

philippine studies

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

The Filipino Clergy and the Secularization Decree of 1813

Luciano P.R. Santiago

Philippine Studies vol. 36, no. 1 (1988) 54–67

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 27 13:30:20 2008

The Filipino Clergy and the Secularization Decree of 1813

LUCIANO P. R. SANTIAGO

In the Cavite Mutiny of 1872, three native priests, Gomes, Burgos and Zamora who dared to speak out against the persecution of the secular clergy were charged with sedition. After a hasty trial, they were executed by the garrote and their prominent sympathizers, priests and laymen alike, were banished from the colony.

About sixty years before the Cavite events, we find their foreshadowing in the little-known ordeal of the native clergy in the same province. The Cavite clergy in 1812 were led by Bachiller Don Domingo Sevilla Pilapil, a predecessor of Padre Gomes both as pastor of Bacoar and vicar forane of Cavite.¹

P R E C E D I N G E V E N T S

In order to understand more clearly the ecclesiastical crisis of 1813, we have to look back to another little known episode which preceded it during the reign of Archbishop Basilio Sancho de Santas Justa y Rufina (1767-87). The latter was succeeded by Archbishop Fray Juan Antonio de Orbigo y Gallego, O.F.M. (1787-97) who had earlier served as the bishop of Nueva Caceres (1780-89). Toward the end of his term, Orbigo erected the new parishes of Sta. Rosa (Laguna), Imus (Cavite) and Las Piñas (in the old province of Manila) but disappointed the Filipino clergy by assigning the first curacy to the Dominicans and the last two to the Recollects. As expected, the native priests--whose numbers had multiplied in the past three decades and who were now better organized--rose in protest at these grants. However, before the conflict could be resolved, the archbishop died in 1797. The cathedral

1. See also Luciano P.R. Santiago, "The Struggles of the Native Clergy in Pampanga," *Philippine Studies* 33 (1985):176-202.

chapter, which subsequently governed the vacant see (1797-1804) and had three Filipino members by then, closed ranks with the Filipino clergy and appealed the case directly to the king. His Majesty eventually ruled in their favor with his royal order of 31 March 1803. Unfortunately, it all turned out to be an exercise in futility. The governor general shelved the decree and the religious orders continued to enjoy their new parishes till the end of the Spanish regime.²

THE PHILIPPINES AND THE SPANISH CORTES OF 1810-14

The Spanish War of Independence against Napoleon (1808-14) gave rise to the legislative body called Cortes which passed laws for the country and its colonies in the name of the imprisoned King Carlos IV. The first elected Philippine representative to the initial session of this assembly (1810-13) was a Manila Creole, Don Ventura de los Reyes. He emerged as one of the signers of the liberal Constitution of 1812 which was proclaimed in Manila on 17 April 1813.³

Five months later, the elections of the next Philippine delegates to the regular session of the Cortes (1813-14) were held through the *principales* of the province of Manila which was extended to mean the wider jurisdiction of the archdiocese of Manila. This was in direct violation of the electoral code promulgated by the Cortes to enlist the entire male population of the colony. Nevertheless, the results of the suffrage reflected the will of at least a representative segment of the colonized people. It also brought to the fore the role of the native clergy as their chosen leaders. Ten of the twenty-five electors selected by the *principales* of nine provinces or districts of the archdiocese were native priests. These provincial electors, in turn, converged in Intramuros on 17, 18 and 19 September 1813 and chose the four Philippine deputies. Three of the winners were also Filipino priests: Licenciado Don Joseph de Vergara y Masangcay, Doctor Don Mariano Bernabe Pilapil and Bachiller Don Camilo Pividal. The alternate delegate chosen was likewise a native priest, Bachiller Don Juan Andrés Gatmaitán. The

2. Pablo Fernandez, O.P. *History of the Church in the Philippines* (Manila: National Book Store, 1979), p. 120; Archives of the Archdiocese of Manila (AAM), *Libro de Gobierno Ecclesiástico (LGE)* (1789-97), f. 118.

