
A Seminary Survey

by Yorke Allen, Jr.

New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960.

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MAJOR SEMINARIES OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

The following is a review of training in the Catholic Church Part II, "Major Seminaries of the Roman Catholic Church," pp. 293--498. It is very well written. The more than 200 pages of Part II, illustrated

This is the first study of clerical with 82 tables, describe seminary

training in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Historical and doctrinal notes analyze the growth of Catholic seminaries both in the Latin and in the Eastern Rite. Catholic authors rarely give such extensive historical information, or a key to the nomenclature which goes often back to the Middle Ages. Hence the interest of this monumental book for Catholic scholars also.

Part II of Allen's book lists some 314 bibliographical sources. Such a wealth of information was provided, we are told, by more than 100 church officials and laymen. Moreover, the accuracy of the manuscript was checked by many experts at the various stages of its progress. Such a method is not only fair; it is imperative if one who is not a member of the Catholic Church intends to write about a matter which is as vital and intimate as the training of her clergy. In the welter of details, however, not all errors could, or have, been avoided.

Five-and-a-half pages contain the main data about Catholic seminaries in Japan. The first two pages tell the story of the Xaverian Mis-

sion in Japan. This is followed by one page on the period 1859—1945, and another page on the post-war development. Page 5 is entirely devoted to the Jesuit St Mary's Scolasticate.

This reviewer does not think that a careful reading of the text referring to the first period (1549—1642) would give the reader an accurate view of the early efforts in this country to educate a native clergy. Particularly, one must take exception to Table 140 which gives the figures for the years 1583—1593. It neglects two high points of priestly training: 1601, when the first Japanese priests were ordained and 1630, when the future Tokyo martyr, Peter Kasui S. J., and two other Japanese priests returned to Japan. The quotation of Canon Joly is here out of place.

It is a pity that Allen did not have the services of a Catholic missiologist. The Japanese Province of the Society of Jesus was not founded in 1549 (p. 448). Rather, a Vice-Province was erected by Valignano, who was not an "apostolic visitor," but a "visitor general" (p. 449). The Seminary of the

Nobles was not in Azuki but in Azuchi 安土; and the year 1614 is notorious, not for the ban to appoint bishops in Japan, but for the beginning of mass murder, martyrdom and exile for the whole clergy.

We would have welcomed data about the clerical training of the "dōjuku 同宿," from among whom most priests were selected. Such details, and plenty of them, have been published about the daily life of samurai seminarians at Azuchi, Osaka, and about the young students of the clerical schools at Amakusa 天草 and Usuki 臼杵.

Further corrections are indicated in regard to the period which runs from 1859, the re-entry of foreign missionaries into Japan, to the end of World War II. The tremendous task, carried out by the Paris Foreign Missions in behalf of a native Japanese clergy is glossed over in complete silence. Yet history tells that on March 17, 1865, the hidden Christians of Urakami 浦上 had contacted Fr. Petitjean. Already in December of the same year, the three first seminarians started their training for the pries-

thood in the utmost secrecy within a large room under the roof of his residence. In February, 1866, these heroic boys made their first holy communion.

There is no word, either, about the three first Japanese priests ordained in modern times at Nagasaki, in early 1883.

Allen gives the impression that the Jesuits were the first arrivals from abroad in the Meiji period. This is not true. After the Paris Foreign Missions established a first contact on Okinawa in 1844, the first male society to come to Japan was that of the Marianists (1887). The Marianists established their own scolasticate and trained many religious and secular priests, a fact which Allen fails to mention. Then came the Spanish Dominicans in 1904, the German Franciscans in 1906 and the Jesuits in 1908. The Lazarists, only a couple of them, came after World War II. The Sulpicians were entrusted with the Kyūshū Regional Seminary, not in 1874 but in 1933, the date of their arrival in Japan. It was the Paris Foreign Mission Society which took care of the Tokyo Seminary from

its beginning until 1940. At the November, 1945, the Conference of Japanese Bishops, the Jesuits were asked to continue this work, which they did, in May, 1946, after the buildings had been repaired.

Although St Mary's Scholasticate is an important center for clerical training, the description of it, taken from the *Jesuit Mission Bureau Bulletin* (written for fund-raising and contact with benefactors) hardly could be said to convey a true picture of seminary life. Here, and in not a few other instances, Allen obviously forgot to evaluate his source material. We must admit, however, that it is only since the publication of two recent books on Church history in Japan that many details, unknown to the author of *A Seminary Survey*, have become generally available. We refer to Joseph Jennes, CICM, *History of the Catholic Church in Japan from the beginnings to the Early Meiji Period* (1549—1873), Tokyo, 1959, and to Joseph L. Van Hecken, CICM, *Un Siècle de Vie Catholique*

au Japon, 1859—1959, Tokyo, 1960. (Both books are published by the Oriens Institute for Religious Research, Takanawa P. O. Box 21, TOKYO). Every year, Catholic statistics are published in *The Japan Missionary Bulletin* (also an Oriens publication).

These few remarks are not meant to detract from the true value of Allen's book. The Catholic reviewer feels sincere sympathy with his attitude admirably expressed in the following statement: "Perhaps the greatest difference between Roman Catholic and Protestant seminaries is the stress placed by the former on the spiritual formation of their students. With the possible exception of some Anglican theological schools, the great majority of the Protestant seminaries appear to be seriously neglecting this important phase in the training of a minister." (p. 496).

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