CHAPTER FIFTEEN
THE WEST INDIES

1. HAITI

a. THE END OF THE SCHISM

In Chapter VI we saw how Archbishop Rosati of St. Louis, Missouri, and Father Eugene Tisserant, Prefect Apostolic of Haiti, had been forced to abandon their efforts to heal the schism in which nearly all the priests and most of the people in Haiti were living. Subsequently, the Holy See tried to remedy the situation by working through the Archbishops of Trinidad. Successively Archbishops Smith, Spaccapietra and Etheridge were given jurisdiction over the island, but all their efforts to reconcile the schismatics failed. Their lack of success was in great part reducible to one factor: the three dozen recalcitrant priests who were living on the island. With few exceptions, they were refugees from ecclesiastical discipline in France, Italy and Spain and they justly feared that the Holy See would put an end to their disorders if it regained control over the Church in Haiti. A few of these notorious characters, such as Fathers Cessens and Moussa, were old acquaintances of the Spiritans and did their utmost to prevent a restoration of Church discipline. They and their followers succeeded in doing so as long as Emperor Soulouque (Faustin I) ruled Haiti.

In 1860, however, when Haiti became a Republic, its President signed a concordat with the Holy See. At once the Propaganda asked the Congregation to lend its support to the delicate negotiations that had to be conducted. To this end, Father John Pascal and several other Spiritans were assigned to help Bishop Monetti, the Apostolic Delegate. While the Bishop labored on the diplomatic level, Father Pascal and his companions performed excellent work in reconciling many of the priests with the Church. At the same time he managed to gain the abiding affection of the islanders and the entire confidence of the Government. When Bishop Mo-

1Father Pascal was one of the colonial priests admitted to the Congregation as novices under the reform of Father Leguay. Together with Fathers Hervé and Orinel he pronounced his vows in 1860.
netti had succeeded in reaching an agreement with General Geffrard, President of the Republic, he sailed to Europe to report to the Holy See. During his absence Father Pascal was named Ecclesiastical Superior until resident bishops could be appointed for the Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince and the four dioceses which were to be created.

While Bishop Monetti was in Europe, Father Pascal stepped forward to prevent another disaster in the tormented country. Political trouble regarding boundaries had arisen between Haiti and San Domingo, the eastern half of the island, which at that time was under the protection of the Spanish Crown. The heated arguments of politicians did nothing more than add the fuel of mutual insults to the smoldering fire of hatred. Suddenly, a fleet of eight Spanish warships appeared off-shore opposite Port-au-Prince. Its commander gave the Negro Republic exactly twenty-four hours to make amends for the insults or watch their Capital being blown to bits.

Stung in their national pride, the Haitian Army officers preferred to fight, even though their pitiful lack of arms made resistance a hopeless undertaking. Orders were given for the hasty evacuation of all women and children while preparations for the siege went on apace. Father Pascal frantically appealed to reason and common sense, but the proud Haitians turned a deaf ear. Meanwhile, the deadline set by the Spaniards was rapidly approaching. In desperation, the priest finally rushed to the Governmental Palace, burst into the President's room, and with tears streaming down his cheeks besought him not to listen to his excited military advisers but to spare the city from certain destruction. His sincerity and anxious concern conquered the President. Peaceful negotiations were instituted and the Capital was saved.

The island then returned to the work of spiritual reconstruction. General Geffrard had left the choice of episcopal candidates completely in the hands of Bishop Monetti, but Rome instructed the Apostolic Delegate not to make any move in Haitian affairs without first consulting the Holy Ghost Fathers. To facilitate compliance with this instruction, the Apostolic Delegate took up residence in the Motherhouse, while Father Schwindenhammer, the Superior General, conducted a search for episcopal candidates. Those who came to recommend themselves for the vacancies were immediately rejected, and most of those whom he approached had
no desire to accept such an unenviable position. In the island itself there was talk about making Father Pascal Archbishop or at least Bishop in one of the dioceses, but the Superior General discarded the idea promptly. While the Congregation was willing to do its utmost in healing the schism by doing the spade work and selecting suitable candidates, it still maintained its firm rule not to propose any of its own members for resident bishoprics.²

In 1861 the choice finally fell on Father Martial Testard du Cosquer, the former Vicar General of Guadeloupe. Realizing that the situation in Haiti was still far from clear, Father du Cosquer preferred to go to his future archdiocese as a simple Monsignor and begin settling matters quietly. If he achieved success in this, he was willing to be consecrated. Accordingly, he received authorization to do so and in February 1862 he landed in Haiti. With the aid of Father Pascal, he managed to publish the pontifical bulls creating the island dioceses and to supplement the Concordat with necessary organic articles governing the status of Bishops, clergy and Church properties. Although efforts were made to defame Father Pascal and his confreres and complaints were made about “their accursed Jesuitism,” the projected articles were approved by the Government. Consequently, in 1863 Monsignor du Cosquer was officially named Archbishop and consecrated in Rome. Constitution of the four other dioceses was postponed until the troubled young Republic would have a chance to settle down.

B. G. 4, 142 f. Morality had sunk so low during the schismatic years that Voodooism had reached frightening excesses. At the very gate of the Capital, a Papa-loi (Voodoo sorcerer) had induced people to offer a human sacrifice to the Serpent-God and then devour the victim’s still-quivering flesh. Elsewhere, hiding-places delivered up children who were being fattened for subsequent slaughter in cannibalistic ceremonies of devil worship. In fact, the tremendous inroads of savagery were one of the many reasons why the Government finally came to feel the need of the Church’s moralizing influence on the island. In combating all types of superstition and every kind of human perversion, Father Pascal and one of his fellow Spiritans literally worked themselves to death in 1865.

B. G. 4, 844 f.

²For the same reason, in 1877 the Congregation firmly refused to allow Monsignor Ambrose Emonet, C.S.Sp., Prefect Apostolic of Guiana, to become resident Bishop of Cayes in Haiti. The same fate awaited the proposed candidacy of Father John François, C.S.Sp., Pastor of Petionville, near Port-au-Prince, and that of Father John Duret.

Guilloux, 286 ff.
B. G. 11, 1052 ff.
b. St. Martial Senior Seminary

One of the Archbishop's first concerns was the recruitment of a reliable and well-trained clergy. He immediately turned to the Congregation and asked it to assume charge of this work. The Spiritans had just acquired a new property at Chevilly and had transferred their own scholastics to the new campus. Consequently, it was possible to add a special Haitian division to the Parisian seminary of the Holy Ghost in 1864 and dedicate it specially as St. Martial Seminary. In 1871, however, the next Archbishop decided that his seminarians should be separated from the other colonial aspirants at Holy Ghost Seminary. Accordingly, he proposed that the Spiritans train them in their Breton community of Langonnet. When this plan did not prove feasible, he entrusted his seminary to the Society of Mary, and a house was opened for them at Pointchateau, near Nantes.  

c. St. Martial College-Seminary

Its Foundation. In 1865, Archbishop du Cosquer decided to open a seminary-college in Port-au-Prince in order to further stimulate vocations to the priesthood in his diocese. The Spiritans were asked to take it, and while Father Schwindenhammer at first gave his consent on the grounds that the work was "well within the purpose" of the Congregation, he later demurred because he feared that it would require too many men. In 1870 Archbishop Guilloux reiterated his predecessor's request. With some hesitation, Schwindenhammer consented to undertake the task "in a conditional and provisional way" because the seminary-college was a natural complement of the Senior Seminary of St. Martial in Paris. When the Archbishop closed the Haitian division of Holy Ghost Seminary, therefore, he removed the only reason why Schwindenhammer had accepted the seminary-college in Haiti. Fearing protests from the other missions if he maintained the college by itself, he decided to withdraw his men. Archbishop Guilloux, supported in his plea by the Spiritans already working in Haiti, managed to achieve a stay of execution until another congregation could be found for St. Martial's.

