

HISTORY *of* THE DIOCESE

The
Caroline
Islands



ÉDITIONS DU SIGNE



PUBLISHER

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PRODUCTION MANAGER: MARC DE JONG

TEXTS AND PHOTOS: DIOCESE OF CAROLINE ISLANDS

LAYOUT: SYLVIE TUSINSKI

PRINTED IN CHINA

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ISBN 978-2-7468-2993-0
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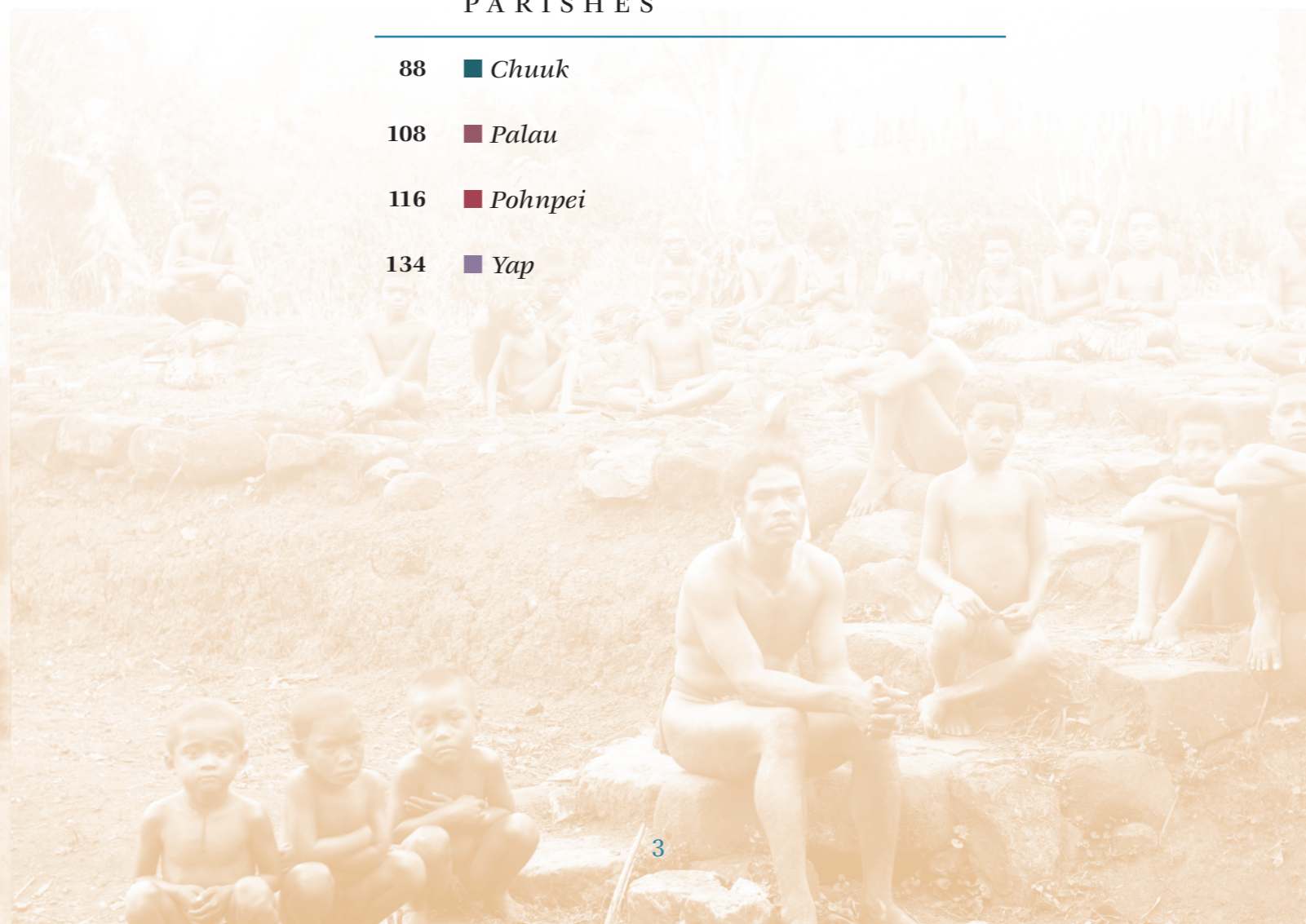
TABLE OF CONTENTS

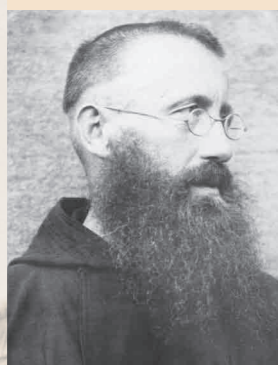
HISTORY OF THE DIOCESE

- 4 *Bishops and Ecclesiastical leaders*
- 6 *Beginnings*
- 18 *German Capuchins*
- 32 *Spanish Jesuits*
- 56 *American Jesuits*
- 76 *A Micronesian Diocese*

PARISHES

- 88 ■ *Chuuk*
- 108 ■ *Palau*
- 116 ■ *Pohnpei*
- 134 ■ *Yap*





■ Fr. Venantius Duffner, OMCap

The Caroline Islands was made an apostolic prefecture in 1905. Fr. Duffner, who was then working on Pohnpei, was appointed the first Prefect Apostolic of the Carolines. For the next six years he governed the church in the prefecture.



■ Bishop Salvator Walleser, OMCap

The Caroline Islands, together with the Mariana Islands, was raised to the status of a vicariate apostolic in 1911. Salvator Walleser, who worked for six years in Palau, was consecrated bishop the following year and brought to Pohnpei to become Vicar Apostolic of the Caroline and Mariana Islands.



■ Bishop Santiago Lopez de Rego, SJ

In 1923, the Caroline and Mariana Islands were joined with the Marshall Islands to form a single vicariate apostolic. Fr. Santiago de Rego, the superior of the Jesuit missionaries who assumed responsibility for the mission two years earlier, was consecrated bishop in the same year and placed in charge of the church. The episcopal seat was in Tonoas, Chuuk.

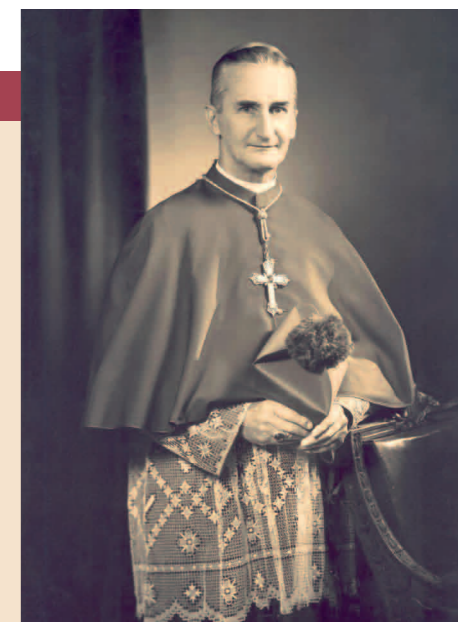


■ Bishop Thomas J. Feeney, SJ

After World War II, with the Mariana Islands again removed, the Carolines and the Marshalls constituted one vicariate apostolic. Fr. Thomas Feeney, who had served in the Marshalls since 1947, was consecrated bishop in 1951 and moved to Weno, Chuuk, to make his home there until his death in 1955.

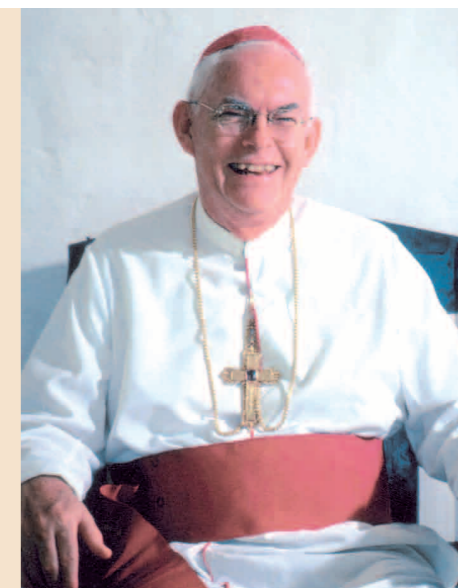
Bishop Vincent I. Kennally, SJ ■

Fr. Vincent Kennally, appointed to succeed Bishop Feeney, was consecrated in 1957. He had been assigned to the Caroline-Marshall Islands immediately after the war to assess the condition of the mission. He was then reassigned to the Philippine Islands before his return in 1957 to become bishop of the vicariate. He governed the church there until his retirement in 1972.



Bishop Martin J. Neylon, SJ ■

Fr. Martin Neylon had only worked in the mission two years before he was named coadjutor bishop in 1970. At Bishop Kennally's retirement in 1972, Bishop Neylon became the Vicar Apostolic of the Caroline-Marshalls Islands. Under his reign the vicariate was elevated to a full diocese in 1980. He retired in 1995 and returned to the U.S. shortly afterwards.



Bishop Amando Samo ■

Fr. Amando Samo was the first Micronesian priest to be consecrated bishop. Ordained in 1977, he was consecrated bishop in 1987 and named Coadjutor Bishop for the diocese. In 1995, Bishop Amando replaced Bishop Neylon as the head of the diocese. Like his predecessors, his episcopal seat has remained in Chuuk.





Beginnings

Early Attempts

The Mariana Islands to the north had the distinction of being the first island group in the Pacific to be catechized—in 1668, well over a century before missionaries planted the faith on other islands in the Pacific. But the Caroline Islands, an archipelago running east-west just a few hundred miles south of the Marianas, an easy canoe trip on the ocean-going sailing canoes with which the “Sea People” crossed the expanses of the ocean in those days, remained unevangelized until the late nineteenth century. Their neighbors to the north might have been the first place in the Pacific to receive the faith, but the Carolines was one of the last.

This is not to say that attempts were not made to bring the faith to these islands. Canoes from the western Carolines were always getting lost in bad weather and washing up on the shores of the Philippines. In 1696, one shipwrecked party of 29 Carolinians attracted the attention of a Jesuit priest, who met with the refugees, publicized their plight, and took up the call for a



(German Capuchin Archives)

missionary expedition to the home islands of these Carolinians. In 1710, after a series of misfortunes had delayed the venture, a ship with three Jesuits finally reached the tiny island of Sonsorol, southwest of Palau. After the two priests were put ashore, a strong storm swept the ship further away from the island. Subsequent attempts to reach the two priests failed, and the Spanish learned years later that they had been killed by the people of Sonsorol.

In 1722, another two canoes were blown off course, this time landing at Guam, where the islanders were welcomed by a Jesuit priest, Fr. Juan Cantova. The priest spent enough time with the islanders to learn a little of their language and draw from the information they provided him a map of Ulithi and the rest of the Carolines. A month after publishing his account, Cantova departed with his new converts for their home islands. High seas and gales carried the priest all the way back to the Philippines, however, and it was not until nine years later that Cantova

was able to obtain permission to make a second attempt to reach the Carolines. In 1731, Cantova and another Jesuit priest landed in Ulithi and worked there for several months before Cantova sent his companion back to Guam to pick up additional supplies. When, after more of the usual mishaps, the ship returned two years later, those aboard saw that Cantova’s house had been burnt down, the cross removed, and all sign of Christianity destroyed. Shortly thereafter they learned from one of the people that Fr Cantova had been speared in the back during a visit to another island in the lagoon.

The second attempt to evangelize the Carolines, like the first, had come to an unsuccessful close; no further attempts were to be made until the following century. These earliest missionary ventures into the Carolines had cost the lives of half a dozen missionaries and were so ill-starred that from this time on the islands earned the name ‘Las Islas Encantadas’ (‘The Enchanted Islands’).



One more brief interlude of missionary activity occurred about a hundred years later, just as Catholic priests were bringing Catholicism to eastern Polynesia. Soon after the Missionaries of the Sacred Hearts (also known as Picpus Fathers) were expelled from Hawaii, church authorities made plans to establish a vicariate for Western Oceania with its seat in Pohnpei. In 1837 Fr. Desire Maigret and Fr. Louis Bachelot, two Picpus fathers who had been sent to Hawaii, set out in a small schooner to bring the faith to the western part of the Pacific. Bachelot took sick and died shortly before the party landed in Pohnpei. He was buried on the small island of Na the day after arrival. Maigret stayed on alone from December 1837 until July 1838, but upon the return of the schooner he left Pohnpei. Afterwards, church officials, uncertain what to do with the area, placed the still unmissionized expanse of the Carolines under the Diocese of Cebu.

A new epoch began on May 15, 1886, when a decree of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith entrusted the long dormant Caroline mission into the hands of the Spanish Capuchins. In the previous year Pope Leo XIII had arbitrated the dispute between Spain and Germany over the possession of these islands. The Carolines, one of the last colonial prizes to be awarded in the Pacific, were to remain under the control of Spain, all parties agreed, while the Marshall Islands were given to Germany. With Spain holding formal title to the Carolines and ready to occupy their new colony for the first time, the Spanish Capuchins prepared to mount a missionary expedition to the islands—one that would not be short-lived, like the previous expeditions, but would permanently plant the Catholic faith at last.

A Foothold in Yap

On June 29, 1886, the steamship *Manila* arrived at Yap from the Philippines after a voyage of eight days in rough seas. It carried the first Spanish governor of the western Carolines, a handful of

Spanish officials, and about 50 Filipino troops to establish Spanish rule over these islands for the first time. It also brought six Capuchin missionaries, three priests and three brothers, who were to found the first Christian mission on Yap.

The rain fell in torrents during those days in late June as the supplies for the new government center and the mission were off-loaded from the *Manila*. The Spanish troops and the Filipino convicts hauled building materials, grain, and tents for temporary shelters, and led off the horses and cattle to the hastily erected stables. The site of the governor's residence and barracks was Tapelor, an island later purchased by the Spanish and connected by a causeway with the mainland. Here the seat of the government was located, while private houses were built up the hill towards Nimar.