3. Luciano P.R. Santiago, "The Filipino Priest-Delegates to the Spanish Cortes of 1813," *PQCS* 13 (1985):221-34. This article gives a more detailed account of the Philippine participation in the First Spanish Cortes.

lone lay representative elected was Don Ifiigo Gonzalez Azaola, a Criollo agriculturist of Calauang, Laguna.⁴

Three of the delegates, Pividal, Vergara and Gonzalez Azaola were able to embark for Spain. Unfortunately, while they were still at sea for almost a year's journey to their destination, the restored King Fernando VII who had succeeded his father, abolished the Cortes on 4 May 1814. This news, however, would not reach the Philippines until February of the following year.⁵

THE SECULARIZATION DECREE OF 1813

On the penultimate day of the first session of the Cortes, 13 September 1813, the legislators enacted into law for all the colonies a resolution which had been introduced by the Bishop-elect of Guyana, Don Jose Ventura Cabelle to secularize the parishes in his diocese. The Guyana prelate had complained of the "moral and political evils" which emanated from the fact that the religious orders had failed to turn over to his rightful jurisdiction their missions "of over 30, 40, 50 or more years" in spite of "decrees after decrees" compelling them to do so.⁶ In the Philippines, of course, the time span was more than two centuries. The decree of 1813 as sweeping and as devastating as it was to the regular clergy, merely repeated earlier royal orders such as those of 1753, 1757, 1768 and 1774 which had gathered dust on the shelves of the colonial archives.⁷

The new law consisted of six sections:

1. All the missions in the colonies which had been under the care of the religious orders for ten or more years were to be transferred immediately to the administration of the bishops concerned.
2. These missions, like the curacies, would be assigned to the secular clergy according to the laws of the church and of royal patronage.
3. The missionaries displaced by the above transfer should be assigned to the missions of infidels who are in need of their services.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

6. AAM, "Expediente seguido de Oficio contra los curas párrocos del Partido de Cavite sobre lo que adentro se expresa, Año de 1815," *Expedientes sobre Diferentes Matérias (EDM)* (1800-32)

A. This is the main source of this article and henceforth, it will be referred to as "Expediente."

7. Fernández, *History*, pp. 117-20.

4. The bishops might designate the friars as assistants to the secular pastors or as acting pastors but not as proprietary parish priests.
5. Each religious order might retain one or two missions or curacies in each ecclesiastical district or province.
6. The missionaries should immediately turn over the management and administration of the haciendas to the Indios themselves. Through their local government and under the supervision of their provincial officials, the Indios, in turn, should choose among themselves the administrators of the lands who would eventually distribute them to the people as their private properties according to the decree of 4 January 1813.⁸

We can deduce that this decree was received by Archbishop Zulaibar in Manila on 1 December 1814 for on the same day, he acknowledged receipt of the other decrees issued by the Cortes on 13 September 1813.⁹ Apparently shaken by its contents, however, the Dominican prelate and the governor-general lost no time in consulting each other on what to do with it and predictably, they agreed that "its implementation was inadvisable due to the dearth and the inadequate preparation of the secular clergy here."¹⁰

But an urgent document such as this which dealt with the long-standing issue of secularization could hardly be suppressed. And this, the governor and the archbishop were soon to find out. Curiously enough, it was a Recollect priest, Fray Manuel Medina, chaplain of the ship *Magallanes* who, sometime in the first week of December 1814, informed the Cavite pastors of San Roque and San Francisco de Malabon, (now General Trías), Padres Eulalio Ramírez and Dionisio Ramos, respectively, of the arrival of the decree in question. This ship, which was apparently one of the official carriers of the decrees from Cadiz, had just cast anchor at the Port of Cavite. A clerk in the Cavite arsenal, Pedro Advíncula, then obtained a copy of the document for Padre Ramírez. The two Filipino pastors immediately notified their vicar forane, B.D. Domingo Sevilla Pilapil, parish priest of Bacoor and first cousin of the Filipino priest-delegate of the same surname. The vicar, in turn, asked Don Pedro Vergara, public scrivener of the city of

8. AAM, "Expediente."

9. AAM, *Cedularios* (1811-14), f. 323 et seq.

10. Fernández, *History*, pp. 120-21. Fr. Fernández is the first church historian to mention this episode in his work which is apparently based on documents preserved at the Dominican Archives in the Philippines.