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3In 1893 the Society of Mary was forced to close the Seminary because of the antireligious laws. The situation was saved by Mère de Kerouartz, of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Retreat, who offered the Haitian Hierarchy part of their domain at St. Jacques, Finistère.
First Attempted Withdrawal. In reality, the Archbishop was confident that the Holy Ghost Fathers would never abandon the College. For this reason he made no effort to find substitutes. One can easily imagine his emotion, therefore, when the Spiritans told him in 1875 that they would be leaving the College at the end of the year. Since it was impossible to keep this decision secret, newspapers began to write long articles bewailing the future fate of Haiti's youth. People circulated petitions and political influences began to inject themselves into the picture. The French Plenipotentiary Minister, for example, wrote that "the only hope for the regeneration of Haiti lay in the education provided by the Holy Ghost Fathers" and if they left, "Haiti for a long time to come would remain under the spell of evil and perhaps again of schism." Other diplomats wrote in a similar vein. Meanwhile all efforts to find substitutes for the Spiritans had failed. At this juncture the Holy See added its voice to the chorus. When that happened, the Superior General admitted defeat and reversed his decision regarding the College.¹

Meanwhile, St. Martial's continued to play its role ever more brilliantly in creating Catholic leaders for Haiti. An 1876 Government report on education compared St. Martial's College with the five State colleges of the land and the comparison was most flattering for the Spiritan institution. St. Martial alone had almost as many students as the other five institutions combined. For one fourth of the cost it educated three times as many students as the nearby national college of Port-au-Prince where, the report complained, students were badly housed, ill-fed, ill-instructed, and almost without any trace of discipline. St. Martial's, on the other hand, had a superb physical plant, a superior staff, and strict discipline. It is hardly surprising that the Haitians looked with confidence and pride on this fine institution.

The College Saves the City. In the nineteenth century nearly all the buildings in Port-au-Prince were constructed of wood and thereby constituted a serious fire hazard during the dry season. Since the municipal fire-fighting equipment left much to the desired,

¹To save personnel, he returned one of the Spiritan parishes to the Archbishop. The departure of the priests from the parish (of St. Ann) had to be arranged in secret, because of the commotion the announcement had caused. Erroneously the people thought the Spiritans had been forced to withdraw under pressure from the Archbishop.
any small blaze could quickly degenerate into a disastrous conflagration. For the protection of the College buildings, the Fathers decided to organize their own fire brigade in 1875. Father Daniel Weik, a former German artillery officer from the Black Forest region, took charge of the operation. With typical German thoroughness he drilled the student brigade and placed at its service a huge water reservoir which he constructed on the campus. By way of equipment he added four standard pumps and one ultra-modern steam pump capable of producing a 1,500 foot jet. Shortly after, a tremendous fire broke out in the Capital just at a time when none of the city pumps was functioning properly. Operating with the precision of a Black Forest clock, Father Weik and the St. Martial Brigade came to the rescue and succeeded in saving a large part of the city from certain destruction. The people escorted the tired fire-fighters home with loud "Hurrahs for the Spiritans,"
and a grateful government reimbursed the College for the purchase of the equipment. After the event, an article in the local paper observed that the city of Port-au-Prince had once more been saved by the work of the Holy Ghost Fathers.

During the years that followed, this fire-brigade rendered similar service in many emergencies. Before long, however, it became obvious that the excitement and the constant interruptions of frequent alarms were not exactly conducive to the tranquil atmosphere that an academic institution needs. St. Martial could not go on being half fire-house and half school. Accordingly, the brigade handed over its thrilling but distracting responsibilities to the alumni of the College and quiet returned to St. Martial's.

Meteorological Observatory. In 1878 Father Weik, who taught physical science at the College, established a meteorological station in an abandoned fort near St. Martial. A government grant made it possible for him to build an observatory tower on top of the fort. Two years later the observatory began to function at full tilt. It soon became one of the most important institutes of its kind in that part of the world. French astronomers came to it in 1882 to watch Venus in her famous passage across the sun under conditions that would not return till 1990.

When a seismological division was established, the meteorological center became important enough to merit better quarters. These had to wait, however, until after World War II when the old fort was abandoned and replaced by modern laboratories at the top of one of the new buildings on the campus. This Observatory, staffed by three capable Spiritans, provides information for the hurricane division of the U. S. Weather Bureau. Thus far fifty-seven volumes of its annual geophysical reports have been published for the information of other scientific centers throughout the world.

Second Attempted Withdrawal. After the First World War, the Congregation once more tried to relinquish the College. The war years had seriously diminished the potential of the Holy Ghost Fathers, and now new and insistent voices were demanding that they replace the German priests who had been expelled from the former African colonies of the Reich. Haiti was absorbing a good deal of man-power. In fact, before the war, forty-three men were attached to the district. Under these circumstances, it seemed
unreasonable to maintain a college which, the reader will recall, was accepted “provisionally and temporarily” in 1871. But as a French Spiritan saying goes: “It is only the provisional that is definitive and the temporary that lasts forever.” Subsequent events were to justify this adage once more.

News of the impending withdrawal reached Haiti, but the island refused to believe it. However, when October 1919 arrived and the gates of the College remained closed, a veritable uproar echoed through the city. People erroneously blamed the Archdiocesan administration for the closing. Pressure mounted so high that in the beginning of November the Fathers who had their suitcases packed were practically forced to reopen St. Martial’s—again “provisionally.” Meanwhile the scenes of 1875 repeated themselves but this time on an even bigger scale. It was not only the entire Hierarchy and the Government of the Republic that refused to hear of the Spiritans’ departure. Even the Governments of France and the United States voiced their disapproval in no uncertain terms. Everyone viewed the closure as “an irreparable loss to the religious, intellectual and social interests of the Republic.”

Finally the Holy See stepped into the picture and the Holy Ghost Fathers once more reversed their decision. It involved a great inconvenience during this period of critical personnel shortage, but they consoled themselves by recalling how close Haiti had been to the heart of Libermann. In 1846 he wrote of Father Tissérent who, the reader will remember, descended from a Haitian family:

Father Tissérent’s love for Haiti belongs to the patrimony of the Congregation. We have gathered this love from his letters, his conversations, and from his last breath. We wish that this love may become active—like his—and we will be ready if God’s providence should later offer favorable circumstances.

Haiti’s Gratitude. The island’s jubilation knew no bounds when the good news arrived. As a gesture of gratitude for several generations of service and in an effort to remove the Spiritans’ “temporary and provisional” status at the College, the Republic

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5In 1915, after a series of six or seven bloody revolutions in three years, the U. S. Marines had temporarily occupied the Republic to restore public order.
spontaneously passed a special law in favor of the Congregation. Although non-Haitians are ineligible to own land on the island, the Legislature made an exception in favor of the Spiritans and deeded over to them the government land on which the College stood. Next, the Archbishop presented them with the college buildings that hitherto had been owned by the Archdiocese. Whereupon the Government made a grant to replace the dilapidated "temporary" chapel which had been built fifty years earlier. Not to be outdone, the people, among whom the Fathers were (and are) immensely popular, organized themselves to support the College. Haitians have been accused of many things, but no one can say that a lack of gratitude is one of their vices.

The popularity of the College Fathers is also demonstrated in another rather unusual respect. Throughout the island's turbulent history there have been many civil wars, military coups and bloody revolutions. Yet, by an unwritten law, whatever the political upheaval may be, the vanquished are safe once they reach the sanctuary of St. Martial's College. It enjoys the right of asylum in much the same way as do the foreign embassies in South America and its record is considerably better than theirs because no violation has ever been reported. On several occasions, this privilege has saved hundreds of lives in times of stress and turmoil.

*The College at Present.* After World War II the Spiritans undertook a four-stage development program to replace a number of antiquated buildings and to expand the college's facilities. The first three of these stages, including construction of the junior division and the new observatory, have already been executed. At present, the number of its students exceeds 1,200.