Meanwhile, the Capuchins arranged for the conveyance of their own supplies, as the down-pour continued. At the dock to welcome the new missionaries was Bartola Garrido, the widow of an American trader who had lived with her husband for several years on Yap. Bartola, who was raised in Guam and educated by the Recoletos priests, was a staunch Catholic and a firm supporter of Spanish rule in the islands. The year before, after the Germans had claimed Yap, she had raised a Spanish flag that she herself had sewn in a show of patriotism. As she greeted the Capuchin missionaries at the dock, Bartola's face showed disappointment, for she had expected to see the Recoletos who had accompanied the Spanish party a year earlier with the intention of founding the mission. Since then, however, the Pope had entrusted the Caroline mission to the Capuchins. Bartola's disappointment soon passed and she presented the Capuchin with rolls, fish and other food with a promise of further assistance in the weeks ahead.

The Capuchins set up their quarters at the outskirts of the Spanish settlement, the colony

known as Santa Cristina in honor of the patron of the Queen Regent of Spain at that time. This was located at the site of the mission today. For the first few days the missionaries lived in tents that were loaned them by the Spanish troops. Before long, however, they finished building the wooden house that would serve as their central residence. They also built a small church roofed in thatch that was named Santa Maria and an open building that could serve as their school. For a year the six missionaries lived together—Fr. Daniel Arbacegui, the superior, and two other priests together with three brothers.

Contacts between the missionaries and the Yapese were infrequent and guarded at first. The Capuchins went out in pairs each afternoon to visit people in nearby villages, particularly the chiefs. Often they spent their time instructing those they met in the new religion they preached. Children especially seemed attracted to the strange-looking creatures with their half-shaved heads and their long brown robes, and they would flit about the bearded Capuchins tugging at their cowls and laughing merrily. To anyone who came to the mission residence the Capuchins would give small presents: mirrors, cheap flutes, whistles, and particularly clothes. So frequently did the missionaries give away articles of clothing, in fact, that for a time Yapese people hesitated to visit the mission unless they were wearing Western clothing. All of this was done in an effort to gain the good will and acceptance of the people.

From the very beginning the Capuchins devoted themselves to teaching the young. Any new mission station that was built in Yap (or later in Palau) always had its school building alongside the church or rectory. The Capuchins felt, as many other missionaries in other parts of the world often have, that they could more easily gain a foothold in society by working with children.

In the first school, held in the simple thatch building in Santa Cristina, the priests and brothers did



■
Dona Bartola Garrido, who welcomed the Spanish missionaries to Yap (Real Academia de Historia, Arias Collection)



■
Sketch of Capuchin rectory in Colonia, Yap



Fr. Daniel Arbacegui, OMCap,
superior of the Spanish Capuchins



all the teaching. Classes were held each morning, with school children instructed in Spanish, Christian teaching, geography and arithmetic. The morning ended with the recitation of the rosary and the singing of hymns to the accompaniment of the violin or accordion. Sometimes in the afternoon students would work in the garden or help the brothers in the carpentry shop.

The education of girls presented more of a problem. At first Bartola was given charge of a small class of girls in Santa Cristina, while the Capuchins appealed to Spain for teaching nuns to run girls' schools. When, in time, it became clear that foreign nuns were unavailable, the Capuchins had Bartola recruit a few Guamanian women to teach in their mission schools.

The patient work of the Capuchins during their first months in Yap finally bore fruit. On February 2, 1887, the first Yapese was baptized—a child who was given the name Leo in honor of the pope who had appointed the Spanish Capuchins to their new mission in Micronesia. The Spanish governor served as godfather in a solemn ceremony that was attended by the entire Spanish

colony and many Yapese. Not long after this, 30 more Yapese, including several adults, were baptized.

Then, a few months later, the Capuchins opened a second church, this one in Guror at the southern tip of the island. On July 20, 1887, the new church was formally dedicated to San Francisco and two of the Capuchines were assigned to this new parish. The small congregation at daily mass donned western clothes for the service. The school began classes for as many as 17 students, and in the afternoons the pastor would often wander over to the men's house to chat with the women staying there. Throughout the years of Capuchin work on Yap, the Guror church remained the most important station outside of Santa Cristina.

The missionaries were cheered by these events, just as they were by the unannounced arrival of the half dozen Capuchins en route to the new mission on Pohnpei. For three weeks the Capuchins enjoyed the unexpected reunion with their brothers destined for the east until they at last left on the *Manila* for Pohnpei.

Struggle on Pohnpei

On March 14, 1887, the *Manila* anchored off the northern coast of Pohnpei at Mesenieng, the site of the new Spanish colony. The curious onlookers that lined the shore watched the Spanish governor disembark, followed by the entire government entourage: the governor's secretary, two military officers, 50 soldiers, and 50 Filipino convicts. Also aboard the ship were six Capuchins assigned to work on Pohnpei: three priest and three brothers.

Within a couple of weeks, the Spanish colony—named Santiago de la Ascension—began to bristle with buildings including the church and Capuchin residence. The church dedicated to the Mother of the Divine Shepherd, was finished in time to hold the first public mass there on Palm Sunday. Two weeks later, on the same day on which the solemn proclamation of Spanish sovereignty was celebrated, the first Catholic baptism took place. The three-year old son of a Pohnpeian woman and Manuel Torres, a Filipino who had come to the island a few years before, was given the name of Isidro with all the solemnity that the missionaries could muster for the occasion. Later in that same week the missionaries celebrated another spiritual conquest when they received back into the church Narciso de los Santos, a Filipino who had been living on Pohnpei for 37 years and had spent the last several years as a lay teacher in the Protestant church.

The Capuchins, under their superior Fr. Saturnino de Artajona, took up residence in their newly finished quarters and began laying plans for their difficult missionary work in a land that had recently been evangelized by American Congregationalists. Within a month of their arrival, Edward Doane, the sole American Protestant missionary on the island, was arrested when he ran afoul of Spanish authorities over a claim to land adjoining the colony. His arrest and deportation to Manila for trial were an indication of the new tensions emerging on the island in which the Catholic missionaries would soon become embroiled.

The Spanish policy of forced labor to complete the construction of the colony soon brought about a strike by Pohnpeian laborers. When the Spanish troops attempted to force the Pohnpeian laborers to return to work, violence broke out, 20 of the troops were killed, and the Spanish took refuge in a pontoon ship that lay in the harbor for the next several months. Only with the arrival of three Spanish warships at the end of October was peace restored and Spanish control over the colony reestablished.

The mission residence had been destroyed and all the Capuchins' possessions—medicine chest, carpentry tools, chinaware, library, and building materials—had been lost. For a time they lived in a nipa hut barely large enough to hold the six of them. By the middle of January 1888 they started constructing a small chapel out of whatever materials they could salvage from the ruins of the colony. With the help of a couple of carpenters and a detachment of soldiers, the missionaries finally began work on the new residence, built of wood and roofed with zinc, which was finished on Christmas Day 1888.

Even as the Capuchins were resettling in the outskirts of the colony, they opened their first boys' school. These schools were normal appendages to all of the mission stations that the Capuchins established; in time they also added girls' schools to their stations. The schools were initially very small, sometimes having no more than three or four students, who usually lived at the parish house with the Capuchins. The daily order of these schools was similar to those the Capuchins began in Yap. Classes were usually held during the morning and included instruction in the Spanish language and catechism, with a little arithmetic and geography on the side. The young boys learned their mass prayers and religious hymns, and would help the lay brothers with work in the shop or garden during the afternoon.

The conditions under which these missionaries worked were far from ideal. Between them and the Protestant pastors, both Pohnpeian and foreign, there was suspicion and mistrust, if not outright hostility. The challenge for the missiona-



■ *Early church in Kolonia, Pohnpei*
(German Capuchin Archives)

ries on Pohnpei was not so much the resistance of local healers and priests, as it was on Yap, but the enmity of those who had already been converted to the Protestant church. In addition, they found themselves caught in the middle of the ongoing struggle between the Spanish colonial authorities and the Pohnpeian people.

The missionaries opened their second mission station in Aleniang, on the south side of the island in July 1889. The Nahnmwarki of Kittii, the paramount chief of that section of the island, had paid a visit to the priests some months earlier with the request that they build a church there. The chief had been at odds for some time with Henry Nanpei, a political rival and prominent church leader in Kittii, and hoped that the Catholics would act as a check on Nanpei's growing power. On July 1, the Spanish ship *Manila* steamed into the harbor near Aleniang with Capuchins, an official government party and some 80 troops to attend the solemn dedication. They were met by the Nahnmwarki, dressed in European clothes, who showed the Capuchins to the modest residence he had prepared for them. On the following day a mass of dedication

was celebrated in the tiny nipa church named for St. Felix of Cantalacio, and a Capuchin priest and brother remained to staff the new church and school.

The work of conversion had gone slowly during the early years of Capuchin activity on Pohnpei: by the end of 1893 there were fewer than 100 persons baptized into the church. Then, in 1894, rapid expansion suddenly began in the northern part of the island. The paramount chief of Sokehs visited the Capuchins to ask for a church and school in his territory, while a new mission station was built in Denipei, a village in Net. Just a short time later, one of the Capuchins arranged with one of the high chiefs in U for the establishment of a new mission there. The Capuchins opened the school in Awak in March, although the church of St. Joseph in Awak was not dedicated until December. By the end of the year there were mission stations in each of the five major chiefdoms except Madolenihmw.

The overall mission picture on Pohnpei was suddenly brighter than ever before. With the arrival of additional Capuchins in 1896, the size

of the staff was increased to eight priests and eight brothers. Soon a string of baptisms of high-ranking chiefs occurred that strengthened the influence of the church beyond any of the missionaries' expectations. The Wasai of Sokehs was the first in March 1896. His baptism was a solemn and joyous occasion, celebrated in the main church in the colony amid colorful pennants, the ringing of bells and the discharge of muskets. The Soulik of Awak was baptized together with some of his people barely a month later, and the number of converts from Awak grew in subsequent months. A year later, in March 1897, the Nahnmwarki of Kittii, who had supported the Catholic mission in his area from the beginning, was received into the church together with his whole family. A few months after this, the Nahnmwarki of Uh and Lepen Nett asked to be received into the church. By the end of 1897 some of the highest chiefs of every kingdom of Pohnpei with the exception of Madolenihmw had become Catholic and the number of baptisms each year had grown to over a hundred.

New Mission in Palau

In April 1891, the Capuchins sent four men—Frs. Antonio de Valencia and Luis de Granada, and two brothers—to found the first permanent mission in Palau. The high chief of Koror, Ibedul, greeted the Capuchins effusively and immediately turned over to them an old meeting house that they could use as their quarters. Within a few days, they had already marked off a site for the new house, blessed this ground, and planted a large cross as a "sign of the redemption they were bringing to these infidel lands."

From the start, the Capuchins waged an all-out battle against Palauan custom. Fr. Valencia, who wrote a lengthy report on Palau after a year on the island, saw their missionary work as a



■ *Chief of Net and his wife*
(Archivo de los Capuchinos de Navarra)

struggle to replace the traditional customs with "new and better ones." The clubhouse prostitution, the ease with which couples divorced and remarried, and the local sorcery and spirit communication were among the main targets of the missionary campaign. The Palauan response to such an announced program of social change was to withdraw, and Palauans at first simply ignored the missionaries. But the intentions of the missionaries were plain: "to bring a new teaching and a new way of life diametrically opposed to their own," as Valencia put it.

Even during their early months in Palau when the Capuchins were shunned by most people, they had their moments of triumph. One high-born man petitioned the missionaries insistently to baptize his three-year old child immediately. The child, who was given the baptismal name of Salvador, was the first of 14 children baptized during the initial year of missionary work. Nine adults were also baptized during the first year, all of them while in danger of death.



Perhaps the most distinguished of the converts, and the first healthy adult to be received into the church, was a 24-year old woman by the name of Udemol who had been blind from birth. Given the name Maria Pilar, she proved to be the most faithful of these early Christians and an inspiration for the missionaries and their small flock. Pilar attended mass every morning and rosary in the afternoons. With her keen memory and thorough knowledge of the people, she served as a living parish register for the Capuchins and their successors. No one symbolized as much as Pilar the bravery and fidelity of the early Palauan converts, and no one played as important a role as she during the first critical 30 years of the church's growth.

The missionaries were disturbed by the prevailing social etiquette: high-ranking people were supposed to be the first to receive baptism, even though they were usually the most unlikely candidates according to the missionaries' own norms. In their visits to Palauan homes, the Capuchins found that people welcomed them warmly and provided food in generous amounts. The people listened attentively as the missionaries explained the mysteries of their faith, but they almost always put off any real change in lifestyle that the gospel might have demanded. Even those under serious instruction were slow to depart from custom. Very few of

those who were given clothing by the Capuchins wore trousers or dresses to mass.

An influenza epidemic that raged through the island in early 1892 proved to be an unexpected boon to the missionary work. The epidemic, which laid people low for three to six days, offered the Capuchins a good excuse to step up their home visiting. As they stopped in homes, the Capuchins looked at the sick members of the family and prescribed a hot broth that relieved the flu victims. The success of this remedy and the apparent immunity of the Spanish missionaries to the disease amazed the people, who attributed this to the power of their god. Even those Palauans who had no interest in the new religion often asked the Capuchins to pray that the epidemic be ended. The response from the missionaries was that they would pray for those who were baptized; others could pray to their own spirits for deliverance.

During the first year of their work in Koror, a new church was built and dedicated to the Sacred Heart, and in January 1892 the first mission school was opened there. The following year there was a change in mission personnel.