Manila (Intramuros) and brother of another Filipino priest-delegate, to verify its existence for him. Vergara at once sent him another identical copy of it. Now convinced of its authenticity, Sevilla Pilapil circulated it on 9 December among the pastors in his province with the following circular:¹¹

Lord Pastors:

I send Your Graces the enclosed decree so that we can discuss it in the parish house of the town of San Roque on the twenty-sixth of this month for it is a matter of great importance to the welfare of the clergy. May God keep Your Graces many years. Bacoor, 9 December 1814.

(Sgd.) B.D. Domingo Sevilla Pilapil

In the meantime, they gained the support of well-placed laymen like Advíncula and another clerk, Don Matheo de los Reyes, a provincial elector of Cavite for the Cortes of 1813, and Don Pedro Mayoralgo, assistant to the provincial judge (*teniente de Justicia Mayor*), an ex-seminarian and another elector from the province of Tondo in the previous year.¹² These three attended the conference of the Cavite clergy. Almost all the pastors of Cavite gathered at the appointed time thus signifying the importance they attached to the decree. Padres Sevilla Pilapil himself, Ramirez, the host and Juan Capistrano, pastor of Cavite el Viejo or Kawit, emerged as the three most influential leaders of the group. The six other priests present were Padres Dionisio Ramos of San Francisco de Malabon, Julian Francisco Gavino, pastor of Puerto de Cavite; Gavino Ayala, pastor of Silang; Leon de los Santos, pastor of Maragondong; Pedro Celestino, chaplain-curate of the Hacienda of Naic; and Mariano Mercado, coadjutor of Indang who was sent by the pastor Padre Juan Salamat (1757-1819) who was ill. The sixty-year-old parish priest of Sta. Cruz de Malabon (now Tanza), Padre Narciso Manás (1755-1817) was also unable to attend.¹³

The group decided to draft a letter addressed jointly to the archbishop and the cathedral chapter and another one to the four other Filipino vicars forane of the archdiocese. At first, they had thought of submitting a separate entreaty to the chapter or ecclesiastical council, but decided against it. In the process, they apparently glossed over the fact that their case pertained only to the governor and the archbishop "by the

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid; *LGE* (1789-97), p. 140v; Santiago "Filipino Priest- Delegates."

13. AAM, "Expediente."

laws of the Indies and the Council of Trent" as pointed out by the ecclesiastical notary during the subsequent proceedings against them. Evidently, they were hoping to mobilize this body to their side since it had supported them in their previous struggle for the secular clergy (1796-1804). They dispatched the first letter to the archbishop and the chapter after the meeting on the same day. However, probably to see the initial reaction to their petition, they delayed sending the letters to the other vicars forane till after New Year's Day, 2 January 1815. The archbishop responded on 29 December 1814 summoning each of the signatories in the letter to his palace for interrogation and as it turned out, summary detention of their leaders.¹⁴ The text of the letter is as follows:

Most Illustrious Lord and Venerable Dean and Chapter:

The parish priests of the towns of the district of Cavite—bound without doubt by the supreme obedience which they owe their esteemed prelate His Most Illustrious Lordship and the Venerable Dean and Chapter, and moved at the same time by the patriotism which they feel—will be remiss if we do not inform you of what transpired in our meeting this 26th of December.