Although the College originally began as a seminary, the absence of vocations in the earlier days soon reduced the institute to the status of a simple college. In recent times, however, a junior seminary for secular clerics has once more been added as a special division of the boarding school. In this way, it is hoped, new vocations will come forward to fill the relatively thin ranks of the native Haitian clergy.6

The apostolic activity of the College Fathers is not limited to the religious and intellectual training of the youth entrusted to

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6At present, there are about fifty priests who were born in Haiti. Nearly all of them are alumni of the Holy Ghost Fathers.
their care. It ranges far beyond the precincts of classroom and campus. Nearly all modern branches of Catholic action on the island have been started in St. Martial College. Moreover, the Fathers play a vital role in deploying the forces of press and radio against the destructive influence of Marxism and other ideological evils that have recently invaded the Republic.

d. Social Works

St. Joseph Workshop. In 1893 the Haitian Government asked the Spiritans to take charge of a social center near the Capital. Two years later, after careful investigation, the offer was accepted. Father Amet Limbour, three other Fathers, and eight Brothers were sent to take over the work which, according to Government plans, was soon to embrace a trade school, a detention home, a lower and a higher agricultural school. By means of this complex undertaking, the Spiritans hoped to reach the poorer classes of the island which till then had been almost totally neglected.

Under the skillful direction of the Brothers, foundations were laid for the trade school. To everyone's surprise, the job was finished within five months and the mechanical shops of the school began to hum with activity. Mechanized tools seem to have been a novelty at the time, for endless files of important and unimportant visitors had to be shown around. As the tired chronicler reported:

Anyone in Haiti who thinks or judges, anyone who sells or steals, works or loiters, prays or drinks... all these and many others think that they have an obligation in conscience to pay us a visit.

At first the school prospered visibly. However, the financial panic of the nineties prevented the Government first from expanding the work as planned and then from even supporting the existing divisions in an adequate way. In 1899, it became so urgent for the Republic to marshall its faltering resources elsewhere that the shops had to be closed.

St. Theresa Re-Education Center. Fifty years were to pass before the Holy Ghost Fathers were able to resume their social role among the poor of Haiti (1949). In the slums of the capital there were thousands of abandoned children roaming about, knowing no father and at times not even a mother. In addition, there were the ubiquitous country youths who, driven by poverty or
St. Martial College, Haiti. Two views of the new buildings.
St. Martial College, Haiti. Above, the Observatory tower.
The West Indies

lured by dazzling dreams, flocked to the city and lived in wretched hovels without any means of subsistence. Their number was once estimated at about forty thousand.

Moved to pity by the sight of so much misery, the social-minded President of Haiti wanted to reclaim as many as possible of these abandoned youngsters. He realized that only a religious organization could adequately take care of them and therefore addressed himself to Don Bosco's Salesians who operated a small trade school within the Republic. When they appeared unable to help him, the President appealed to Rome for advice. The Holy See replied that it knew only two Congregations which operate similar works successfully on a large scale: the Salesians and the Spiritans. Since he had unsuccessfully approached the former, why not appeal to the latter?

This was a most pleasant surprise for the President. He knew the Holy Ghost Fathers as educators of the elite, but he was completely ignorant of their wide-spread activities in social service. Moreover, to his great joy, the Superior General accepted the proposition at once.

In 1949, by virtue of a new law, the Legislature entrusted this new social work to the Congregation. It was inaugurated in January 1950 under the direction of Father Louis Le Retraite, a former director of the Anteuil Institute. Mindful of the great success that has blessed the work of Auteuil in France under the patronage of St. Therese, he dedicated its Haitian counterpart also to this patroness of childhood.

Meanwhile, the Government had started to build a mammoth center capable of lodging two thousand youngsters, but the Fathers thought it wiser to limit the number of boarders to a maximum of three hundred and to open branches elsewhere later on. Otherwise, disciplinary control, religious instruction and moral training would become too cumbersome to be effective. In addition to the boarding division of three hundred, the re-education center operates an elementary school and large tradeshops for technical training. To these latter, day-students are admitted.

e. Other Works

Apart from their educational and social activities in Haiti, the Spiritans take care of 32,000 Catholics in two parishes and fourteen rural missions. The oldest of these is St. Peter at Petionville, where
The Spiritans

the Fathers arrived in 1860. The other is St. Nicolas at Kenscoff, which was separated from St. Peter in 1949. In the past, the Fathers also had charge of St. Ann in Port-au-Prince and of Saltrou in the mountains, but these have since been relinquished. For some years too, several Fathers were employed in a Mission Band, but recently, the pressure of other work has forced them to abandon this type of apostolic endeavor.


Eugene Tisserant, (C.S.C.M.), 1844-1845 (also Prefect Apostolic)
John Pascal, 1860-1865
John Simonet, 1866-1881
Amet Taragnat, 1881-1884
William Jaouen, 1886-1892
Marcellin Bertrand, 1892-1903
Paul Benoit, 1903-1909
Adolph Cabon, 1909-1919
John Lanore, 1919-1927
Eugene Christ, 1927-1937
Henry Goré, 1937-1947
Peter Le Bihan, 1947-1953
Etienne Grienenberger, 1953-

2. GUADELOUPE

a. INTRODUCTION


The Carib Indians called it "Karukera," the Emerald Isle. When Columbus arrived in 1493, he renamed this island of a thousand square miles "Guadalupe" after a famous Spanish monastery. Finally, it became a French possession in 1635.

The island is reputed to be a paradise on earth. It bursts into view like a giant bouquet floating on the blue waters of the Caribbean and exuding the fragrance of vanilla, coffee and other tropical aromatics. It is a land of eternal summer, tempered by a gentle breeze, where the weary traveller may plunge into the cooling waters of palm-shaded beaches or climb its verdant mountains to enjoy breath-taking vistas of land, sea, and sky. Its gardens abound in delicious fruits and resplendent flowers, its valleys are filled with sleek cattle, its fertile fields produce an abundance of crops with a minimum of tillage.

A quarter of a million people have made their permanent residence on the island. Most of them are descendants of former slaves
brought thither in past centuries from forgotten villages of Africa, a small percentage can trace their origin to pure white forbears, and a considerable number bear in their features the unmistakable signs of mixed ancestry.

Spanish Dominicans seem to have been the first missionaries on this idyllic island. They arrived in 1603, but soon met a violent death at the hands of the savage Caribs. Later, when the French occupied Guadeloupe, the Dominicans tried again and Franciscans, Carmelites, Augustinians and Jesuits then came to assist them. Though hampered by opposition from the leading citizens, who preferred to keep the slaves in total ignorance, these orders succeeded in Christianizing most of the population. Their work came to an untimely end when the French Revolution wrecked the central headquarters at home in France and severely interfered with their apostolate in Guadeloupe itself.

Holy Ghost Fathers entered upon the scene when the island was returned to France after the Napoleonic wars. At that time, it will be recalled, they took over the religious service of all the old French colonies. In the Spiritan years that followed, three periods may be distinguished in the history of Guadeloupe: from 1815 to 1851, before the creation of the colonial hierarchy; from 1851 to 1912, the time of secular bishops; and from 1912 to the present, during which the Congregation assumed full control and responsibility for the island's religious welfare.

b. The Prefecture: 1815-1851

cf. p. 51 ff.  The First Prefects. As was mentioned in Chapter IV, the Congregation encountered great difficulty finding a clergy for the colonies, because in France itself the Church was still reeling under the savage blows it had been dealt during the Revolution, and the Spiritans in particular were painfully taking their first steps toward recovery. Nevertheless, Father Bertout, then Superior General, succeeded in finding an excellent Prefect Apostolic in the person of Father Bernard Grafife. He was a confessor of the Faith who had been exiled to Cayenne for his refusal to take the schismatic oath and later had managed to make his way to Guadeloupe. Under his direction, the first attempt was made to re-Christianize this island, which was now no longer Catholic except in name. In 1825 when a particularly violent hurricane claimed eight hundred
victims on the island, the Prefect himself was one of the casualties. He died under the crumbling walls of his church.