Babeldaob, which the Capuchins visited occasionally for short stays, soon had its own mission station. In April 1893, Fr. Luis de Granada

established a residence and a chapel named for St. Joseph in Ngarchelong in the northern end of Babeldaob. Within a year he was also running a small school. Fr. Luis was aloof and uncompromising in his dealings with Palauans. He spoke out fiercely against clubhouse prostitution and did not hesitate to smash the sacred traditional images that his people venerated. The Palauans retaliated by building a residence for him out of *titimel* wood, a material that rotted very quickly, in the hope that he would leave when his house rotted away.

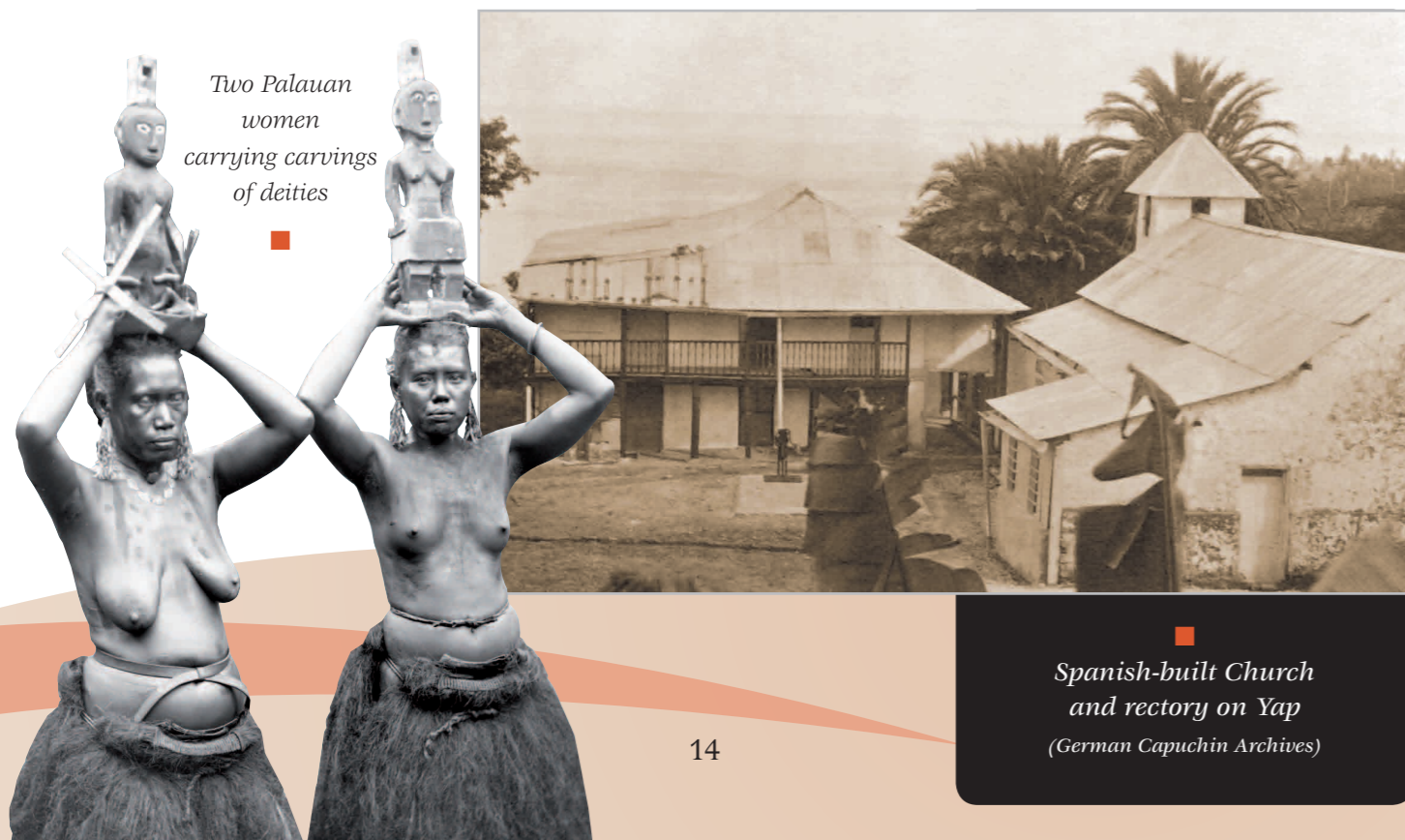
In time Fr. Luis moved on to other parts of northern Babeldaob. He took up residence in a village in Ngaraard, but his militant stance towards Palauan customs soon alienated the people of that place as well. Then the priest moved to Ngiwal where he was treated more kindly. Hearing of the traditional prestige of Melekeok, however, he decided to settle there under the protection of the Reklai in the hope that he might have a wider influence throughout the area. The chief's patronage guaranteed that there would be no repetition of what had happened in Ngarchelong and Ngaraard, however strongly the old priest chided the people for the evils of their society.

Fr. Luis' missionary career was a tale of frustration and apparent failure. His work in Ngarchelong and Ngaraard came to a premature and unhappy

end when he was rejected by the people to whom he had tried to preach Christianity. His death was hastened by the maliciousness of one of the many people whom he had offended. Yet, the man who had found no home in Babeldaob during his active ministry found one in death. The priest was buried with honor on Reklai's clan land and his grave marked with coral to indicate that he came from across the sea. The small mission station that he established in Melekeok in the final months of his life became Christianity's foothold in Babeldaob. It remained under the patronage of St. Joseph and would have another Capuchin as pastor during the final days of Spanish work in the mission.

Slow Growth on Yap

Despite the apparent rapid expansion of the mission in its first year, the missionary work was slow and filled with frustrations. The Yapese language was difficult to learn despite the publication of a Yapese grammar by Fr. Antonio during this time. The missionaries complained again and again of the custom of institutionalized prostitution, as well as of the widespread divorce and polygamy, although they soon recognized the futility of trying to eliminate these customs all at once. Above all, they regarded the temperament of the Yapese as one of their



Two Palauan women carrying carvings of deities

Spanish-built Church and rectory on Yap (German Capuchin Archives)



Spanish Capuchin residence in Koror (German Capuchin Archives)



main obstacles. The people appeared to the missionaries as cool and aloof, stubbornly resistant to change and very slow to give up their traditional beliefs.

The first major confrontation between these traditional Yapese religious beliefs and Christianity was not long in coming. An earthquake in Lamer in March 1889, the first in the memory of the people, lasted for three months and left the people of that vicinity shocked and terrified. This strange event inspired a prophetic movement led by seven men from that village who began collecting Yapese money of different kinds as an offering to the spirit of that place. These spokesmen for the spirit soon began telling everyone that all the Spaniards, missionaries included, would be driven out of Yap or be killed. The same fate awaited any Yapese who did not renounce their belief in Christianity. The effect of all this was to frighten away those people who had been coming to the mission for religious instruction, until Fr. Daniel himself confronted the prophets and challenged them to let him speak to the spirit. At this the men backed down and were forced to retract their empty threats.

The same seven men from Lamer began a revival of a fertility cult at about this same time. They cleared a large area, erected a two-story Yapese house (the only one of its kind in Yap), and started holding dances in their village every two or three days in an attempt to strengthen the traditional religious beliefs. They attracted large numbers of women to the dances by spreading the word that any woman who attended would become pregnant soon after. Enthusiasm for this revival waned quickly, the missionaries reported, after the wives of five of the seven cult leaders died and several of the women who attended the dances had miscarriages or died in childbirth.

Even after such triumphs, Christianity made very slow headway in Yap. By 1890 there were no



■ *Limestone discs, used by the Yapese as money, lying on the beach*

more than a few dozen baptized Catholics and a total school enrollment of only ten children. The new Spanish governor, the fourth in as many years, apparently felt that the social reforms that the government had hoped for were moving too slowly. He took it upon himself, therefore, to compel parents to send their children to the mission schools under the threat of a fine. School attendance jumped immediately, of course.

The mission headquarters at Santa Cristina had grown considerably in the few years since the arrival of the Capuchins. The small thatch-roofed church had finally given way to a stronger wooden structure with a tin roof, and it would soon be replaced by a cement building. The interior had artistic designs and religious frescoes that were done tastefully enough to impress a visiting American Protestant. It was equipped with a small organ, and a German musical box for those occasions when there was no organist. The Capuchins also had a small boat with which they could visit other parts of the island.

Meanwhile, the missionaries continued to establish new stations in Yap. In January 1892 they moved out to Maap where they built the church of San Jose in Toruw. The following year they constructed the new station of Santa Cruz in Kanfay and opened a boarding school there that soon became the largest and most advanced

of the mission schools. These two churches and residences, together with those at Santa Cristina and Guror, were the major mission stations on Yap. The church in Guror, which had been destroyed by the sea, was rebuilt. The new church was located in Machbob on the ruins of a temple to the local spirit Gopin, and the event was celebrated by a solemn procession and a dedication ceremony attended by hundreds.

The last church to be established by the Spanish Capuchins was the one in Wanyan, which was dedicated to San Felix in 1897. This church, which had been the cause of a dispute when it was first built a few years earlier, soon became the center of another conflict. Wanyan was at war with its old rival, Gachpar, and fighting had gone on intermittently for more than a month. They called the residence "the house of peace" in the hopes that it would lead to improved relations between the two villages.

Additional Capuchin missionaries were assigned to Yap during these years to staff the new churches and schools. By the end of the decade there were 20 Capuchins in all at work in the western Carolines, with five of them working in Palau. The new manpower made it possible for Fr. Daniel to visit Woleai and some of the other outlying atolls by Spanish gunboat in 1898. The priest could do no more than say mass on each island and greet the people in the short time he was there, but this was the beginning of evangelization in the outer islands.

Final Tally

The final year of Spanish rule in the Carolines, 1898, was the high-water mark of Capuchin work in the Caroline Islands. There were 11 mission stations and over 30 Capuchins in the field at the time. On Yap alone over 1,000 people had been baptized and 542 children attended the mission schools, while Palau had a Catholic community of 140. The eastern part of the mission field was not yet as well cultivated. The island of Pohnpei could count 800 Catholics, but no work was attempted in Kosrae, an island that was strongly Protestant and had a rapidly declining population, or in any of the coral atolls to the east. Moreover, the much larger region of Chuuk, seldom visited under the Spanish administration, would have to wait for another decade before it received its first Catholic missionaries.



■ *Palauan young men drinking from drum-shaped container at a feast*



(German Capuchin Archives)



German Capuchins

Parish Consolidation

When Spain surrendered its authority over the Caroline Islands to Germany in 1899 following its loss in the Spanish-American War, the mission personnel also changed. The first two German Capuchins arrived in the Carolines in 1903 to work alongside their Spanish brothers. One of the two, Fr. Salesius Haas, was assigned to Yap where he immediately began teaching German to island students. Seven Capuchins from the Rhine-Westphalian Province arrived in 1904, and an equal number were sent out each of the next two years. By 1907 German missionaries no longer worked side by side with the Spanish; they had replaced them entirely.

Meanwhile, the eastern and western Carolines were joined together to form a single unit and the mission was raised to the status of an apostolic prefecture in December 1905. The entire prefecture was placed under the authority of Fr. Venantius Duffner, a Capuchin working in Pohnpei. Two years later the seat of the prefecture was moved to Yap.



Venantius Duffner, [Prefect]

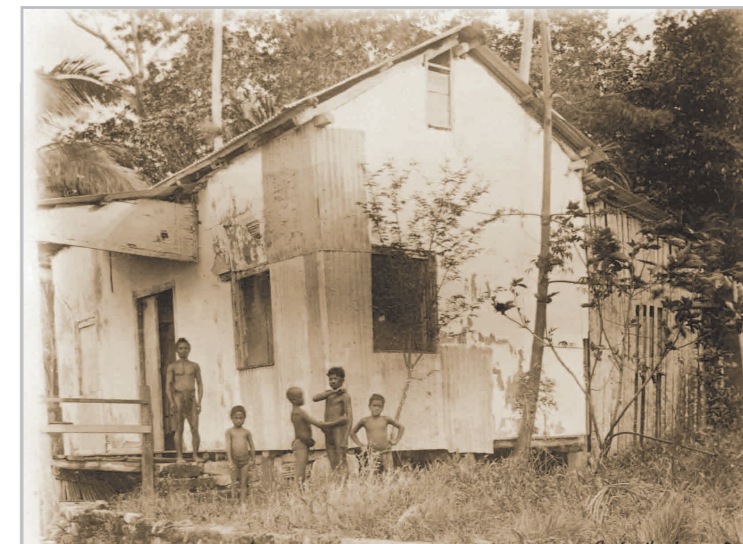


(German Capuchin Archives)

The German Capuchins worked to consolidate the gains made by the Spanish missionaries during their years of work in the islands, but the emphasis was different from one island group to another. In Yap, the number of Christians dropped with the departure of the Spanish government, and so the new missionaries had to cut back on the number of churches they tended. The six missionaries assigned to Yap staffed the two main stations of Santa Cristina in the colony and Guror in the southern part of the island, while visiting the two sub-stations at Aringel and Malay from time to time.

On Pohnpei a fierce typhoon in 1905 had leveled nearly all the mission buildings on the island. The German Capuchins directed a massive reconstruction effort that resulted in the replacement of nearly all the churches on the island. Inspired by the effort, Catholics from other communities began their own church-building programs. The people of Takaiu, a small island near Awak, put up their own chapel, and almost immediately presented 50 people for instruction for baptism.

Soon afterward, another mission station was opened on the island of Parem in Net. In addition, the priests cared for the four main parishes on the island: Kolonia, Kitt, Awak and Sokehs.



Rectory in Aringel, Yap



In Palau, the Capuchins limited their work to Koror for the first few years so as not to dissipate their energy. Finally, in May 1910, they opened a second mission residence in Melekeok. The people of Melekeok rebuilt the whole station—a rectory with cookhouse, and a 60-foot long school that also served as a church—and the new mission complex was dedicated in the presence of the German government representative and most of the local population.