A copy of the royal order which we enclosed had miraculously come to our attention. Its publication has been neglected up to the present time in violation of another royal order dated 11 November 1811 which provides the following:

'Don Fernando VII, etc. The Cortes in its regular and special sessions, desiring to promote the responsibility of public employees and in compliance with the provisions of the decree of 14 July to ensure the prompt observance of its sovereign laws, ordain that all public employees, civil or military, who three days after receipt of a law or decree of the National Congress fail to comply with its directives, will, by this omission, be deprived of their employment, etc., etc.'

Since the reason for its dissimulation is unknown to us, we, therefore, formally petition His Very Illustrious Lordship, the Governor, that he may be pleased to order its publication and compliance as we have thus communicated to Your Most Illustrious Lordship.

May God keep His Most Illustrious Lordship many years. District of Cavite, 26 December 1814.

(Sgd.) B.D. Domingo Sevilla Pilapil, et al

The Cavite clergy also attempted to rally the other Filipino priests through their vicars forane to their cause. Unfortunately, they could not

14. Ibid.

reach their colleagues in provinces where the vicars were Spanish friars.¹⁵

The parish priests of this district of Cavite, in view of the copy of the royal order which we send you with this letter, have tried to petition the superior authorities to publish and comply with it. Since it appears to us that the lack of participation of our colleagues in your province in our petition can weaken the force necessary to pursue this case, we suggest that you confer with all your pastors, informing them of what we have tried to accomplish in this regard which is to petition the Reverend Archbishop and the Cathedral Chapter to appeal to the superior authorities to comply with the said royal order. Further, since contribution to this undertaking with the same diligence will redound to the benefit of the entire clergy, in case we are frustrated in our petition, we will be compelled without doubt to appeal to the Regency of the Cortes and thus we have to share the expenses to be incurred in sending an attorney- in-fact or one of our delegates to plead our case before it.

May God keep you many years. District of Cavite, 2 June 1815.

(Sgd.) B.D. Domingo Sevilla Pilapil, et al

From his interrogation of the first Cavite clergyman, Padre Gavino of the Port of Cavite, on 31 December 1814, the archbishop had discovered the existence of this communication and he lost no time in issuing on the same day his own decree requiring all his vicars to immediately turn over to him this letter and the copy of the royal order attached to it.

Only the Pampanga clergy found enough time to answer the letter of their confreres in Cavite. The first to respond on 4 January was B.D. Gaspar Macalinao (1749-1816) the vicar of upper Pampanga and pastor of San Lufs. He stated that he had only seven parishes under him which were quite distant from one another. Furthermore, three pastors had no coadjutors and some of them were ill. Hence, they could not even hold meetings. He counseled his spiritual sons to be patient and await their prelate's decision.

In contrast, the younger vicar of Pampanga proper, Padre Felipe Basilio, pastor of Bacolor, circulated the letter from Cavite together with the decree on 7 January 1815 in order to "let (his pastors) express their feelings (expusiesen su sentir)" about these developments and

15. Ibid.

"with the end in view of cooperating in union with (the Cavite clergy)." Before doing so, he had consulted B.D. Felipe Tubil, Director of the Civil Court of the District of Pampanga and a former elector of the province for the Cortes of 1813 who had encouraged him. Another former elector of Pampanga, B.D. Vicente Mariano de las Nieves, pastor of Guagua together with Padre Tomás Gosum of Betis led the majority (nine) of the pastors who clamored for a local conference as proposed by their Cavite colleagues. Another four promised to abide by the will of the majority and three suggested consulting the Archbishop before they made any move. It appears that they were able to hold a meeting in which they decided to come to Manila as a group and personally present to the archbishop the same petition as that of the Cavite pastors. But no sooner had they adjourned than they were overtaken by the chain of events which had already begun including the fall of their vicar who was also incarcerated in Intramuros.¹⁶

THE INTERROGATION AND DETENTION

After being summoned for interrogation on 29 December 1814, one by one or in small groups, the Cavite pastors were questioned by the chief notary, Don Antonio Claro Zobollino in the presence of the Archbishop. It is from their composite statements that we have been able to reconstruct part of the events we have so far narrated.¹⁷