The appointment of a successor took nearly two years, because no suitable candidate could be induced to take the unenviable position. Father Henry de Solages, who at first accepted, later declined because he felt that the territory was too small. Finally, in 1828, Father Brizard, who had done excellent work in Martinique, agreed to give it a try. He lasted only a year and a half and then, when they accused him of a serious offense, he gave the impression of actual guilt by fleeing in panic from the island. Curiously enough, according to the general consensus of everyone who had any knowledge whatsoever of the affair, he was the innocent victim of a base calumny. Even his accusers did not dare to spell out the crime, and from the beginning to the end they remained absolutely vague in their charges. Nonetheless, he positively refused to return and justify himself. Presumably he was afraid that a hasty Governor would unceremoniously ship him back to France as a convicted offender.

Two Spiritans Superiors. When the commotion over this case had died down, the Propaganda named Father Francis Lacombe as Brizard’s successor. The new Prefect had studied at Holy Ghost Seminary and joined the Congregation as a director of the Seminary, but failing eyesight forced him to relinquish his teaching post and he went to Guadeloupe to work as a missionary. He was an excellent priest from every point of view. To the great satisfaction of the clergy, the people, and even of the Government, he wisely governed the Church in Guadeloupe for sixteen years. When one knows how difficult the situation could be under a government that constantly interfered in ecclesiastical affairs, this general satisfaction is eloquent commendation indeed. Although he was handicapped by a persistent shortage of priests, he made great strides toward the restoration of Catholic life on the island, without once becoming involved in any of those noisy conflicts which are so typical of the ecclesiastical history of the old French colonies during this period.

When Father Lacombe retired from active service in 1844, he was succeeded, after an interval of two years, by Father Peter

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7Later he became Prefect of Reunion and annexed to his Prefecture Madagascar, New Zealand and Australia.
Guyard, a priest who had joined the Congregation under the reform of Father Leguay. Because the Government had published his nomination without waiting for official confirmation by the Holy See, the Propaganda refused to give him the title of Prefect Apostolic. Consequently, the documents refer to him simply as Ecclesiastical Superior of Guadeloupe. Although highly respected by all, Father Guyard lasted only a short time. Mr. Schoelcher, whom the 1848 Revolution had placed in charge of the old colonies, forced him to resign because he wanted to appoint his own candidates to the various Prefectures.

Father Dujougon and Father Drouelle. The particular man Mr. Schoelcher had in mind for Guadeloupe was Father Casimir Dujougon, a member of a religious order. Much impressed by this priest's undeserved reputation for zeal in behalf of Negro slaves, Schoelcher literally forced his appointment through channels. Bypassing Father Monnet, the Spiritan Superior General, he had the nomination approved by the Papal Nuncio and then casually notified the “Citizen Superior” that Dujougon was now Prefect. To avoid sharpening the Church-State clashes of this turbulent period, the Holy See resigned itself to the appointment.

In Guadeloupe, however, a storm of protest arose among the clergy and the people. The slaves themselves had never heard of their self-appointed hero and did not want him. Subsequent events proved that these instinctive prejudices were justified. No sooner had he arrived in the colony than he exasperated the priests by his breaches of confidence and the people by his provocative arrogance. Shortly after his arrival, he found himself in a bitter conflict with the enraged Governor, who peremptorily shipped him back to France.

Before leaving the island, Father Dujougon performed the one good deed of his administration: he named as Vice-Prefect a member of his own religious Congregation—Father Victor Drouelle. This priest, who had come from the States, proved to be an extremely able man. He won the respect and veneration of everyone and in short order counteracted all the bad impressions created by his predecessor. Father Drouelle remained in charge till 1851

8Subsequently, on Libermann’s suggestion, this injustice was repaired by Father Guyard’s appointment to the Prefecture of Senegal.
when, thanks to Libermann’s diplomacy, the hierarchy was established in Guadeloupe.

**c. The Secular Hierarchy: 1851-1912**

Although the creation of dioceses in Guadeloupe, Martinique and Reunion gave these islands ecclesiastical autonomy, the Holy See refused to let the Spiritans disengage themselves completely from responsibility for their religious welfare. The Congregation remained in charge of training their clergy and educating a Catholic elite. Moreover, it was expected that the Holy Ghost Fathers would supervise the islands’ general spiritual development without, however, transgressing in any way against episcopal authority. Because of the problems inherent in this delicate relationship, we must pause here for a note on the bishops of Guadeloupe in these troubled years.

Bishop Peter Lacarriere was the first. The Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs insisted on his nomination in 1851 despite the candidate’s vile temper and utter lack of adaptability. In short order, both the Holy See and the government found him intolerable and removed him two years after he had gone to Guadeloupe. Napoleon III then intervened personally and insisted on the appointment of Gallican Bishop Theodore Forcade who, rumor had it, was a descendant of the first Napoleon. He remained nine years and then went back to France. Bishop Anthony Boutonnet followed him. Guadeloupe then had another Gallican prelate who cordially detested the Spiritans for having opposed his nomination. Within six years he died and a former Navy chaplain, Bishop Joseph Reyné, succeeded him. Reyné lasted only two years and spent most of that brief period in France. Next, Bishop Francis Blanger came like a breath of fresh air bringing with him a ten-year interlude of enlightened zeal and peaceful government. After that, the see was vacant for sixteen years because a feud between the executive and legislative branches of the French government had cut off subsistence funds. During this period, Apostolic Administrators ruled the Church in Guadeloupe. At the end of this vacancy, Bishop Peter Avon came in 1899, resigned after a year, and was succeeded by the last of the series, Bishop Emmanuel Canappe, a capable and zealous prelate who died in 1907.

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9The striking resemblance between the Bishop and Napoleon I, added to the unusual interest of the imperial family in his preferment, gave substance to this rumor.
This rather dreary recitation graphically demonstrates the evils attendant upon civil interference in Church affairs. The Spiritan Superior Generals knew full well the unsatisfactory character of some of these prelates, but they were powerless to prevent their nomination by capricious and irascible civil officials. Through government indiscretion, uncomplimentary Spiritan reports about the nominee sometimes came into the possession of the bishop after his appointment, and the frank appraisal of a candidate's deficiencies did not make things easier for the Holy Ghost Fathers who were to work under the prelate in question. Clearly, while the separation of Church and State in France caused something of an upheaval, one of its better by-products was evident in the elimination of Parisian officialdom from episcopal appointments.

The Spiritan College of Guadeloupe. During this period, the Holy Ghost Fathers limited their activity to training the island's clerical aspirants in their central seminary at Paris and in educating Catholic leaders on Guadeloupe itself. In 1853, at the request of Bishop Forcade, they took over the seminary-college which he had just founded but was unable to staff. His arbitrary inter-
ference in the internal affairs of the institution, however, caused continual conflicts. By 1855 these difficulties reached such a pitch of intensity that the Spiritans had to withdraw. They were succeeded by teachers drawn from the diocesan clergy and, when the same difficulties continued under the new arrangement, Bishop Forcade transferred the college to new buildings which he had constructed practically in the back yard of his residence. However, closer supervision was hardly the answer to the problem. The College continued to decline. At last it became apparent that only a religious order could handle the situation but, since none but the Holy Ghost Fathers could be found to undertake the thankless task, Bishop Forcade faced a most uncomfortable dilemma. Matters were even more embarrassing for his successor since, prior to his nomination, this Gallican prelate had formally pledged himself to keep these defenders of papal supremacy out of his seminary-college:

D. C. 311

If I am appointed to Guadeloupe, I shall allow no one in my seminary but priests who are subject solely to the Bishop and who will follow him on the road of loyalty and submission to the laws of the State.

B. G. 6, 690 ff.

Nonetheless, shortly before Forcade's death, local pressures and the desperate condition of the College forced him to pocket his pride and ask the Spiritans to return to Guadeloupe and to take charge of educating the island's leaders once more. In 1869, the Congregation consented. From then until 1905, when the separation of Church and State forced its closure, the Fathers continued to manage this diocesan institution.