The establishment of a mission residence in Melekeok was just the beginning of church expansion in Palau. The year after the Melekeok church was opened, three new mission stations were founded in other parts of the island. The first was in Ngatmel, a village on the northern tip of Ngarchelong, where a community of about 80 Chamorros dwelt. In response to their request for regular pastoral care, the pastor had them build a church and visited them each month for mass and the sacraments. Another sub-station was opened in Airai later in the year. As soon as a small residence and a school building were built, one of the priests from Koror began visiting the sub-station two or three times a week. The largest of the mission stations was the one at Aimeliik, founded in 1911 to serve the Pohnpeian exiles resettled there after the Sokehs uprising.



■ *Capuchin priest visiting a Palauan family*
(German Capuchin Archives)

Expansion of Schools

From the start the German Capuchins were quick to sense that any hope of long-range gains in their mission work depended on the influence they exercised on children. Their task, as they saw it, was to create a new environment that was hospitable to the Christianity they were preaching. This could best be achieved by running schools, boarding schools wherever possible, in which they might expose children to a Christian environment while also providing them with useful skills for later life. The mis-

Mission station in Melekeok, Palau



■ *Children from Sokehs at the mission school in Aimeliik, Palau. These children and their parents had been exiled to Palau after the uprising on Pohnpei.*

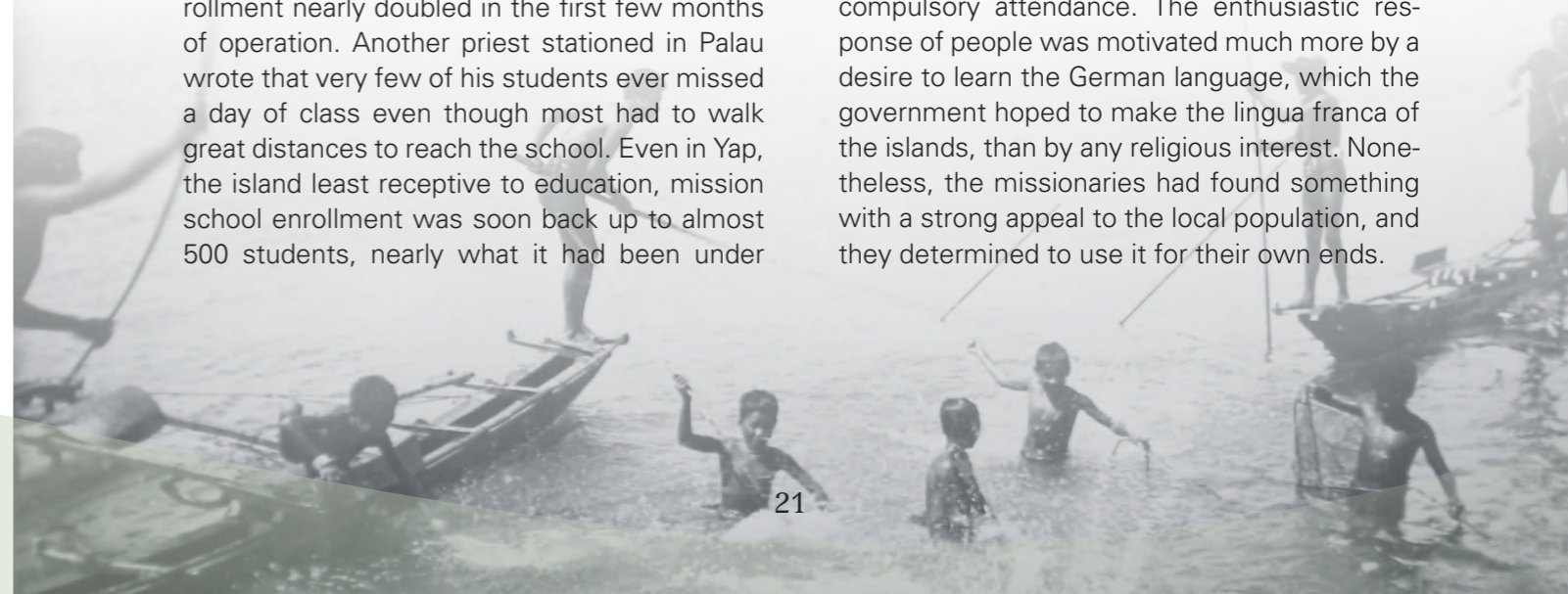
Palauan students doing homework by kerosene lamp
(German Capuchin Archives)

sionaries had virtually the entire education field to themselves, since the government operated no public schools in the Carolines and most of the Protestant schools that had once been run on Pohnpei and Chuuk were forced to close because of their failure to comply with the government's German language instruction policy.

In every parish the Capuchins opened a school. Even in the outlying mission stations that they visited only once or twice a month, the missionaries were besieged with requests to start a school. Everywhere people begged the priests to admit their children into the mission schools. One Capuchin working on a heavily Protestant island reported that his school enrollment nearly doubled in the first few months of operation. Another priest stationed in Palau wrote that very few of his students ever missed a day of class even though most had to walk great distances to reach the school. Even in Yap, the island least receptive to education, mission school enrollment was soon back up to almost 500 students, nearly what it had been under



the Spanish, but without government-enforced compulsory attendance. The enthusiastic response of people was motivated much more by a desire to learn the German language, which the government hoped to make the lingua franca of the islands, than by any religious interest. Nonetheless, the missionaries had found something with a strong appeal to the local population, and they determined to use it for their own ends.





To help them run these schools, the German Capuchins persuaded an order of Franciscan nuns from Strassburg to establish a mission in the Carolines. In 1907 the first six sisters arrived and were soon teaching in girls schools on Pohnpei and Yap; two years later girls' schools were also opened on Palau. One of the new arrivals described, in an unintended but striking allegory of deculturation, how the young school girls would gather on a Sunday afternoon preparing to begin the new school week, take off the grass skirts they customarily wore in their own villages and don the dresses that were required of them in the classroom. At meal times, the sisters would watch to make sure that the girls were using their knives and forks rather than their fingers.

The Catholic schools usually offered only a three-year program, with all instruction being done in German. The schools received a subsidy from the colonial government for their language instruction. Despite the brevity of the school program, the schools achieved surprising results. Each year the Capuchin mission annual,

Aus den Misionen, displayed letters in German from island children showing off their new language skills. Micronesian children sang German songs and recited German poetry on holidays such as the Kaiser's birthday. One of the priests in Palau looked on in amused astonishment as his boat crew tried to best one another with their knowledge of European geography.

The education that mission schools offered went far beyond the academic. Mission boarding students raised their own food, caring for pigs and chickens under the supervision of the Capuchin brothers and Franciscan sisters. Most of the religious, raised on farms themselves, added their knowledge of European methods of cultivation and livestock production to the fund of local techniques their students possessed. The sisters trained girls in sewing, embroidery, sanitation and domestic duties, while the brothers taught the boys basic carpentry and building skills. All this along with the daily schedule of prayer and religious activities furnished a complete learning environment for the young students.



■ Mission school students in Palau displaying a captured bat



■ Capuchin rectory in Colonia, Yap



■ Sisters convent in Koror, Palau



■ Franciscan sisters and their schoolgirls
(German Capuchin Archives)

Cathedral on Pohnpei

Mission work during these years necessarily included much construction, for there were churches, schools, rectories and convents to be built. Most of the Capuchin brothers, whether trained for this work or not, were obliged to do construction. One of their number, Br. Melchior Majewsky, lost his life while working on a church when he was crushed to death by a heavy beam that fell from the ceiling.

Nowhere was there a more extensive and sophisticated building program than on Pohnpei. At the main mission station in Kolonia Brothers Othmar Gesang and Koloman Wiegand dammed



■ *Capuchin brother in the metal-work shop on Pohnpei*
(German Capuchin Archives)



■ *Capuchin brother and students in the carpentry shop on Pohnpei*
(German Capuchin Archives)

■ *Pohnpeian men accompanied by a Capuchin brother cutting down a tree*
(German Capuchin Archives)



German Capuchins

■ *Capuchin seated with Pohnpeian people*
(German Capuchin Archives)

a small creek and fabricated a wooden mill wheel to make a sawmill so that they could cut their own lumber for use in construction projects. They also had a kiln for melting down coral into lime for the stone walls of the new church they were building. The operation was expanded to include brick works as well after they accidentally discovered that the mud could be baked into good quality bricks. This small industrial complex was the pride of the colony, and visitors were almost always brought over to see these amazing achievements. All of this was artfully employed in the construction of the magnificent new church on Pohnpei, the pride of the mission, which was begun in 1908 and completed in 1913. With its

imposing bell tower (which still stands today), the graceful lines of its arches, and the ornate interior, it resembled a small-scale European cathedral more than a Pacific island church. Work on the church was nearing completion when the announcement was made in 1911 that the Caroline Islands, now juridically rejoined with the Marianas, would be elevated to the stature of a vicariate and would soon have its first bishop. The following year Salvator Walleser, a Capuchin who had spent six years in Palau, was consecrated bishop of the vicariate. He arrived at Pohnpei, which was to be his episcopal seat, late in the same year, and the church, finished a few months later, immediately became his cathedral.

■ *Blessing at a gravesite on Pohnpei*
(German Capuchin Archives)





■ Cathedral on Pohnpei before its completion (German Capuchin Archives)



Founding of the Church in Chuuk

The beginnings of the Catholic Church in Chuuk, the last of the principal island groups to be evangelized, lay in the terrible typhoon that devastated the Mortlock Islands in 1907. Large numbers of Mortlockese were evacuated from their ravaged islands by German ships and brought to Saipan and Pohnpei where some of them were catechized and became Catholics. The new converts repeatedly begged the German Capuchins, who then staffed the mission, to send priests to begin work among their fellow Mortlockese. The Capuchins had to turn down these requests, however, because of their lack of personnel and resources. It was only in 1911, following the Sokehs uprising, after the entire Sokehs population was exiled to the western Carolines and the parish there was closed for good, that a priest could be found to undertake this new assignment.

The uprising and its aftermath brought significant changes to the mission. Since Sokehs was



virtually deserted after the exile of several hundred of its people, the mission station there was closed and Fr. Gebhard was sent to begin a Catholic mission in the Chuuk area. A considerable number of the Mortlockese who had made their home on Pohnpei after the typhoon of 1907 had become Catholics, and for some time they had been asking for a missionary to be sent to their

own islands. In late April of that year, Fr. Gebhard Rüdell, the former pastor of Sokehs, and Br. Eustachius Kessler left Pohnpei on a Japanese schooner to found the first Catholic mission in the Mortlocks.

The two Capuchin missionaries soon arrived in Lukunoch where they received an enthusiastic welcome from the island chief and his people. Br. Eustachius, with Mortlockese men assisting him, soon constructed a sturdy wooden house, raised well off the ground so that the space beneath could be used for a chapel. This church, the first in the Chuuk area, received the name that it still bears today: Sacred Heart. With the help of those Mortlockese Catholics who had returned to their island after the typhoon, Fr. Gebhard began catechizing adults and

German Capuchins



■ Mission schoolchildren on Pohnpei

children. He soon had under instruction over a hundred people, many of them pagans, even as he began making visits by canoe to the islands of Satawan.

But the missionaries' duties involved far more than introducing people to the Catholic faith. The island and its people were still reeling from the shock of the typhoon four years earlier: the houses were in poor shape, food production was not yet back to normal, and the drinking water was polluted. A virulent form of dysentery and an epidemic of typhus were claiming a shockingly high number of victims; Fr. Gebhard reported 18 church funerals within the first few months of his work. The priest sent to Pohnpei for medical supplies and the services of a German doctor;

and by the beginning of 1912 living conditions were improved and the worst of the epidemics was over.

When Fr. Severin Oppermann replaced Fr. Gebhard, who returned to Germany for a rest in early 1912, the foundations of the mission in the Mortlocks were well laid. There were already over 50 Catholics on Lukunoch, with another 200 people being prepared for baptism. The seeds of the faith were planted in the other islands of the Mortlocks as well, for some of the first converts had ties with Satawan, Moch, Kuttu and Ettal. Fr. Severin and Br. Eustachius remained on Lukunoch for the remainder of the German period assisting the growing church there.



■ Fr. Gebhard and Br. Eustace with their congregation on Lukunoch (German Capuchin Archives)



■ *Mission station on Tonoas*

frame church with roof and walls of thatch. While Br. Sebald worked on the construction of the new mission buildings, Fr. Ignatius traveled about the lagoon in his 32-foot boat, *Pastora*, and explored new sites for additional mission stations. Everywhere he was warmly received and everywhere people asked when the missionaries would open a school on their island. Taking advantage of this interest, the priest opened the door to missionary work on every island he visited.

Meanwhile, the clamor for Capuchin missionaries spread to the Chuuk lagoon. A handful of Chuukese, most of them half-caste, had attended the mission boarding school on Pohnpei where they became Catholics. When their schooling was complete, they returned to Chuuk and began teaching prayers and proselytizing among members of their families. The foundations of the faith were laid in Fefan through the work of these young people, many of them from the Hartmann and Hallers families.

Finally, in March 1912 Fr. Ignatius Ruppert and Br. Sebald Trenkle were sent from Pohnpei to establish the first mission in the Chuuk Lagoon. The site of the first residence was a hill on Tonoas, conveniently close to the government station that had been opened three years earlier. Within a few months Tonoas had its first church, St. Anthony of Padua, a small wooden

When a new priest, Fr. Siegbert Gasser, was assigned to Chuuk a few months later, he was put in the charge of the parish on Tonoas. While he tended to the pastoral duties there and taught in the newly opened school, Fr. Ignatius continued to roam from island to island befriending those he met and untiringly telling any and all of the Catholic faith that he had come to preach. He bought land and established himself in Sopou, Pwelle, a site at the opposite end of the lagoon from the mission in Tonoas. There, with the help of two Capuchin brothers, he built what was probably the most distinctive building in Chuuk. This new residence, situated on a hill overlooking the village, was a two-story structure constructed of iron and measuring 25 by 50 feet. The large hall downstairs was used as a church and school, while the priest lived on the second floor.