As noted earlier, the first to appear the day before New Year was Padre Gavino of the Port of Cavite. The day after New Year, Padre Ramírez and Ramos, presented themselves at the Archbishop's palace. Three days later, three more priests arrived: Padre de los Santos of Maragondong, Ayala of Silang and Mercado of Indang. Another six days elapsed before Padre Capistrano of Kawit reached the capital on 9 January 1815. Two days later, the tardy Padre Celestino of Naic was summoned anew as well as the Recollect friar Medina, who was summoned for the first time. The two showed up the following day, 12 January.¹⁸

Fray Medina admitted giving notice of the controversial decree to the pastors of San Roque and San Francisco de Malabón, but denied informing them that the archbishop or the governor had received copies of it. To add fuel to the fire, he volunteered that "he has heard from a

16. Santiago, "Filipino Priest-Delegates"; AAM, "Expediente."

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*

reliable person, the procurator general of his province, that Don Manuel Darvin had told the latter that when Darvin had disagreed with the pastor of Kawit (Padre Capistrano) about the pastor's way of thinking and intended plans regarding the decree, the pastor remarked that there is no justice in this country but in Spain, there are priests who can help them, alluding to the two priest-delegates of these Islands to the Cortes!"¹⁹

True enough, the next day, 13 January 1815, realizing that they had no chance of obtaining redress in Manila, the unrepentant pastors of Cavite (now excluding Padres Gavino, Ramos and Celestino who was still in Manila) formally drew up a document in their province appointing Don Pedro Vergara, brother of the priest-delegate Don Joseph de Vergara, as their attorney-in-fact who would represent them in the Spanish Cortes. They pledged to contribute ₱50 each and ask their colleagues in the other provinces to pledge the same amount for this undertaking.²⁰ Licenciado Don Pedro Mayoralgo, the other lawyer they had considered, and Dr. Pilapil and Padre Gatmaitan, the two priest-delegates who had remained behind were obviously not available for this task.

The following are a composite of the questions (Q) of the Spanish notary as well as the answers (A) given by the priests.²¹

- (Q) Did you know the content of the letter to the archbishop and the cathedral chapter before you signed it?
- (A) Almost all of them simply answered "yes" to this question. Padres Gavino of the Port of Cavite and Celestino of Naic, however, claimed that they had signed it reluctantly in order not to displease the others. In fact, the Filipino social value of *pakikisama* (group cooperation) runs through most of the answers of the respondents.
- (Q) Who composed this letter?
- (A) They pointed to the vicar and Padres Ramírez and Capistrano as the three most active members of the group who drafted the letter.
- (Q) Were there laymen who attended the meeting? Who were they and what did they advise the group?
- (A) They all mentioned Don Pedro Mayoralgo but at the same time, they were vague about his role in the meeting because they were apparently considering him then as their potential attorney-in-fact to

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

the Spanish Cortes. Some others mentioned Advíncula and de los Reyes and "many other clerks" who made copies of the letter.