It required heroic courage to keep the College functioning during those years when yellow fever and other diseases constantly decimated an already overburdened staff. If the Congregation had not been aware of its historic function to provide the island and the other old Holy Ghost Missions with a solid tradition of Catholic higher education, it would not have hesitated a single moment to withdraw its priests and send them off to more rewarding areas.

D. C. 316 ff.

The situation at Guadeloupe was especially painful because the Bishops constantly interfered in the internal affairs of the

10 It was only exceptionally that a Spiritan in these colonial colleges reached the age of forty.
College. Moreover, the College was diocesan property and this usually meant that the Bishops kept control of its finances. As a result, the Spiritans had to operate it on an inadequate budget and still listen to the Bishop’s everlasting complaints about the exaggerated cost of higher education. Even when the incumbent Bishop was favorable, conflicts arose over the proximity of the College to the Bishop's residence. For instance, Bishop Blanger legitimately demanded a measure of privacy, but he obtained it by boarding up the college windows that faced his house. One shudders at the thought of a hermetically sealed dormitory on a hot tropical night, yet that is exactly what eventuated. This and similar incidents occurred on an almost daily basis and they cannot be said to have contributed significantly to the peaceful pursuit of academic excellence.

The situation became completely untenable after 1882 when the government’s increasingly antireligious attitude resulted in a determined attempt to secularize education. A State College was opened in the same locality and thenceforth all students of the Catholic College had to present themselves at this institution for their examinations. The result was disastrous. In 1886 and 1887 not one candidate of the Spiritan college passed the baccalaureate examination. But when these failures transferred to the State College, they took the test a few weeks later and all passed with flying colors. After several years of such manifest discrimination, and with the distraught Bishop blaming them for the sorry record, the Fathers gave up in complete discouragement and asked to leave. Nevertheless, when the Motherhouse ordered them to stay on, they remained valiantly at their post until 1905. In that year, all State subsidies were withdrawn and diocesan support was withheld. With mixed emotions of regret and relief, the Spiritans left. Anticlericalism had conquered. Shortly thereafter, as if the forced closure of the College had not been enough, two mysterious attempts were made to burn down the physical plant.

Even after the College closed its doors, the Holy Ghost Fathers did not completely leave the island. They kept a few priests there until in 1912 when the Holy See formally charged the Spiritans with complete responsibility for the religious welfare of Guadeloupe and ordered that its bishop be a member of the Congregation.
d. **SPIRITAN HIERARCHY: 1912 TO THE PRESENT**

The Holy See’s decision in 1912 put the Congregation in full charge of Guadeloupe, Martinique, Reunion, and, somewhat later, of Mauritius. It resulted in far greater administrative effectiveness than had ever existed before. As members of a religious society, Spiritan bishops did not look to be promoted to any metropolitan dioceses. Rather, they regarded themselves as wedded for life to the see entrusted to their care. Unlike previous colonial bishops, they did not cast an anxious eye back to the finer dioceses of France, nor did they import their friends as Vicar Generals. Instead, they chose their curial officials from the local clergy who knew and understood the people and then settled down to achieve consistency and stability. As a result, conflicts between the Bishop and his clergy disappeared almost completely.

Another effect of the Pope’s decision was to remedy the shortage of priests that had plagued these islands for more than thirty years. It had grown increasingly until it appeared to be approaching disastrous proportions when the Congregation took over. By order of the Holy See, the Spiritans had to substitute members of their own Congregation if they could not find enough other priests to fill the vacancies that existed. At first, this papal command proved extremely burdensome for an already overloaded society, but God seems to have blessed its obedience, for just at that time the number of vocations to the Congregation began to increase dramatically. Moreover, now that they had complete charge, the Spiritans finally had an opportunity to foster native vocations without being hampered by episcopal opposition to the recruitment of Creole seminarians. Since 1912, the results achieved by their vocation program are impressive indeed: most of the diocesan priests on these islands are now Creoles. The end result of the Holy See’s decision, therefore, has been to bring these formerly helpless branches of the Church to a point of development at which their relative self-sufficiency now enables them to think ahead to a time in the future when they may even help in foreign missionary work elsewhere.

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31 Glancing over the list of Ecclesiastical Superiors of Guadeloupe, one is struck by the administrative stability that prevailed when Spiritans, whether Prefects or Bishops, were in charge: four Spiritan Prefects and Bishops averaged sixteen years of service, while seventeen others lasted only a mean of four years and four months. Undoubtedly, this stability is one of the reasons why the island’s religious development forged ahead more vigorously under their aegis than under other regimes.
As the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda pointed out in 1939, “this would be the most fitting reward for the apostolate of the Congregation.”

Guadeloupe’s first Spiritan bishop under the new program was Father Peter Genoud, who had been Novice Master of the French Province for sixteen years before his consecration. Although he had already reached the age of fifty-two when he assumed jurisdiction, he governed his See for thirty-three years till his death in 1945. During that time he had the consolation of seeing the Church in Guadeloupe overcome the evil effects of preceding events and enter into period of strength such as it had never known before. In 1943, Father John Gay, C.S.Sp., become his Coadjutor and, when the old prelate died two years later, Bishop Gay succeeded him.

Spiritans Works. At present, the Holy Ghost Fathers staff about twenty-five parishes for which no diocesan clergy is as yet available. Near Basse-Terre they opened a seminary in 1939 and shortly thereafter it was transformed into a seminary-college. By a curious sort of poetic justice, then, the Spiritans resumed their historic function as educators of Catholic leaders on the island. Their tradition of social work finds expression in an institution for homeless boys where some two hundred youngsters are given an opportunity to learn how to live and how to earn a living.

List of Ecclesiastical and Religious Superiors of Guadeloupe

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<td>Prefects Apostolic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fr. Bernard Graffe, 1815-1825</td>
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<td>(Vice Prefect till 1821)</td>
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<td>Fr. Blaise Chabert, 1825-1827</td>
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<td>Fr. Peter Brizard, 1827-1829</td>
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<td>Fr. Francis Lacombe, C.S.Sp., 1829-1844</td>
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<td>Fr. John Dupuis, 1844-1846</td>
<td>(Pro Prefect)</td>
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<td>Fr. Peter Guyard, C.S.Sp., 1846-1848</td>
<td>(Eccl. Superior)</td>
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<td>Fr. Casimir Dujougon, C.S.C., 1848-1849</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fr. Victor Drouelle, C.S.C., 1849-1851</td>
<td>(Vice Prefect)</td>
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1851: Creation of the Hierarchy

Bishops
Bishop Peter Lacarrière, 1851-1853
Bishop Theodore Forcade, 1853-1861
Bishop Anthony Boutonnet, 1862-1868
Bishop Joseph Reyne, 1870-1872
Bishop Francis Blanger, 1873-1883
Fr. Emmanuel Canappe, 1883-1885 (Apostolic Administrator)
Bishop Frederic Oury, 1885-1886 (never reached Guadeloupe)
Archbishop Francis Laurencin, 1885-1892 (Apostolic Administrator)
Archbishop Dominic Soule, 1892-1898 (Apostolic Administrator)
Bishop Peter Avon, 1899-1901
Bishop Emmanuel Canappe, 1901-1907
Msgr. Eugene Duval, 1907-1912 (Apostolic Administrator)
Bishop Peter Genoud, C.S.Sp., 1912-1945

Bishop John Gay, C.S.Sp., 1945- (Coadjutor since 1943)

Fr. John Klein, 1853-1855
Fr. Francis Pernot, 1869-1870
Fr. Ambrose Emonet, 1870-1871 (later Prefect Apostolic of Guiana)
Fr. Victor Guilloux, 1871-1875
Fr. Jules Brunetti, 1875-1882
Fr. Etienne Morin, 1882-1887
Fr. Francis Girard, 1887-1904
Fr. Joseph Malleret, 1904-1906
Fr. Henry Van Haecke, 1906-1907
Fr. Auguste Venard, 1907-1908
Fr. Joseph Malleret, 1911-1912 (later Bishop of Martinique)
Fr. Paul Lequien, 1913-1915 (later Bishop of Martinique)
Fr. Matthew Gallot, 1915-1921
Fr. Jules Levasseur, 1921-1925
Fr. Charles Manet, 1925-1926
Fr. Charles Grullot, 1926-1936
Fr. Louis Quentin, 1936-1947
Fr. Emile Girard, 1947-1956
Fr. John Delawarde, 1956- (district combined with Martinique)
3. MARTINIQUE

The Spiritan history of Martinique follows a basic pattern similar to that of Guadeloupe. It divides rather conveniently into the same three periods.

a. THE PREFECTURE: 1816-1851

In all the old French colonies, this period was a time of reconstruction and reorganization after the storm of the French Revolution. A succession of eight Prefects and Vice-Prefects of Martinique were presented for nomination by the Spiritan Superior General. With the help of priests supplied by Holy Ghost Seminary, they gradually prepared the island for its transformation into a diocese.