Even after the Japanese takeover of the islands in 1914, the church continued to expand in Chuuk. In addition to the main mission station on Tonoas, there were already churches on the islands of Fefan, Udot and Pwelle. Soon a church was

■ *Capuchin priest with mission schoolchildren*



established on Uman, a Protestant stronghold and long resistant to Catholicism, while a second mission station was opened on Fefan. In the western side of the lagoon, the expansion was even more remarkable. From Pwelle the new faith spread to Wonei, which soon had a large enough community to warrant its own chapel and eventually replaced Pwelle as the vital center of Catholicism in the western part of the lagoon. Meanwhile, Fr. Siegbert founded churches for the growing communities on the islands of Romanum and Fanapanges.

By the end of 1918 the German missionaries could look back on their work with genuine satisfaction. Churches had been established on nearly all the major islands in Chuuk Lagoon with the exception of Weno, where attempts to found a church were strenuously opposed by island leaders. By this time there were 1,400 baptized Catholics throughout the lagoon, with nearly 400 more in the Mortlocks.

Farewell and Legacy

At the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, the Japanese warships steamed into all the major islands in the Carolines and seized possession of them. There was no resistance offered and no casualties suffered, but most German nationals were repatriated within a week or two. The Catholic missionaries were an exception; they were left to continue their work, but under increasingly severe restrictions.

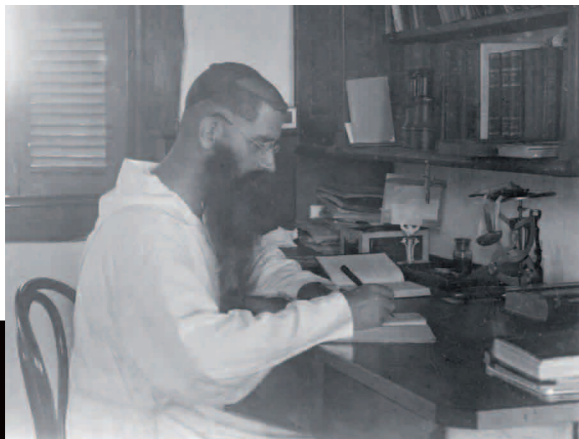
For a time the Catholics schools remained in operation, although their enrollments declined sharply because the political turnover had made the schools largely irrelevant to islanders. Then, in late 1915, the new government issued a proclamation requiring all students to attend the new Japanese public schools. All private schools were to be closed. In time the missionaries found themselves restricted in their movements from one island to another, and eventually they



■ *Fr. Crescenz with two boys*

were confined to their immediate surroundings. Meanwhile, the church's communication with the outside world was cut off—and with this its source of funds as well.

The final expulsion of the missionaries was only a matter of time. In Palau, where the local commander was especially hostile, it occurred early. In November 1915, the five Capuchins and five Franciscan sisters were marched down to the dock where they boarded a military transport bound for Japan. On other islands, a few of the missionaries were expelled within the first year or two, but most remained at their post carrying on their ministry under difficult circumstances until 1919. In that year, the remaining priests and sisters were finally sent home. Before they departed, the priests made one final round of visits to the faithful, giving the sacraments to those in need, offering a few words of encouragement to their catechists, and leaving their neophytes a few printed works in their own language—hymnals, catechisms and translations of a few books of the bible—to sustain their faith. The parting was melancholy. As his steamer was pulling out from the dock, one of the Capuchin priests in Chuuk, Fr. Siegbert Gasser, called out with tears in his eyes to his flock: "Carry on and if we do not see each other again on this earth, we will meet in heaven."



■ *Fr. Salvator Walleser at his desk*
(German Capuchin Archives)

So ended the German missionary period in Micronesia. The German missionaries had accomplished a remarkable amount, considering the brief period they had worked in the islands. They left a Catholic population of over 4,000 in the islands, nearly double the size of the community they had inherited from the Spanish missionaries. In addition, the Catholic Church was operating twenty schools with a total enrollment of 1,200 students. Moreover, they had introduced Catholicism to Chuuk, an island group that had never before been evangelized by Catholic missionaries.

But the legacy the German missionaries left behind also included the fruits of their own scholarship. They brought to their missionary work a strong interest in the cultures and languages of the area that resulted in an impressive list of publications. Salvator Walleser's

linguistic works on Palau and Paulinus Borocco's Yapese grammar were notable examples of their scholarship on island languages. The German missionary contribution to ethnography is even more impressive. Salesius Haas produced a book-length work on the culture of Yap; Lorenz Bollig's work on Chuuk remains a classic even today; and Sixtus Walleser turned out a series of scholarly articles on Yap published in *Anthropos*. The scholarly output of these missionaries has not been equaled since.



■ *Capuchin rectory Koror*
(German Capuchin Archives)

■ *Capuchin brother and two Palauans sawing a log*
(German Capuchin Archives)



■ *German military band on Palau for the celebration of the Kaiser's birthday*
(German Capuchin Archives)



■ *German Capuchin missionaries in Japan after their banishment from the islands*
(German Capuchin Archives)

■ *Members of the Catholic Young Men's Association on Pohnpei*
(German Capuchin Archives)





Spanish Jesuits

The Return of Missionaries

Not long after the expulsion of the German Capuchins missionaries from the Caroline Islands, the Vatican began negotiations with the Japanese government over the possible dispatch of other missionaries from a neutral nation to these fields. The Japanese government had no objection in principle to Christian missionaries, providing they were citizens of a nation that had remained neutral during the World War I. In fact, Admiral Shinjiro Yamamoto, a distinguished Catholic leader, went before the Vatican in 1920 to petition for new missionaries for the Japanese-held islands. It was the decision of Pope Benedict XV to assign Spanish Jesuits to this field.

In March 1921 a band of 22 Spanish Jesuits, headed by Fr Santiago Lopez de Rego, arrived in the islands to rebuild a mission that had suffered badly from the neglect of the past few years. Work had scarcely been resumed in the



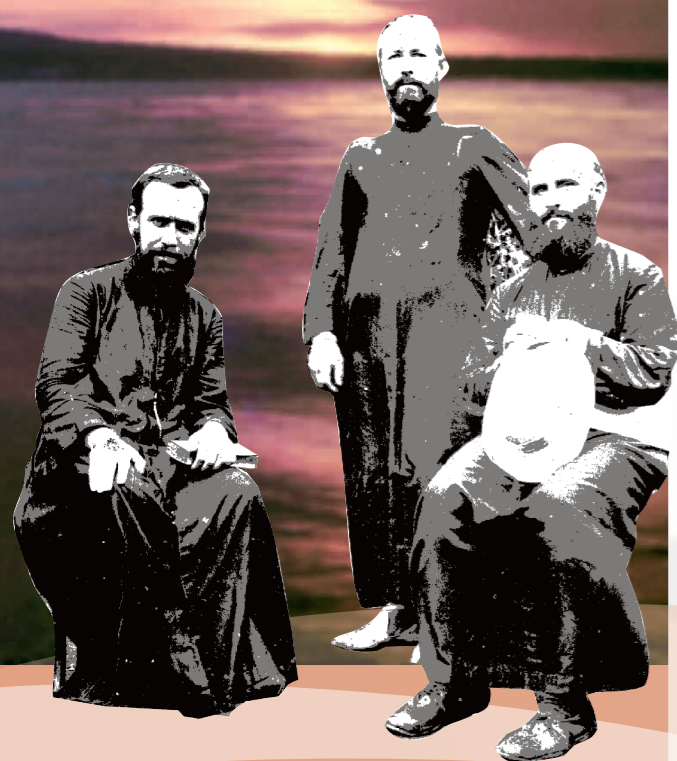
■ Bishop Santiago de Rego with Jesuits and people on Pohnpei

missions when another administrative change was announced: the Marshall Islands, which had formerly been a separate mission, were united with the Carolines and the Marianas to form a single vicariate. In Tokyo on August 26, 1923, Santiago de Rego was consecrated bishop and placed in charge of the vicariate that now embraced all the Japanese islands of Micronesia. His seat was on Tonoas, Chuuk.

As the missionaries reached the different island groups to which they were assigned, they faced the usual challenge of familiarizing themselves with the language and culture of their people. But the more immediate problem was the rundown condition of the mission facilities. The two Jesuits who disembarked on Yap in a torrential downpour found that the large concrete

residence that the German Capuchins had built at the main mission station had lost its roof in a typhoon a few months before and the building was in disrepair. They had to huddle under thick blankets that night to protect themselves from the rain.

In Palau the four new Jesuits were pleasantly surprised at the good condition of the church and residence in Koror, but everywhere else they went they found the old mission stations utterly devastated. In Airai nothing remained of the old church and school building but the foundations, while the garden had gone wild. Ngiwal was even worse; the mission buildings had disappeared so completely that the Jesuits could not even find any trace of the foundations. The church in Ngarchelong that had once served



■ Bishop De Rego with younger members of his flock

the Chamorro community living in the nearby village of Ngatmel was long gone, as were all the mission buildings in Aimeliik. Melekeok, too, once the largest mission station outside of Koror, was in complete ruins.

Much the same was true in Chuuk, where neglect and the tropical climate had left the buildings in shambles. The chapel on Tonoas tilted to one side, the Jesuits discovered, and the altar cloths had been turned into lace by vermin. Even the solidly built parish residence had suffered serious damage; one day a door collapsed, and the kitchen and porch gave way a few days later. Conditions were much the same in the other stations. In Fefan the windows of the church were broken, the door of the entrance was torn down, and the roof leaked everywhere. The residence there was not much better: the house was infested with rats, the tank for collecting rainwater was overturned and lying useless on the ground, and part of the roof collapsed while one of the Jesuits was cooking his meal. On Udot and Pwelle, the houses and churches were in better shape, but the cook-house and walkways were so termite-eaten that they were all but reduced to a pile of dust.

The Turn of the Tide in Yap

When Fr. Jose Gumucio and Br. Ramon Unamuno arrived in Yap to re-establish the Catholic mission, the Jesuits were well aware of the difficulties that their predecessors had experienced there. In fact, the Jesuits initially decided that because of their limited manpower and the Yapese resistance to the faith they would not send anyone there at all and concentrate instead on other places. Only a chance conversation with a German living on Yap aboard the ship bringing the missionaries to Chuuk convinced the Jesuit Superior that this decision should be reversed. The two Jesuits, who had originally been assigned to Chuuk, were given a quick change in assignment and were sent on the next ship to Yap. Within a few years the number of Jesuits working in Yap was increased to four.

The Chamorro people living on Yap were a great source of support for the new missionaries, for they served mass, cared for the church, trans-

lated for the priests, and did whatever else was needed. Even so, the first few years were trying ones for the Jesuits. Like the missionaries before them, they found it extremely difficult to make converts from among the Yapese people, and they saw many of those who had been baptized earlier drift away from their religious practices. As one of the Jesuits summed up the situation, "most of the people were pagans, many had abandoned their faith, and only a few were practicing Catholics."

Within a few years, however, the missionaries detected a remarkable change in attitude on the part of the people of Yap. Suddenly the very people who had been so resistant to conversion for 40 years expressed a growing interest in joining the church. One of the highest chiefs on the island asked for baptism and shortly before he died told those gathered around him: "By this grey hair soon to go to the grave, I tell you to become Catholics because this is the only true religion." His children and their spouses were soon afterward baptized and given the names of Spanish kings and queens. Meanwhile, one of the most renowned sorcerers on the island turned over to Fr. Espriella the tools of his trade and asked for baptism. In the early stages of the great typhoon in 1925 he was asked by the chiefs to use his magic to protect their houses, but these turned out to be the first buildings destroyed by the typhoon. The sorcerer's baptism took place in his own house, which was formerly taboo for people to enter under fear of death.

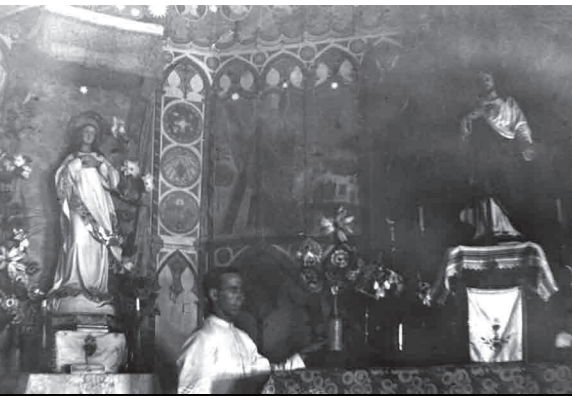
While Fr. Pons cared for the routine parish needs of the main church at Santa Cristina, Fr. Espriella traveled tirelessly around the island preaching the gospel and attempting to build up Christian communities in the different villages. One of the first villages he visited was Guror, a place that once had a large Christian population but which had not had Sunday mass for 15 years. Fr. Espriella found that most of the old Christians had abandoned the practice of their religion and many of them had divorced and remarried, some

several times. The priest said mass, baptized a few children, and spent the next few days taking a parish census of the Christians. Not long after this he spent several days in Rumung, where he found only one of those baptized earlier living a Christian life. In the course of his visit Fr. Espriella baptized several people and began instructions for many others who requested baptism. Fr. Espriella also visited Wanyan, a village in which the Capuchins had set up a mission station. Only one of the original Christians had remained active in the church two years earlier, but by the end of the priest's visit there was a flourishing community of 70 Christians gathering twice a day for prayers and rosary.