- (Q) Why was the letter addressed not only to the archbishop but also to the cathedral chapter?
- (A) They all said they thought of the archbishop and the cathedral chapter as forming "one body" and according to Padre Ramírez, they wrote to them jointly "por no multiplicar papeles."
- (Q) Do you know if the royal order has been received by the governor?
- (A) They assumed or inferred so because of the existing copies of it which were verified and circulated by their vicar. Padre Capistrano even exclaimed half innocently: "But I really thought the royal order had reached the hands of the governor!" It is interesting to note that the notary carefully refrained from asking them if they had also thought the archbishop had received his copy of the decree.
- (Q) Why did you assume that the governor had "dissimulated" the publication of the royal order and was thus in violation of the other royal order punishing such omission?
- (A) They did not really think that the governor deliberately did so but that he might have "forgotten" to do so because he was occupied with many other matters of state or that the document might have been overlooked in the secretary's office. Padre Ramírez said he had objected to the strong words "dissimulation: (*disimulación*) and "contravention" (*contravención*) but the other approved them so that he had to sign the letter in order to prevent disharmony in the group.
- (Q) Do you know if a similar letter was also sent to the other vicars forane of the archdiocese exhorting them to do the same as what your group had done?
- (A) They all confirmed this but most did not know if the other vicars had responded. Padre Ramírez, however, claimed that he had heard of the plans of the parish priests of Pampanga to come to Manila personally. Padres Capistrano and Mercado, on the other hand, added that the presbyters of Cavite and probably of the other provinces too had already promised to contribute ₱50 each if it became necessary to elevate the case to the Cortes in Spain.
- (Q) Do you know if a pamphlet is being printed in Manila entitled "Notice to Awaken the Native Priests" (*Aviso para despertar a los Sacerdotes Nacionales*) and if this is being done under the auspices of the pastors of Cavite or some other persons in the capital?
- (A) To this last question, which hinted at sedition, they all answered "no."

The final interrogation was that of Domingo Pilapil, the vicar of Cavite. Upon the latter's arrival in Manila on 16 January 1815, the Archbishop issued an order detaining him in the convent of Sto. Domingo, the vicar's patron saint and the prelate's own mother house. Pilapil was forbidden to leave the cloisters except to hear Mass at daybreak and attend compline at sundown. At his interrogation Pilapil was asked basically the same questions as his patrons.

Having done with the Cavite priests, the archbishop now took their colleagues in Pampanga to task but in abbreviated proceedings. Only one Pampanga pastor was initially summoned: B.D. Alberto Rodríguez of Sexmoan. He arrived on 17 January 1815 and confirmed the collaboration between the Cavite and Pampanga clergies as recounted earlier. However, he said that he himself had given his word to defer to the majority. On the single basis of his testimony, the vicar of Pampanga, B.D. Felipe Basilio was called on the same day. As soon as he arrived on 26 January, the archbishop put him in detention at the San Carlos Seminary. During his interrogation on the same day at the archbishop's palace, Vicar Basilio, in contrast to Sevilla Pilapil, readily confessed exceeding his authority and begged his prelate's pardon. Nevertheless, he had to go back to his cell in the seminary.²²

THE AFTERMATH

When the coast had been cleared for them by their counterparts in the church, the civil authorities now entered the scene with a series of official denials. First came the secretary of the governor, Don Juan Nepomuceno Miciano disclaiming receipt of the controversial decree on 27 January 1815. Later on the same day, the governor-general followed suit, disavowing the same thing. He requested a copy of Don Pedro de Vergara's letter to the Cavite clergymen as well as the decree he had enclosed with it.²³ But predictably, his request fell on deaf ears nor did he dare summon Vergara himself who could have exposed his source of the document in Manila.

Meanwhile on 28 January, the Vicar Pilapil wrote a letter to the archbishop protesting his "incarceration" for the past eleven days without being informed of the charges against him. Quite aware of his rights, he cited article 300 of the New Constitution requiring

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.*

notification of the charges within twenty-four hours after arrest. "I, therefore, beg His Most Illustrious Lordship to let me know of the reason for my imprisonment and the status of whatever case had been filed against me so that I can act accordingly as in this manner it is justice that I implore His Lordship."²⁴

The archbishop referred the letter to the ecclesiastical assessor who recommended on 31 January that Padres Sevilla Pilapil and Ramírez of San Roque--whose warrant of arrest should also be issued--be made to admit their guilt before their release could be considered. On the other hand, the vicar of Pampanga should be set free for having voluntarily made his confession, but he should be deprived of his vicarship. The other priests involved should remain for the time being in their respective parishes where they were needed, because they had obeyed their vicar's orders.²⁵