Because the Church was hampered in all its activities by excessive control on the part of civil authorities both local and Parisian, the period is rich in instances of strife between Church and State and between the Prefect and his subordinates. In fairness, however, it should be pointed out that a large proportion of the island's priests did excellent work in revitalizing the Church in Martinique.

Cl. C. 80 ff.

Its first Prefect, Father Pierron, a confessor of the Faith during the Revolution, ruled the island with zeal and moderation and avoided conflicts completely. His successor, Father Carrand, however, nullified his many good qualities by a strong conviction that understanding and conciliation were signs of weakness in a churchman. For example, when a convent sold its property to the government and both parties forgot to notify him, he placed the convent chapel under interdict and excommunicated the hapless Mother Superior.

Cl. C. 124 ff.

In 1834, the government in Paris practically forced Father Fourdinier to nominate Father Castelli to the Prefecture. It was a most unfortunate choice. Although he was an honest man, morally irreproachable, and full of good will, he totally lacked the objectivity that a good administrator needs. In a very short time everyone cordially detested him because of the animosity that clouded most of his decisions. The government that had insisted so strongly on his appointment now groaned in embarrassment and frustration. It heaved a deep sigh of relief when the Holy See deposed him seven years later. After the 1848 Revolution, however, Mr. Schoelcher, the new Director of Colonies, demanded
Father Castelli’s reappointment because he was sure that the Prefect’s interest in the slaves had been the cause of his downfall. The second term of office was even worse than the first, because the poor man’s disposition had grown all the more irascible through melancholy and nervous attacks. This time, fortunately, he lasted only one year. As a final stroke before his resignation he lashed out at his predecessor, Father Jacquier, and placed him under interdict.

The Venerable Francis Libermann had to intervene in Rome to get the sentence lifted. Shortly thereafter, Martinique became a diocese.

b. The Secular Hierarchy: 1852-1911

In general, the six prelates who occupied the See during this period were pious and zealous men who governed the diocese with prudence and wisdom. The most serious conflict of the time came about in 1860 when a divergence of views between Church and State kept the diocese vacant for more than ten years. After Bishop Porchez’s death, the government pressed the candidacy of Father Mouniq, a man of doubtful character who was supported by Bishop Forçade, the Gallican prelate of Guadeloupe. When the Holy See refused to cooperate, Napoleon III personally took the matter in hand. Meanwhile, however, Pope Pius IX had done the same. After examining Father Mouniq’s file the Pope’s reply was: “As long as I am alive, this man will not be bishop anywhere.” Nonetheless, the Emperor stubbornly persisted in considering Father Mouniq the legitimate Bishop of Martinique. He even went so far as to pay him the salary stipulated for the position by the Concordat. The issue was settled only after the Franco-Prussian War when a revolution toppled Napoleon from his throne. In the next government, a Jew became Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs. Being totally disinterested in Gallican prerogatives in Church affairs, this gentleman very sensibly left the choice of a Martinique bishop entirely up to the Church.

12 Father Castelli retired to Paris. Utterly penniless, he seems to have appealed unsuccessfully to the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs. By 1864 the police had lost track of him. Most likely he had died in misery and want shortly before this time.

13 When Martinique became a diocese, its first Bishop made further amends to Father Jacquier by naming him an honorary canon of his cathedral.
In addition to this ten-year vacancy, there was a very noisy clash in 1893 when Bishop Carméné dismissed Father Cudenec as his Vicar General and replaced him with his own nephew. When the civil authorities refused to recognize the dismissal, the case degenerated into an open controversy in which eventually the entire clergy, the people, the Governor, the Ministers in Paris, the metropolitan Archbishop of Bordeaux, and finally even the Pope himself became involved. In Martinique there were rallies for and against each party, religious and secular newspapers lashed out against or vehemently defended the various protagonists, scores of wild pamphlets circulated, and even fist fights took place in the streets. After the bishop was called to Paris in 1895 to explain his action, he was forbidden to go back to his diocese. When he returned in defiance, the government cut off his salary and refused to have anything to do with him. Because of the intimate relations which still existed between Church and State, it was not long before the diocese approached a state of complete chaos. The affair came to a close only in 1897 when the Holy See called the Bishop to Rome and Leo XIII personally induced him to resign. By way of consolation, the Pope made him titular Archbishop of Hieropolis. It was a sad ending for an otherwise splendid and fruitful episcopate that lasted twenty-two years.

Spiritans Works of Education. As long as the secular hierarchy governed Martinique, the Holy Ghost Fathers not only kept a watchful eye on the diocese, as they were bound to do, but they also supplied the island with priests and Catholic leaders. In addition to their central Parisian seminary for the colonial clergy, they staffed the senior seminary of Martinique which had been founded by Bishop Le Herpeur in 1851.

In 1859 the Spiritans took over the diocesan College of St. Pierre. Under the paternal direction of Father Emonet, the school soon enrolled more than three hundred students—a very high number for that time. Although several rival colleges started in St. Pierre, none of them could compete with the Spiritan institute and all disappeared after a few years of lingering existence. When the diocesan junior seminary was founded in 1867, it too was entrusted to the Congregation's care. Moreover, since 1863 the Spiritans had operated a junior college at Fort de France.

When the suppression of government subsidies in 1880 forced the diocese to cut its budget drastically, only the College of St.
Pierre was able to survive. This institution had to be kept functioning for the foundation of a secular State college in the same city made it imperative that a center of Catholic education be maintained there. For this reason the Spiritans valiantly stayed at their post until the disaster of 1902.

In that year, the eruption of Mont Pelée engulfed the whole city in a sea of molten lava and devouring flame. Together with thirty thousand others, the entire Spiritan staff of the College perished in the horrible holocaust. Only a monument remains to mark the spot where the College once stood. The next year, the Holy Ghost Fathers regrouped their forces and opened another Seminary-College at Fort-de-France, but perforce on a modest scale.

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14 Later in the same year, another eruption destroyed the town of Morne-Rouge with its shrine of Notre Dame de la Délivrande. Before the disaster, the Spiritan Director of the Shrine, Father Mary, tried to persuade the people to abandon their town. When they refused, he heroically resolved to stay with them and share their fate. Horribly burned in the catastrophe, he spent the remaining few hours of his life in administering the last sacraments to the dying.

15 In 1930, signs of another eruption caused the hurried evacuation of the rebuilt city. Fortunately, no serious tragedy ensued, although the threat of sudden disaster still hangs over that part of Martinique.
c. SPIRITAN HIERARCHY: 1912 TILL THE PRESENT

For reasons which have been explained in Chapter X, the Holy See decided that the Congregation should henceforth nominate one of its members for the Diocese of Martinique and supplement with its own personnel whatever vacancies might exist throughout the diocese.

As in the other colonies, this inauguration of a Spiritan hierarchy was followed by great stability of administration, an efflorescence of native vocations, and the disappearance of conflicts between the Bishop and his clergy. We do not, of course, mean to suggest that the Spiritans should be credited with all these improvements. In significant measure, those anticlerical politicians who brought about the separation of Church and State contributed likewise to the peace and harmony of the time. They had acted to spite the Church, but in effect they had abdicated all control over ecclesiastical affairs. Free at last from civilian interference, the forces of religion could no longer be mobilized by political pressure to war against each other.