By this time the church in Yap had a small group of dedicated catechists who went about instructing their own people. Augustine Ayin from Amun was one of the earliest in Gagil. With him worked Bernardo Figir of Wanyan, who had been baptized on Pohnpei in 1923. Figir moved around Tomil, Gagil and Maap preaching and catechizing. He also acquired the land for the church that would be built in Wanyan during the 1930s. Other catechists active at this time were Defang in Rull and Tithin in Kanfay. Yapese Christians were bearing increased responsibility for preaching the faith to their own people.

Beginning Anew In Palau

The four Jesuits assigned to Palau—Frs. Indalecio Llera and Marino de la Hoz and Brs. Jose Gogenola and Emilio Villar—received an enthusiastic greeting from the dozens of Catholics who turned out to meet them: Palauans in their loincloths and representatives of the Chamorro community in pants and shirts. The people sang as they escorted their new missionaries from the dockside to the Koror church in a reversal of the sad departure of the Capuchins five years earlier.



Br. Arregui in the church in Unifei, Chuuk



Main church in Santa Cristina, Yap (Belau National Museum)

Despite the warm welcome, the Jesuits soon became aware of the toll taken during the five years of missionary absence. Only half of the small Catholic congregation in Airai bothered to show up for mass on the Jesuits' first visit to that place; the rest were out fishing for the day. The same thing happened in Ngiwal, where no more than a dozen people greeted the priests. The Chamorros in Ngatmel turned out at church in greater numbers, as these religious-minded people always did, but very few of the Palauan Catholics from the main settlement in Ngarchelong bothered to attend.

Even in Melekeok, which with the support of the paramount chief there had been the most promising spot in the Palau mission, the missionaries met with disappointment. For a time Fr. Marino and Br. Gogenola made Melekeok their home, and from this base they did what they could for the small, scattered communities of Catholics in northern Babeldaob. Then, on Easter Sunday of 1922, a typhoon struck and destroyed most of the mission buildings. The two Jesuits remained in Melekeok for another year, rebuilding as their finances allowed, but increasingly they found themselves pastors without a flock. Even at that early date Palauans were beginning to move to Koror in some numbers to find jobs with the government.

From 1923 on, the Jesuits concentrated their main efforts on Koror, which was rapidly growing into a sizable little town. With new housing being built by the Japanese government and a rapidly growing immigrant population, Palauans from Babeldaob were starting to move to Koror to seek jobs. In such a climate of rapid expansion, the local population of Koror grew steadily.

As the new missionaries settled into their ordinary pastoral activities, they began to experience many of the same problems their predecessors had reported. Palauans were not avid church-goers, they found; only a fraction of those whose names were on the parish register as Catholics actually attended Sunday mass. Church teaching on Christian marriage and divorce posed one of the major obstacles for Palauans. Of ten Palauan marriages that had been blessed by earlier missionaries, one of the priests wrote, only one survived. The others had all broken up and both men and women were living with new partners. Many of the younger converts had married outside the church and, consequently, attended mass only on Christmas and Easter, if then.



Jesuits in front of their residence in Koror, Palau

Each month the priests made pastoral visits to the Christian communities outside Koror: Melekeok, Airai, Aimeliik, Ngarchelong, Ngiwal and Angaur. They had a small boat with a two-horsepower engine that they could use for their travels, but they frequently took advantage of the government-run launch that serviced the islands. The missionaries spent little time in these out-stations, and the results of their work were not always visible. Peleliu was an exception, however. The Jesuits had visited this island, a stronghold of the Modekngai religion, from the beginning without making any more than three converts. Then, in 1926, an old woman possessing the highest female title on the island was won over to Christianity by her daughter. The elderly lady, once a Modekngai adherent, began proselytizing among the others in this sect. Word circulated around the island that the ancient god of Peleliu appeared to his devotees instructing them that he would appear to them no more and urging them to embrace the "light coming from the sea" brought to the island by those wearing long robes. Aided by this endorsement, Jesuits witnessed a new interest in Christianity. In a few years they had 160 converts, including the most prominent families on Peleliu.

Building on Former Foundations in Pohnpei

The five Jesuits who began work on Pohnpei in 1921 found a much more encouraging scene than their companions had in Yap and Palau. The marvelous complex of buildings in Kolonia constructed by the German Capuchins stood ready to use, and the Catholic communities served by that parish were surprisingly well intact. The tiny group of Catholics on Parem, who had been meeting for the rosary on their own during the past few years, immediately asked the new pastor, Fr. Herrera, to begin saying mass monthly at their small chapel. At Nanpihl the sister of the Nanmwarki of Nett, Carmen, had taken charge of the small community; she prepared the children for first communion, taught them their prayers and checked to make sure they were wearing shirts for mass. Fr. Herrera found another valuable assistant in Luis Kio, son of an English beachcomber, who lived with his family at the edge of the mission land in Kolonia. Luis had taken over major responsibility for the church during the absence of priests, baptizing and giving religious instruction. He also accompanied the pastor on

Church in Koror, Palau, in 1922 (Jesuit Archive, Granada)



all his sick calls and visits to the different parts of his parish, soon becoming the foremost catechist in the northern part of the island.

Meanwhile, Fr. Castro and Br. Cobo went to Kittu, where a few years earlier a Catholic community only slightly smaller than the one in Kolonia had flourished. The years of absence had taken their toll and the new missionaries found that some of their flock had drifted away. Yet, they could only marvel at how well the foundation for the church on Pohnpei had been laid by their predecessors. When the Angelus bell rang, people stopped, reverently made the sign of the cross and said their prayers. At the sight of the priest carrying the Blessed Sacrament through the village to a sick person, Catholics dropped to their knees. Masses on First Fridays were crowded with people who had learned this devotion from the Capuchins, and the priests soon received requests to reorganize the Apostleship of Prayer in their parishes.

When three more Jesuits—including Br. Juan Ariceta—arrived the following year, a third parish was staffed as Awak was reopened. Attached to this parish was the sub-station of Tamworoi with its fervent community of about 150 Catholics and the large copra plantation to be cared for. The Catholic population, which had met regularly for rosary and prayers all the while, had fared much better than the mission

plantation, now badly neglected and in need of considerable work. There were minor setbacks for the missionaries, but the parish was clearly fervent and had rich potential. On the pastor's biweekly visits to Takaiu for mass, the entire small community there turned out and received communion. Mass attendance at Awak itself was impressive and the parish congregations were very active. Although the Nanmwarki of Uh remained a Protestant, there was a steady stream of converts, among them some influential village chiefs. In addition, a 13-year old boy from Awak left Pohnpei in June 1923 to join four young men from other parts of the mission at the minor seminary in Manila. Hardly two years after the arrival of the Jesuits, Paulino Cantero was off to begin preparation for the Jesuit priesthood.

The Awak parish suffered a sharp blow when the church burned to the ground in the summer of 1923, but Br. Gojenola, that master craftsman, was soon sent to Awak to begin construction of a new church. In July 1926, a new arrival to the mission, Fr. Higinio Berganza, was assigned to the parish just as work on the new church was being completed. The church, situated above a stream, was a magnificent structure for its day with its pseudo-gothic design and its ornate wooden altar rising in three turreted niches, each containing the statue of a saint. The church was the genuine product of community labor; while



Seminarians sent off in 1923
[Paulino Cantero is left in the first row]
(German Capuchin Archives)



Dedication of the new Awak church in 1926
(Jesuit Archives, Granada)

many of the men in the parish sawed lumber and hammered nails, some of the more skilled local artisans were responsible for the doors, the baptismal font and other finer detail.

Everywhere a number of active congregations flourished, some of them carry-overs from German times. For young boys there were the Luistas and the Estanislaoistas, the congregations dedicated to St. Aloysius Gonzaga and St. Stanislaus, the Jesuit patrons of youth. Any

boy could join the Congregation of St. Stanislaus providing he attended mass weekly, received communion twice a month, showed up for daily catechism class, and tried to lead a decent life. Members had the distinction of wearing around their necks large medals attached to wide blue ribbons. The Jesuit brothers moderated these congregations, meeting with members monthly to give them a homily on the importance of a good Christian life.

Early mission station on Pohnpei, 1921



Catholics from Awak, Pohnpei



With the parishes now staffed and functioning, the missionaries turned their eyes to the outer islands, which had been left virtually untouched by the Capuchins. In August 1922 Fr. Herrera and his catechist Luis took a small copra steamer to Sapwafik, bringing with them a handful of islanders who had become Catholics on Pohnpei. By the end of his twelve-day stay on the island, the priest and his catechist had received about 60 people into the church, and they made plans for building a chapel on their next visit. Attempts to make inroads on Kapingamarangi, however, were disappointing. A mere dozen or so people were converted on the first visit, although the number of Catholics grew in time to about 60. The priests subsequently did what they could to minister to the Catholics on that island, but decided that future efforts to convert Kapingamarangi and the other atolls would probably prove futile. Sapwafik, meanwhile, remained the only outer island in the Pohnpei area that had any sizable Catholic presence.

Resumption of Work in Chuuk

As the seven Jesuits assigned to Chuuk surveyed their new mission field, they learned that the condition of the Catholic communities depended greatly on the strength and leadership qualities of the catechists who cared for the congregation after the departure of the German priests.

Fortunately, the church was endowed with some exceptional individuals, many of whom had been trained in the German mission school on Pohnpei. Felix from Fefan, who had helped on Lukunoch before moving to Chuuk, was one such devoted catechist. Kalistus from Udot was another. Hilario Narruhn, also a product of the German school and the captain of the mission boat *Maria*, instructed people in the faith and gathered them daily for prayers. Several from the Hartmann family and two of the Hallers boys also provided essential leadership to their communities during those critical years. Simeon, the catechist of Parem, had kept his fellow Catholics steadfast even in the face of threats by others on the island.

Young men's congregation of St. Aloysius in Kiti, Pohnpei
(Jesuit Archives, Granada)



Group of Catholics from Fouchuen on Fefan, Chuuk
(Jesuit Archives, Granada)

Even with the return of the missionaries, the Catholic communities were forced for a time to depend largely on their own spiritual resources. With just three priests working in the lagoon and not yet able to speak Chuukese, the priests could do little more than visit the different stations to provide mass for the people. For the most part, Catholics continued as before to look to the morning prayers and the afternoon rosary that were recited together as their main source of spiritual sustenance.

The islands of Tonoas and Fefan were the first to have resident pastors. The next island to receive its own priest was Tol when Fr. Castro was assigned there in 1923. Even at that time there were five villages with Catholic communities,

the largest of them in Wonei and Pwelle. Nearby lay the island of Paata, an area that was largely pagan and which had always intrigued the priest on his monthly visits to Wonei. One day he stopped in Paata to distribute to everyone he met a Sacred Heart badge from a bundle that he brought with him. As he was leaving the dock, two men threw a package of the badges back to the priest with instructions that he keep away from the island by order of the chief. Months later, he happened on the same chief nursing his dying wife, placed a badge on the sick woman and prayed over her. When the chief's wife subsequently recovered, the chief allowed the priest access to his island, and soon there was a tiny Christian community sprouting there.



Jesuit priest and brother in Fefan, Chuuk



Other priests using more conventional means, and always relying heavily on the dedication and persuasive powers of their catechists, found doors opening to them everywhere. The doors were even opened on Weno, an island that for years had tried to prevent priests from entering and had gone to great lengths to dissuade the few Catholics on the island from practising their faith. The island chief Mailo had at first requested Bishop Rego to refrain from setting up a church on the island for fear that this would create further divisiveness among a people who already had more than enough to quarrel about. But when Bishop Rego defended the rights of some people from Weno against the Japanese authorities, Mailo was so impressed that he immediately sent word to the bishop that he could begin a mission on the island and even offered his own house as a place to stay. From that time on, all chiefly opposition to Catholicism on Weno ceased and the doors were open for the assignment of the first resident pastor to the island a few years later.

Within four years of their arrival, the Jesuits had established a foothold on every island in the lagoon and had baptized about 4,000 Chuukese. Two Chuukese had even been sent off with three other Micronesians to the seminary in Manila in 1923, and three more would soon follow. Opposition from Protestant pastors and the island chiefs who supported them continued long afterwards, of course, since this was not an age noted for its ecumenical spirit. Nonetheless, the new missionaries made surprisingly rapid progress during these early years.



Church in Lukunoch, Mortlocks
(Jesuit Archives, Granada)

Return to the Mortlocks

While progress was being made in Chuuk, Fr. Espinal and Br. Arizaleta were assigned to the Mortlocks where they would serve with extraordinary dedication for the next 20 years. Within a short time the Jesuits had replaced the dilapidated old chapel on Lukunoch with an imposing coral block church measuring 100 by 40 feet—the closest thing to a cathedral that the Chuuk area would have during the pre-war years. The Catholic community that the German Capuchins had left on Lukunoch was quite well intact in 1921 and grew quickly as conversions multiplied during the first years of Jesuit work. The priests could not help but be impressed by the piety of the Mortlockese Catholics: there were over a hundred communicants at daily mass and almost the entire Catholic population crowded into the temporary chapel in the late afternoon for rosary.

Travel to the other islands in the Mortlocks was difficult for the missionaries in those early years before the purchase of a sea-going mission boat, but Fr. Espinal realized that it was essential if he wanted to capitalize on the growing interest in the church among the Mortlockese people. Those from other islands who visited Lukunoch could not help but be impressed with the vigor of the church there. Up to this point all the 400 Mortlockese Catholics were from Lukunoch with the exception of a small number from Satawan who had been converted during German times. Espinal desperately wanted to establish a beachhead on the other islands in the area, particularly those places that had been staunchly Protestant until then.

The first island to fall under the spell of Catholicism was Moch. Led by the island chief, some Moch people came to Lukunoch for instruction in the faith and were baptized there in May 1922. Soon afterwards Fr. Espinal visited Moch, received many more people into the church, and appointed the island chief as the



catechist. Next came Satawan, an island with a number of baptized Catholics, many of whom had succumbed to pressure and reverted to Protestantism. Fr. Espinal administered the first baptisms on that island in early 1923, although Catholicism never swept through Satawan as it did on Lukunoch and Moch. Ettal became the site of a chapel and mission station in 1924 after several people from that island were baptized on Lukunoch. Kuttu received its first Catholic population in March 1925, and within a short time a church was under construction on the island.