Sevilla Pilapil was questioned again on 3 February 1815. But to no avail. The vicar only went so far as to make a conditional statement: "If I have erred in this case, then I admit my error." Thus, Padre Domingo was sent back to Sto. Domingo. In contrast, the assessor's recommendations for Padre Basilio of Pampanga were apparently carried out and he was set free at this point. He died the following year in his early fifties.²⁶

Summoned for the second time, Padre Ramírez arrived in Intramuros on 7 February apologizing for his tardiness because he had to celebrate the Feast of the Three Falls (*Tres Caidas*) of Christ on the way to Calvary which had attracted countless devotees in his parish. Padre Ramírez had already been ordered detained at the Franciscan convent so he was immediately arrested. In this, his second interrogation, he did not put up any resistance and simply acknowledged his error in hosting and taking part in the conference of the Cavite clergy.²⁷

Within the next few days, however, the news of Fernando VII's restoration and subsequent abolition of the Cortes reached the Philippines. Thus, on 11 February 1815, invoking the "good news," Padre Ramírez asked the archbishop to grant him his liberty but the latter initially refused.²⁸ However, both sides seemed relieved by this

24. *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.*; *LGE* (1815-24) f. 105.

27. AAM, "Expediente."

28. *Ibid.*

unexpected turn of events. The question of liability of the governor and the archbishop, for one, had become moot at this point. On the other hand, the case against the native priests could be terminated sooner than anticipated.

By 21 February, the ecclesiastical fiscal Dr. Don Raymundo de Mijares recommended that Padre Sevilla Pilapil and Ramirez be set free in view of their "confessions." Although Pilapil had not definitely "confessed" he was deprived of his office as vicar forane. Seeing the futility of further resistance at this juncture, the vicar did give in four days later, recanting to the archbishop his "error as a frail human being, albeit the first time" he had committed such "error." On the same day, Padre Ramírez repeated his petition for release.²⁹

But the archbishop waited for two and a half weeks before he announced the final sentence in their case on 15 March 1815, the week before Holy Week.³⁰

Padre Pilapil was removed from his appointive position as vicar forane and his license to hear confessions was revoked indefinitely. He was further commanded to start the Spiritual Exercises in Sto. Domingo, after which he was to present himself before the governor-general and beg his forgiveness. Then he was to present himself to the rector of San Carlos Seminary to whom further instructions regarding his case would be sent.³¹

On the other hand, Padre Ramírez's privilege to hear confessions was also suspended for six months and he was to make the Spiritual Exercises as well. Then he was to join Pilapil in imploring the Governor's pardon at the *palacio real*.³²

The other erring pastors of Cavite were called again to Intramuros to make the Spiritual Exercises in the different convents of the friars, whom they had sought to displace, after the Sunday after Easter (*Domingo in Albis*). Upon completion of these, the group had to present themselves again to the archbishop and then make a public apology to the governor.³³

The following were given their conventual assignments as they arrived in the walled city for the Spiritual Exercises.³⁴

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

| | | |
|---------------|---|--|
| 5 April 1815 | Padre Capistrano of Kawit Padre Ramos of San Francisco de Malabon | Augustinian Convent San Carlos Seminary |
| 6 April 1815 | Padre Mercado of Indang | Recollect Convent |
| 8 April 1815 | Padre Ayala of Silang | Franciscan Convent |
| 11 April 1815 | Padre Celestino of Naic | San Carlos Seminary |

In the same week, Padre de los Santos of Marangandong sent word that he was severely ill but that he would come as soon as he recovered.

On 17 April, the group was fined more than ₱394 as the total cost of the proceedings or about ₱43 each. This was less than the ₱50 each had pledged to contribute towards their planned appeal to the Cortes.³⁵

The last note we have on this case is dated 29 May 1815 when Padre Gavino of the Port of Cavite applied for dispensation from the Spiritual Exercises because he was supervising the construction of his parish church. It was granted and the case was finally closed.³⁶

35. *Ibid.*

36. *Ibid.*