Bishop Malleret, the first Spiritan to occupy the See, died in 1914, two years after his appointment. Only two other prelates, Bishop Paul Lequien (+1941) and Bishop Henry de la Brunelière, have spanned by their administrations the forty-odd years between that time and the present. In accord with papal directives, the Holy Ghost Fathers have taken on a score of parishes for which a local clergy is not yet available. In addition, they have pursued their historic objective of providing the island with Catholic leadership by developing the junior college at Fort-de-France into a full-fledged Seminary-College. Their social-work tradition is given substance by an institute for homeless boys which has been affiliated with the famous Auteuil organization referred to earlier.

List of Ecclesiastical and Religious Superiors of Martinique

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<td>Prefects Apostolic*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fr. John Pierron, 1815-1822 (Vice-Prefect)</td>
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<td>Fr. John Carrand, 1822-1830</td>
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<td>Fr. George Taillevis de Perrigny, 1830-1834 (Vice Prefect)</td>
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Fr. Peter Castelli, 1834-1841
Fr. George Taillevis de Perrigny, 1841-1844 (Vice Prefect)
Fr. John Jacquier, Sp., 1944-1848 (Vice Prefect)
Fr. Peter Castelli, 1848-1849
Fr. Fauveau, 1849-1851 (Vice Prefect)

**1851: creation of the Hierarchy**

**Bishops**

Bishop John Le Herpeur, 1851-1858

Bishop Louis Porchez, 1858-1860
Fr. Prudent Guesdon, 1860-1871 (Apostolic Administrator)
Fr. Francis Blanger, 1871 (Apostolic Administrator)
Bishop Amand Fava, 1871-1875
Bishop Julian Carméné, 1875-1897

Bishop Etienne Tanoux, C.M., 1898-1899

Bishop Mary-Charles de Cormont, 1899-1911
Bishop Joseph Malleret, C.S.Sp., 1912-1914

Bishop Paul Lequien, C.S.Sp., 1915-1941

Bishop Henry Varin de la Brunelière, C.S.Sp., 1941-

Fr. Ambrose Emonet, 1856-1870 (later Superior General)
Fr. Anthony Grasser, 1871-1883
Fr. Henry Van Haecke, 1883-1892
Fr. Julian Prono, 1892-1896
Fr. Philip Kieffer, 1896-1897
Fr. Louis Veillet, 1897-1899
Fr. Joseph Malleret, 1899-1911 (later Bishop of Martinique)
Fr. Matthew Gallot, 1911-1912
Fr. Charles Guyot, 1912-1913
Fr. Auguste Venard, 1913-1916
Fr. Auguste Grimault, 1916-1924 (later Vicar Apostolic of Senegambia)
Fr. Joseph Janin, 1924-1934
Fr. Emile Muller, 1934-1938
Fr. Paul Droesch, 1938-1942
Fr. Bernard Arosteguy, 1942-1952
Fr. John Delewarde, 1952- (district combined with Guadeloupe in 1956)

*Sp. refers to Holy Ghost Father in the broad sense of the term; C.S.Sp. indicates members of the Congregation.*
4. TRINIDAD

a. ST. MARY’S COLLEGE

B. G. 3, 6 ff.   Foundation. In 1860 Archbishop Ferdinand English asked the Holy Ghost Fathers to open a Seminary-College in the Archdiocese of Port of Spain. After some hesitation, the Congregation acceded to his repeated requests and on the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, August 24, 1862, the offer was officially accepted. A few weeks later, the Archbishop died and execution of the plan was postponed. However, when government opposition unduly delayed the appointment of a successor to the See, the Propaganda insisted that the College be started at once and guaranteed that, no matter who would eventually occupy the archiepiscopal post, he would have to honor the agreement with the Spiritans. On July 7, 1863, therefore, Father Victor Guilloux and one confrere arrived on the island. Others followed later. By the first of August they had begun operations with fourteen students in a small diocesan property near the convent of the Sisters of Cluny. Six months later, this initial student body had grown to a total of eighty, the maximum number that the limited physical facilities could accommodate.

B. G. 3, 474   While the Catholics of Trinidad had welcomed the Fathers with open arms, government reaction to their arrival was not too friendly at first. British officials feared a return of French influence at a time when they were at odds with the Catholics over the appointment of a new Archbishop and promulgation of new marriage laws. As the Fathers reported it, they “cordially detested” the little band of teachers. Shortly afterwards however, when British members of the Congregation were added to the staff, this early tension gave way to such a sincere mutual regard that the French Fathers often spoke highly of the British government when they compared their position in Trinidad with that of their compatriots who had to struggle against anticlerical officialdom on the French-held islands.

B. G. 4, 445 f.; 572 f.   Permanent Buildings and Recognition. In 1865 the Spiritans bought a property on Pembroke Street, opposite St. Joseph’s Convent, and began to build the first unit of a permanent plant. Five years later, Immaculate Conception College, as it is officially called, became affiliated with the Queen’s Royal College. This affiliation entitled it to receive annual government grants and
rendered its students eligible for Cambridge University diplomas. Thereafter, St. Mary’s began to acquire its great reputation for academic excellence. It is a scholarly renown that has increased with the years until now the College is justly considered as one of the largest and soundest in the whole of the British Commonwealth of nations. Much of the credit for its present flourishing academic condition must be given to its venerable Dean of Studies, Father Louis Graf, who has presided over the educational endeavors of the past two generations with astonishing ability and unflagging zeal.

*Attempted Withdrawals.* Several times, severe personnel shortages and the pressing needs of other works induced the Holy Ghost Fathers to abandon St. Mary’s College. On the occasion of each attempt, however, public reaction was much the same as that which developed when they tried to leave St. Martial’s College in Haiti. In 1874 and again in 1880, when the Congregation was forced to open Colleges in Reunion and Pondicherry, the authorities decided to withdraw from St. Mary’s. As soon as the impending departure was announced, alumni, parents and the whole clergy separately addressed petitions to the Holy See and to the Superior General. By their strongly-worded plea to keep the college open, they effectively prevented execution of the withdrawal. The Congregation could not abandon the work without the consent of the Holy See, and the Propaganda was not inclined to grant its permission unless the Spiritans could be suitably replaced. Despite the very flourishing condition of St. Mary’s, failure attended every effort to interest the Jesuits, the Dominicans and other groups in the project. Consequently, the Holy Ghost Fathers decided to stay on, at least “provisionally.”

After World War I they made a last attempt to close the college. The critical man-power shortage than plaguing the Congregation demanded a drastic redeployment of its members, but once more the plan could not be executed. The Holy See did not want the Spiritans to abandon their educational task in Trinidad, and popular reaction in the island was prompt and decisive. No one would hear of their departure. The priests of St. Mary’s were regarded as one of the most important mainstays of the Archdiocese and their educational achievements were deeply appreciated by Catholics and non-Catholics alike. Local travel agencies simply refused to sell them the necessary steamship tickets. Again the
Main Entrance of St. Mary’s College, Trinidad.

Fatima College, Trinidad.
A 1902 eruption of Mt. Pelée, Martinique. In the May 8th explosion of this long-dormant volcano thirteen Spartians lost their lives.
The West Indies

Congregation had to reverse its decision and continue its historic task.

Development. The steady increase of students during the thirties necessitated a huge building program. St. Mary's laid out a master-plan and entered upon a program of expansion and modernization in 1935. Large airy wings surrounded by pillared galleries gradually arose in horse-shoe pattern around four connected courtyards, and a monumental chapel came to replace the nineteenth century steel structure which hitherto had served the religious needs of the College. The cream-colored complex of tropical-style buildings, lying in the heart of the city, unfailingly draws the admiring attention of the many Americans—service men or tourists—who visit this Capital of the British West Indian Federation. Indeed, the physical plant of the College would do credit to an academic institution in wealthier lands.