The Catholic evangelization of the Mortlocks occurred with surprising speed; by 1927 church expansion had just about reached its limits. In that year there were four churches under construction, including stone churches on Moch, Satawan and Kuttu. The number of Catholics throughout the Mortlocks already exceeded a thousand, a level at which the Catholic population would remain for the next two decades. With the acquisition of the *San Ignacio*, the 40-foot sailboat that the mission acquired in 1925 to serve the outer islands, the Jesuit priest could get around much more easily. From 1927 on, then, the principal work of the Jesuits in the Mortlocks was to consolidate the gains that they had made and deepen the faith of their converts.

Expansion to the Other Islands

As the missionaries carried on their pastoral work in the lagoon and in the Mortlocks, they became increasingly concerned about what to do for the outer islands. The Catholic faith had already reached some of the islands through

the efforts of zealous catechists. One man from Tonoas took it upon himself to visit Puluwat and introduce Catholicism to that island. He returned to Chuuk with some of the Puluwatese, who were promptly baptized and thereafter returned to their own island to form a church of over one hundred people. The same catechist also helped build up another Catholic community in nearby Tamatam. When a group of Mortlockese who were lost at sea happened on Nomwin in the Hall Islands north of Chuuk, they took the opportunity to initiate their hosts in the teaching of their faith. Consequently, when a priest and catechist paid a visit to that island a few months later, they were able to baptize half the population. They went on to the neighboring atoll of the Namonuitos where they baptized another 150 on the island of Onoun.

When Fr. Guasch visited the outer islands again the following year, it was in the new San Ignacio with its Mortlockese crew members who also doubled as song leaders and catechism teachers. Upon reaching Nomwin, they immediately found themselves preparing the other half of the population for reception into the church. The next stop was Pisarach, where they were welcomed by the dapper young island chief who was fond of European clothes and liked to have a hand in everything, church matters included. The island population was virtually all Catholic already, but there were a few more baptisms and confirmations to be performed. There were stops at other islands, hours of instruction through the Mortlockese, and always mass and communions. At the end of it all, the missionaries could take satisfaction in knowing that there was a Catholic community of some size on every island except Pulusuk, Pulap, Fananu and Murilo.



Missionary work in the outer islands continued intermittently during the following years, with the islands visited every year or two in the San Ignacio. In the Western Islands the old practices were still very much in evidence—women were confined to menstrual houses, divination and fishing magic was performed, and many of the ancient taboos were observed—but the new religion was making some headway nonetheless. Pulpap at last had a small Catholic community numbering about 50, while Puluwat and Tamatam had already become heavily Christian. On Pulusuk the missionary party was breaking new ground since the island had never before been visited by a Catholic priest, and they left a couple from Tonoas to live there as catechists for a year or so. The Namonuitos, which Fr. Espinal and his party visited next, were almost entirely Catholic by this time. The party did not visit any of the Hall Islands, but there was already a catechist at work on Fananu and word had reached the bishop that the island was ready to be converted en masse. Upon the next visit to the Halls a year or two later, 70 people from Fananu were baptized, a new church was under construction, and all signs pointed to the quick triumph of Catholicism on this island and the rest of the Halls.

Yap Outer Islands

In Yap, too, there was a thrust to the outer islands. Once the missionaries there tasted their first real success on the main island, they turned to the neighboring coral atolls to bring the gospel there as well. In February 1928, Fr. Bernardo Espriella began a six-week field trip to Ulithi and the islands further out. His was the first visit by a priest to Ulithi in 30 years, and the first ever to any of the atolls beyond. When the priest reached Falalop, Ulithi, nearly the entire population came out to greet him and catechetical lessons soon began in a large canoe house. Since the priest knew none of the Ulithian language, he would present large posters on the central teachings of the faith,

explaining what he could through an interpreter. After this he would begin teaching people the basic prayers that had already been translated into the local dialect. Fr. Espriella wrote that he could barely keep back the tears as he listened to old men reciting these prayers again and again along with the little children. The people were so interested in the new religion that it instantly became the single topic of conversation on the island, and the priest answered questions on the differences between Christianity and the traditional island beliefs until 11 o'clock each evening.

After two weeks of instruction, Fr. Espriella held the first baptisms: more than 50 people, including the island chiefs and a few of the local sorcerers. Following the baptisms he organized a religious procession, complete with home-made banners and Ulithian hymns, in honor of Our Lady. The procession ended at a large tree that the people of the island had regarded as sacred; the priest planted a large cross in the ground near the tree, sprinkled the area with holy water, and took out a small hatchet and chopped at the tree a few times. The Falalop people, now freed from the ancient fear of touching the tree, promised that they would finish cutting it down and would make it into a canoe that could be used for taking the priest around to the islands in the lagoon.

At Mogmog, another island in Ulithi, the priest encountered Mangmai, a man who had lived on Saipan and had worked with the German Capuchins for some years. Mangmai began proselytizing among his people and soon became the priest's chief catechist in Ulithi. Hachegemang, one of the first converts, assisted him in this work for the next several years. So successful were they that the island chief, a paralytic, had his family carry him to the canoe house to hear the catechism lessons each day. After short visits to Asor and Federai, where dozens more were received into the church, Fr. Espriella returned to Yap to begin planning his next visit to the outer islands. The priest had the



Fr. Bernardo with children outside the church on Ulithi

good fortune to have found a group of dedicated Ulithians who would serve as the foundation of the church communities in that atoll and the missionary band to carry the gospel to further islands in the area.

A year and a half later, Fr. Espriella made another visit to Ulithi, where he found his newly converted Christians fervent despite the opposition of the pagans. He went on to Fais, an island that had never been visited by a missionary. There he spent five weeks gathering people whenever he could to explain the mysteries of the faith and visiting the chiefs to win their good will. But the resistance to Christianity on Fais was deep-rooted, far more so than in Ulithi, and Espriella made only about 30 conversions during his stay. Before his departure, the priest designated a small house as a chapel, set up pictures of the Sacred Heart and the Blessed Mother, stocked the chapel with a supply of holy water, and left his few converts to the care of the Lord.

In 1932 Fr. Espriella made another and longer trip to the outer islands, visiting distant atolls that had not yet been evangelized. After passing through a severe typhoon at sea that drove the ship 400 miles off course, the priest stopped at Faraulep for two days and baptized ten people. He next visited Sorol, Ifalik and Eauripik, where

he was able to accomplish very little. On Woleai, where the priest stayed for three months, he ran into strong opposition from the chiefs, who did everything they could to prevent their people from accepting the new faith. Even so, however, there were some conversions, and a small group of Christians was formed to say the rosary each evening.

The Jesuits continued to make visits to the outer islands during the 1930s. When one of the priests stopped in Ulithi in 1934 he found that the women in Ulithi had begun to disregard the taboo against leaving menstrual houses during their monthly period so that they could attend religious devotions. Bit by bit, they reported, the traditional spirit practices were falling into disuse and the opposition of the local healers weakening. When one priest later visited Lamotrek, an island that lay at the farthest edge of the Yap outer islands, he found the people so receptive to the faith that he was able to baptize nearly half the population. Among those baptized were four young men from Satawal, who he hoped would return to their own island to spread the faith there. Much remained undone, but in the end the Jesuits had left over 400 Christians and seven chapels scattered throughout the atolls of the area.

Schools... Or the Next Closest Thing

Even as the church was expanding to other islands, the missionaries faced the problem of how to provide intensive catechetical training for the young. The Catholic schools that the German Capuchins had run were an effective instrument for catechesis as well as a valuable tool for arousing adult interest in the faith. The Jesuits in Palau, in fact, had been told that unless they ran schools like the Capuchins, their efforts to win over the people would amount to very little. Earlier missionary forays into education there had proven successful even when other pastoral efforts met with an indifferent response. Most of the converts during German times came from the students at mission schools and their families, whatever might be said of their perseverance in the faith after adolescence. The German school in Pohnpei proved to be a springboard to Chuuk; the young Chuukese who attended the school brought the faith back to their own islands, leading to the request for the first resident missionaries in Chuuk.

Ordinarily the Jesuits would have opened schools, as the Capuchins had so successfully done, but under Japanese rule schools were a practical impossibility. The government jealous-

ly reserved to itself the right to educate the young, and all instruction had to be done in the Japanese language in any case. Hence, the Jesuits everywhere in the mission established catechetical programs for those attending public school. These took different forms from one place to another. In Palau the priests conducted religious instruction twice each day for a total of 60 or 70 public school students, and on Sundays they held additional catechism classes for those who worked after school on weekdays as houseboys. In Yap, the missionaries would gather young people for catechetical instruction for a few weeks during the summer. In Pohnpei the solution was to establish dormitories for as many students as space and funds would permit, provide meals for these boarders, and set up a supplementary course of instruction that might furnish them with some useful skills and nourish a deep commitment to their faith.

By the late 1920s the Jesuits on Pohnpei had already set up a small dormitory for boys in two empty rooms in the rectory, but quarters were cramped and no more than a dozen could be accommodated. These few boys would at least have regular contact with the missionaries and a more intensive training in their faith. There was still no such facility for girls, however, although they too attended the public school in almost equal numbers. The Jesuits had long dreamed of having sisters working on the island to open

a girls' dormitory. Hence, the announcement that the Mercedarian Missionaries of Berriz were willing to send sisters to Pohnpei for this purpose was greeted with great enthusiasm. The large casa de piedra, the stone building that once served as the German sisters' convent, was prepared for their use as a residence and girls dormitory. In November 1928, the four Mercedarian sisters assigned to Pohnpei arrived with Mother Margarita Maturana, the Superior General of the Order. Their reception was similar to the one Pohnpeian Catholics gave to the German Franciscan sisters 20 years before: a procession from the wharf, the sung *Te Deum* in church, and the speeches of welcome and the inevitable feasting. The reception was well deserved, for two of the four sisters, Sr. Concepcion and Sr. Belen, would serve in Pohnpei for over 30 years, and the new religious order would continue its work with distinction up to the present.

The new boarding school on Pohnpei opened almost immediately with 20 girls. The sisters began instruction in academic subjects as well as what we would today called home economics: cooking, washing, ironing, making bread and even stitching shoes. The girls also cared for the chickens and pigs, cleared the land and farmed, and in moments of leisure even made attempts at playing the piano. They also learned their catechism, attended rosary and mass daily, and imbibed deeply of the piety and discipline of their spiritual mothers. When the renovations on the stone house were finally completed, the number of boarders tripled to 60.

Missionaries in Chuuk had long held out hope that someday they might have a similar boarding school to provide a Christian education for at least a few young Chuukese. When Mother Margarita visited Fefan on her way to Pohnpei to open the school there, she picked up a stone and said, "May this stone be the cornerstone of the future convent for our sisters here."



School girls on Pohnpei learning to sew
(Jesuit Archives, Granada)



Students and Mercedarian Sisters on a picnic in Pohnpei

Japanese public school



This dream was finally realized in 1936, when the Jesuits began construction of a two-story school building on Fefan. Four Mercedarians arrived in Chuuk to staff the school as soon as the building was far enough along to furnish living space for the sisters. Among them were Sr. Concepcion Bernaola, formerly the superior in Pohnpei and now transferred to Chuuk, and Sr. Ursula Matsunaga, the Saipan-born sister who would spend over 20 years in Chuuk. Margarita School, as it was known, was formally dedicated in a ceremony that was attended by virtually all the Japanese dignitaries and local chiefs in Chuuk. The school had the approval of Japanese authorities since it took in largely older girls, many of whom had finished the Japanese elementary school and were able to speak Japanese. The formal instruction there, as in the girls school on Pohnpei, was centered largely on religion and home economics. The school was an instant success: the enrollment grew to 60 boarders and over 100 day students with a long waiting list.

Four of the first group of girls to finish their three-year program founded an alumnae association known as the Teresitas, the forerunner of the Mwichen Mercedes, that met monthly for mass, rosary and a business meeting. Another, Perpetua Hallers, entered the Mercedarian Congregation and became the first Chuukese girl to pronounce the vows of religious life. The ideals proposed by the Mercedarian sisters had already begun to have an impact on the lives of their former students.



Four Mercedarian Sisters on Pohnpei in 1938
(Jesuit Archives, Granada)

Dedication of Margarita School on Fefan in 1936
(Jesuit Archives, Granada)



New Challenges in Yap

During the 1930s the final resistance to Christianity on the island was crumbling. The chief of Maap asked to be baptized and the event was celebrated with a great feast. Many of the sorcerers, who had once held out strongly against the new religion, were also becoming Christian even though this meant that their source of income was cut off. One well-known sorcerer who was received into the church a few years before gave a dramatic witness of his rejection of the old beliefs. When the workmen on a new road refused to touch a large boulder that they believed was cursed, he took the tools in hand and broke the rock into pieces by himself. Then, the chief of Gachpar, one of the most influential figures in Yap, had a change of heart. For a long time the old chief had rejected offers of baptism, since he blamed the new religion for the many epidemics and the continuing population loss on Yap. One day he told the priest that he wanted to learn about Christianity. He began attending mass on Sundays, always leaving a gift on the altar and speaking aloud to God on entering and leaving the church. Several weeks later, he was baptized and received his first communion, after which a large feast was given in his honor.

But if local opposition to Christianity was waning, the church faced problems of a different kind. The number of Catholics in Yap had grown greatly as a result of the wave of conversions during recent years, but the priests had to instruct their converts and provide for their growth in the faith in the face of rapid social change. In the past the main obstacle to the establishment of the church in Yap had been the old customs and beliefs. Now the missionaries recognized another serious obstacle: the new values and beliefs that were becoming widespread as a result of growing modernization. During the 1930s the Japanese thrust for production was changing life in the islands. Yapese, considered the best workers in Micronesia, were sent away in ever larger numbers to labor in the phosphate mines on Angaur and Fais. Still others were recruited to work in the plantations of Pohnpei.



