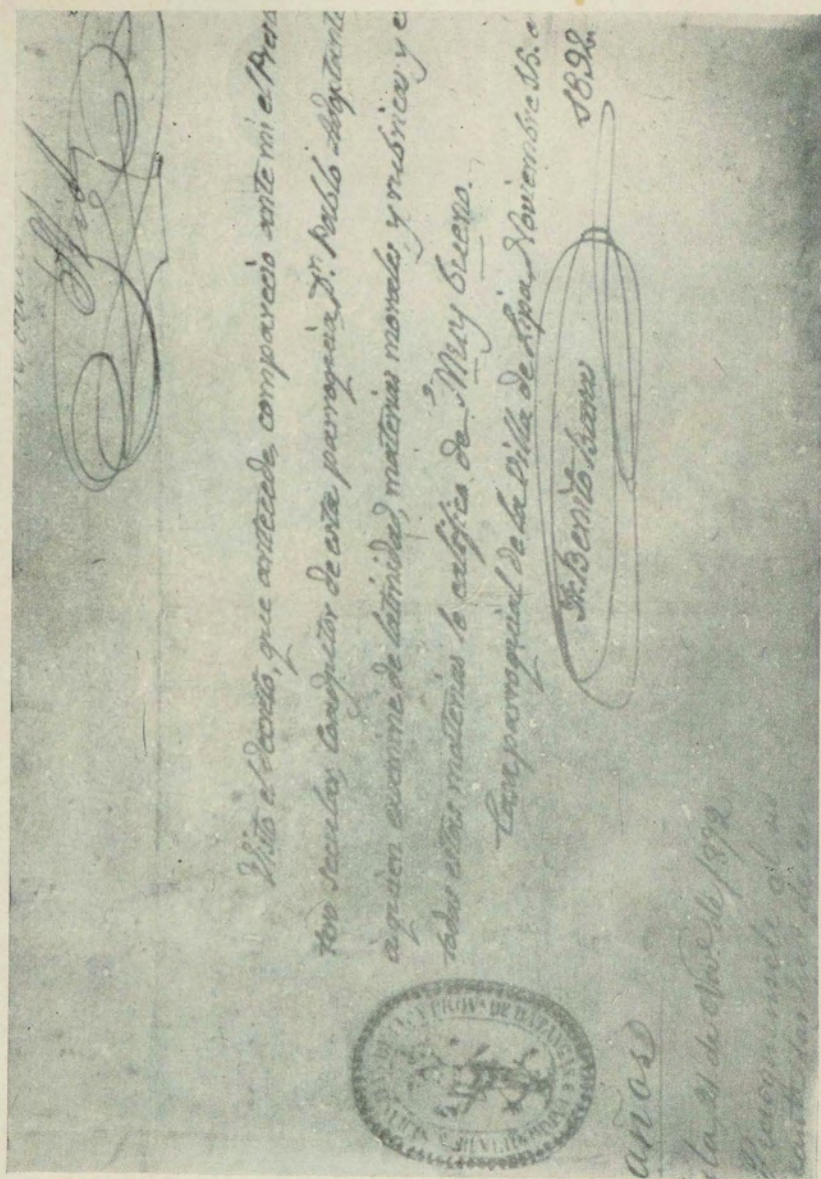
Lo cual pongo en conocimiento de V. B.
para los efectos q. estime convenientes

Antonio J. J. J.

Cañela 29 de Mayo de 1877
Excmo. e Ilmo. Sr.

R

13620



Examination mark of Father Pablo Adoptante

(See Document 63, page 453)

60

Fol. 150v, N. 911

En 29 de Mayo (1895) se prorogan....D. Gregorio Aglipay.... hasta el 29 de Mayo de 1897.

61

Fol. 218, N. 1363

En 29 de Mayo (1897 se prorogan....D. Gregorio Aglipay.... hasta 29 de Mayo de 1898.

62

Fol. 251, N. 1610

En 24 de Mayo (se expidió en la) [*sic el parenthesis*] se prorogan al Presbítero D. Gregorio Aglipay las licencias de celebrar y confesar hasta el veintinueve de No.e del presente año (1898).

Document 63

See photostatic copy on page 452

Visto el decreto, que antecede, compareció ante mí el Presbítero secular, Coadjutor de esta Parroquia, Dn. Pablo Adoptante, á quien examiné de latinidad, materias morales, y rúbricas, y en todas estas materias le califico de '*Muy bueno,*'

Casa parroquial de la villa de Lipa, Noviembre 15 de 1892.

SELLO

Fr. Benito Bara (firma y rúbrica)