Imposing as its buildings are, they barely accommodate the twelve hundred students of all races and creeds who flock to St. Mary's in quest of higher education. One special feature of that
education may be of special interest to Americans because it is currently being discussed in academic circles: for many years, the Spiritans at St. Mary's have successfully followed a program whereby students are trained in separate sections according to their intellectual abilities, so that the teaching can be adapted to the intelligence of the class without exposing the quick-witted to boredom and the plodders to despair. Students of the same year are divided into from five to seven groups according to their mental capacity. As a result, the brightest group can advance twice as fast as the slowest: they cover the curriculum in half the time.

**Native Vocations.** As we recorded at the beginning of this section, St. Mary's was originally started as a Seminary-College. For many years, however, vocations among the native population, whether white or colored, were almost nonexistent. It was only under the presidency of Father John English (1925-1936) and Father James Meenan (1936-1950) that this situation began to change significantly. During the last thirty years, a constantly growing number of boys began to heed the call for laborers in the Lord's vineyard. At present, the Spiritans count no less than thirty-one living Trinidadians among their confreres. Moreover, other boys have joined other religious orders and the diocesan clergy. Trinidad is no longer a burden on the personnel resources of the Congregation. Instead, it is so nearly self-sufficient that it can even take part in the Holy Ghost Fathers' world apostolate in other lands. It is particularly noteworthy too that many of these Trinidadian priests and seminaries were boys who won first, second, or third place in the Cambridge Higher Certificate Examinations. This distinction would have entitled them to substantial government scholarships for advanced university studies in medicine, law, and other professions of their choice. Nonetheless, they sacrificed the prospect of a lucrative and brilliant career in the world and preferred to follow Christ.

With justification, the Catholics of Trinidad are immensely proud of the fact that their own sons play such an important role in the Church of their native land. At the least provocation they will plunge into an enthusiastic discussion of St. Mary's three periods of development: the first stage of painful beginnings and arduous labor during which French Spiritans ploughed and sowed the seed without ever seeing the approach of harvest time; the
second period in which Irish Spiritans cultivated and weeded the land; and the third stage in which the magnificent work of several generations of Holy Ghost Fathers bears fruit in a rich harvest of vocations—almost enough to man the college completely if all remained in their native land. These roots in the island itself have effectively removed any danger that the Congregation will ever abandon Trinidad.

b. College of Our Lady of Fatima

B. G. 41, 458

Since St. Mary’s present location made further expansion impossible, and since the Archbishop wanted a similar institution in another part of the city, the Congregation built a new college in 1945. A site was chosen in a northern suburb of Port-of-Spain, facing the Gulf of Paria. Dedicated to our Lady of Fatima and maintaining the same high standards that made old St. Mary’s famous, it merited almost immediate recognition. In fact, two additional wings had to be added only four years after its inauguration and now it has a student-body of six hundred. The combined clientele of these two colleges, though numbering some eighteen hundred boys, represents only the higher strata of Trinidad’s scholarly potential. Each year, St. Mary’s alone rejects three hundred applicants for admission. The two colleges are staffed by forty-six Spiritans and twenty-seven laymen.

c. Other Works

B. G. 7, 711; 8, 886 ff.

As early as 1871, the Holy Ghost Fathers began to assume the direct care of souls by accepting the parish of Diego Martin, whose pastor, Father Jouin, had been the victim of an atrocious murder the year before. In 1915, the post-war personnel crisis forced them to return the parish to the care of the Archbishop for a while, and they did not resume that charge until 1948.

B. G. 41, 458

B. G. 19, 207

For many years, the Fathers also served the adjoining parish of Carenage, near Point Cumana (of Rum and Coca Cola fame), a parish that extended all the way down to Teteron Bay. In 1894 a Spiritan had built there an auxiliary church, a school and a rectory in order to serve the local fishermen and the many vacationers who seek it as a refuge from the city heat. The region, then an ideal holiday spot, is now occupied by an American naval base and may soon become the site of the central government of the British West Indian Federation.
In 1890 a Holy Ghost Father took over the parish of St. Patrick in Newton, a suburb of Port of Spain. However, six years later, this parish was exchanged for the one at St. Joseph, about twelve miles from the Capital. In 1943 the town of Tunapuna (population 22,000) was detached from the parish of St. Joseph and became the parish of St. Charles. Since then the Congregation has continued to serve it also.

The three parishes now served by Holy Ghost Fathers can boast of three large churches, eleven primary and three secondary schools, nearly five thousand pupils, and 14,000 parishioners.

Victor Guilloux, 1863-1866 (later Prefect Apostolic of the Malgaches Islands)
Francis Corbet, 1866-1874 (later Vicar Apostolic of Diego-Suarez)
Casimir Marcot, 1874-1876
James Browne, 1876-1892 (later Pro-Vicar Apostolic of Sierra Leone)
Achilles Lemire, 1892-1894
Nicholas Brennan, 1894-1896
William Carroll, 1896-1903
John Neville, 1903-1910 (later Vicar Apostolic of Zanzibar)
Edward Crehan, 1910-1920
James Lacy, 1920-1925
John English, 1925-1936
James Meenan, 1936-1950
James Brett, 1950-

5. PUERTO RICO

Back in 1862, the Holy Ghost Fathers were asked to extend their apostolic labors to the island of Puerto Rico but the request came at an inopportune moment: the Congregation had just accepted the immense Zanzibar mission in East Africa and St. Mary's College in Trinidad. No personnel was available for this new work. They declined regretfully because, as the chronicler reported, it could have become "the beginning of a realization of the plans which our beloved Father had envisioned with respect to the Spanish colonies."

It was only about seventy years later that the Congregation actually undertook work in Puerto Rico. In January 1931, at the pressing invitation of Bishop Edwin V. Byrne of San Juan, the

16At the turn of the century, the parish of Couva was also served by Holy Ghost Fathers. This parish, however, was given up because it was so isolated and so far from other Spiritan residences.
Spiritans established their first residence on the island. Headed by Father Christopher J. Plunkett, four priests from the American Province assumed their duties in the town of Arecibo. This parish extended over one hundred and twenty square miles and it had fifty thousand Catholics on its books. However, only about four hundred of them really practiced their faith. The rest had been neglected for centuries and their religious illiteracy proved it. Apart from baptism, their only other demonstrations of "faith" seemed to consist in noisy processions and a number of superstitious practices that had little or nothing to do with religion. This bleak spiritual picture was complemented by the equally cheerless material situation of the parish: a church badly in need of repairs, no rectory, a few crumbling mission chapels, and a population so desperately poor that little or no financial help could be looked for in that quarter.

Undaunted by these depressing conditions, the Fathers resolutely set to work to cleanse the parish of its spiritual and material decay. The response was maddeningly slow, but after a time the picture began to improve. Redoubling their efforts, the Spiritans opened a score of mission chapels throughout the rural areas of their far-flung parish. Their tireless efforts have not been in vain, for the latest statistics show 12,000 practising Catholics in Arecibo.
The Spiritans

After World War II began, the Spiritans took over a number of other parishes throughout the island: Hato Rey (1941), Barcelona (1942), Dorado, Toa Alta and Toa Baja (1943), Jayuya (1945), Juncos (1947) and Orocovis (1952). A network of ninety missions has been created around these parishes, so that even the people in the isolated hills and valleys can be now reached.

At present, about thirty American Holy Ghost Fathers care for close to 300,000 souls in Puerto Rico. Recently (1957), the Spiritan residences in the island were united into an independent district. Its first Principal Superior is the Very Reverend Robert J. Eberhardt, C.S.Sp.

6. GRENADA

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Congregation had a residence on this island to take care of the parish of St. Andrews. However, in 1896, it was decided to abandon Grenada because it was too distant from other Spiritan communities.

7. ST. MARTIN

The French half of this Franco-Dutch island is entrusted to a few Dutch Holy Ghost Fathers. Ecclesiastically, it depends on the Spiritan diocese of Guadeloupe.