Fr. Bernardo in front of his church in Wanyan, Yap

The separation of men from their families for long periods of time had undesirable effects on the stability of the family, the missionaries complained.

Then, toward the end of the 1930s, as war became imminent, the missionaries found themselves increasingly hampered in their work. The attitude of the Japanese government towards the Spanish Jesuits, which was once supportive even to the extent of subsidizing the mission, grew more hostile by the day. From the late 1930s on, Japanese police visited the mission to conduct interrogations regarding the Jesuits' activities and the sources of their financial support. With the mobilization of local men

and women to work on military fortifications and other projects, the missionaries found that almost everyone except themselves was busy all day long. The rhythm of life rotated around the Japanese war effort and the missionaries had to schedule their activities around this. In time the Jesuits had even more severe restrictions put on their travel, and they were forbidden to teach and preach in any language other than Japanese.

By 1941 the Jesuits had been working in Yap for 20 years; in the course of their work over 2,000 of the island's population of 3,000 had become Christian. The numbers were impressive. Yet at the very time that the communities needed instruction and support the missionaries were able to do little more than pray for their people. The church of Yap was now in the hands of Yapese catechists for the first time. The coming war was to be the first real test of their mettle.

Progress and Problems in Palau

The church in Palau was growing despite the obstacles to conversion. Notwithstanding the sizable gap between church teaching on marriage and Palauan practice, the missionaries were clearly making headway in their evangelization. At times it may have seemed that the converts were drawn mainly from the disabled (the blind or infirm) and the marginalized of the island society. Indeed, one of the early converts and a pillar of the church was a deaf-mute from Koror. Pilar, the blind woman who was baptized by the Spanish Capuchins years before, remained an exemplary Christian and an inspiration to the priests and their people. The 30-year old Katosang from Peleliu, crippled by disease and confined to his house, embraced the faith that he had rejected during his younger and healthier years and led several others to embrace it. Yet, Reklai Tellei, who held one of the most prestigious titles in

Palau, was an ardent supporter of the church up to his death in 1937. Two young Palauans, Indalecio Rudimch and Emmanuel Yoshiwo, joined three others from different parts of the mission in entering the minor seminary in Tokyo in 1928. Although both later left the seminary because of illness, they became important lay leaders in the Palau church.

For some years the missionaries' only contact with the outer atolls to the southwest was through those people who had migrated into Koror. Then, in August 1930, Fr. Elias visited the islands for the first time. When he reached Sonsorol, he found 90 adults, over half the island population, ready to receive baptism. This was owing to the dedicated work of those Sonsorolese who had been converted on Palau and who, on their return to their own island, had zealously instructed others in the faith. Fr. Elias baptized

couples, planted a tall cross on the shore, and left with the assurance that the remainder of the population would be ready for baptism by the time he next visited the island. His first visit to Tobi six months later was much the same story. The seven Christians on the island, all of them converted in Palau, had instructed the whole population and built a small chapel that they filled every evening for rosary. By the time the Jesuit reboarded the ship a week later, nearly the whole island population had been received into the church. The less populous islands of Pulo Ana and Merir were converted just as simply, and within two years the southwest atolls had become entirely Catholic.

If Catholicism was making headway in Palau, the twin forces of modernization and secularization were making even more. Nearly all the residents of Koror, those same people who 20 years before dressed in grass-skirts and loincloths, now wore Japanese apparel: the men in white trousers and shirts, the women in kimonos, sometimes made of silk. Palauans working as errand boys or messengers could be seen at all times of the day bicycling up and down the roads of Koror.

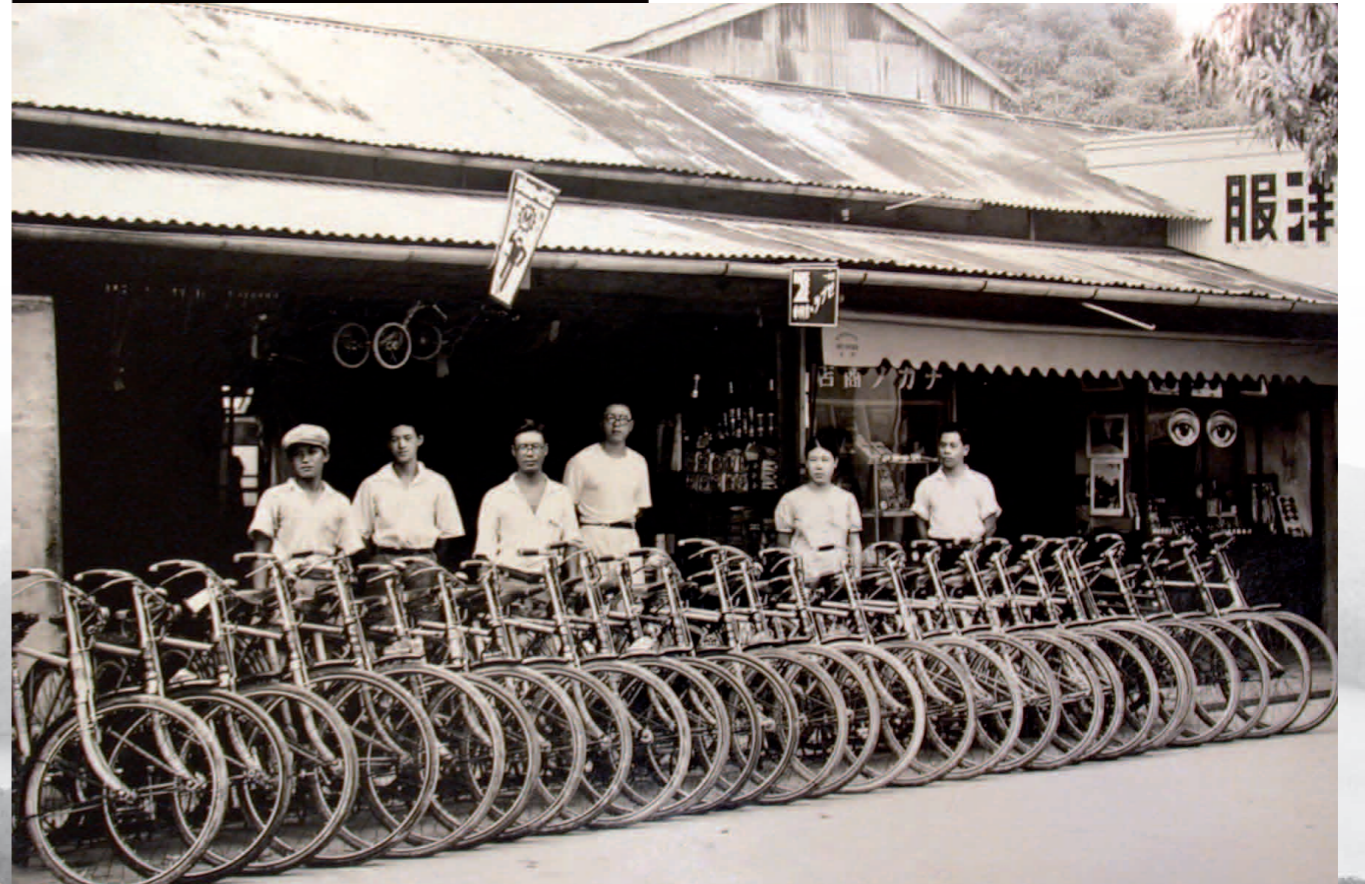


Micronesian seminarians in Manila, 1930

Japanese department store in Koror, 1935



Japanese store in Koror in 1930s (Belau National Museum)



Although the number of Catholics in Palau had grown to 2000, about one-third of the local population, the church was hampered by ever more stringent government regulations. Church-government relations, which began as a marriage of convenience in the early 1920s, were deteriorating rapidly as Japan prepared for war. As the government mobilized the local labor force for its own purposes, the missionaries found it difficult to get the men needed to work on church projects. Moreover, the government's rapacious land policy was a direct threat to mission holdings. During 1939 the Jesuits spent much of their time defending church property titles in a land claims court they considered hostile to their interests.

The most serious problem, though, was the government's interdiction of certain communities to the priests as the threat of global war grew more serious. Pastoral work on Peleliu, one of the more promising young Christian communities, came to an abrupt end in late 1937 when the Japanese closed the island to all foreigners, including missionaries. The missionaries had been forbidden to visit the outer islanders living in Ngarekebesang since 1936, but the latter continued attending church in Koror. On Angaur, just months after the completion of the new church in December 1939, Japanese began preparing to transfer the Palauan residents to another island so as to expand mining operations there. By that time the priests were banned from visiting Angaur and the resettlement sites.

The restrictions on the Jesuits working in Palau tightened after the outbreak of World War II in December 1941, and soon they were confined to Koror. There the Jesuits spent the next three years doing what pastoral work they could with the assistance of devoted helpers like Indalecio Rudimch, Francisco Delong, Joseph Tellei and the Polloi family. Then, in July 1944, the Japanese military police ordered the three remaining Jesuits to evacuate the mission quarters, and the buildings were converted into

a temporary military barracks. The Jesuits were brought to Ngatpang where, together with three of their co-religious who had been working on Yap, they were installed in a small house and placed under guard.

Suddenly, one evening in September 1944, a truck manned by Japanese military police pulled up to the house; the prisoners were loaded into the truck and driven off to an even more deserted spot. Fr. Blanco, Fr. Espriella and Br. Hernandez from Yap, along with Fr. Marino, Fr. Elias and Br. Emilio, were ordered out of the truck and were forced to kneel alongside a large trench where they, together with a Filipino family from Yap, were shot at close range by the Japanese military police. Their bodies were later dug up and cremated, but the gravesite remains unknown to the present day.

Changing Conditions in Chuuk

One of the most striking achievements of the missionaries in Chuuk was the growth of the Catholic community on Weno, where the conversions multiplied rapidly. Each day after mass, Fr. Jaime, the pastor, baptized several people; after a year he had baptized about 1,000 people, almost half of the total population of Weno. With the help of Br. Espuny and Br. Casasayas, the priest set about establishing mission stations on the three pieces of land that the mission had bought on Weno. The Jesuits set up a church at Tunnuk with a small house to accommodate the pastor on visits and then built a thatched chapel and a tiny residence in Sapuk, the present site of Xavier High School. Within a few years they also had a chapel at Wichap to provide for the southern part of the island. The nearby island of Fono, which the priest visited once a month, also had its own small church. But the crowning achievement was the construction and dedication of a new wooden church at Nepukos, then the main residence



Br. Pedro Espuny with Chuukese youth

on the island. Built by Br. Casasayas, the small church was set on cement blocks and had an attractive belltower. The dedication of the new church, held on December 8, 1935, was a cause for island-wide celebration. The solemn high mass celebrated by Bishop Rego, which was attended by Catholics and Protestants from every part of the island and beyond, was a gesture of reconciliation between Catholics and Protestants and a pledge of mutual tolerance in the future.

Times were changing rapidly in Chuuk, as they were everywhere in the region, during the late 1930s. The Japanese administration had stepped up the pace of modernization of the islands during the decade as the Japanese colonial population grew to equal and then surpass the local population. With the new opportunities for a cash income, large numbers of Chuukese were moving to Pohnpei to work on the plantations or seeking wage labor on Tonoas. The challenge to the church more and more came from the secularization and materialism that rapid progress was bringing to the islands. On top of all this there were hints of war, as the Chuukese were mobilized for work on public projects. This meant improved roads, canals and field trip service, but it also meant that people were far less free to attend church and school and religious instructions.

In addition, the mission found itself seriously short-handed once again. Bishop Rego, then 70 years old and his strength gone, was finally forced to resign his office in early 1939 and return to Spain. When another priest was transferred to Pohnpei, the Jesuits in this group were left with only two priests, Fr. Jaime and Fr. Hernandez, to cover all of Chuuk. This was much the same situation that existed in the first years of Jesuit work there, except that by the late 1930s there were 9,000 Catholics instead of the 1,800 in 1921. While Fr. Hernandez remained on Fefan to carry out ordinary parish duties there and on Uman, Fr. Jaime became the roving missionary to the remainder of the lagoon. He had the responsibility of caring for Weno, Tol and Udot, along with their satellite islands.

Then more than ever the mission had to revert to its old strategy of utilizing catechists in the villages to instruct and inspire the people. Indeed, those communities that retained their vitality and devotion were usually places blessed with



Brother Salvador Casasayas



New church at Nepukos, Chuuk, in 1935
(Jesuit Archives, Granada)



a strong and effective local catechist. Romanum and Wonei both had very able catechists who kept alive the fervor of their people, while a young man from Weno was working wonders there and on the small island of Piis to the north. The dedication of catechists like these was soon tested when, at the outbreak of war, the Jesuits were placed under house arrest and later confined to Udot for the remainder of the war.

The End of an Era on Pohnpei

As conversions continued throughout the early 1930s, the number of Catholics in Pohnpei grew from 1,400 in 1921 to about 3,000 by 1934. One of the priests thought that all this was owing to the missionaries' dedication to visiting the sick and dying, something that he felt had made a favorable impression on Protestants on the island. Yet it was the Pohnpeians themselves who were often the main instruments of conversion, as had been true from the very beginning. The wife of one catechist, for example, had instructed a girl from Kapingamarangi in the faith, and she in turn converted several others in her family. It was not only the children who were leading their parents to the faith, but the catechists and devout adults who were bringing others to Catholicism.

While preparations for war intensified. Fr. Berganza went to Tokyo in August 1939 to learn Japanese. As the situation further deteriorated, his request for passage back to Pohnpei was refused and he was obliged to spend the war years in Japan cut off from all communication with his fellow missionaries. His isolation was all the more serious

a blow since he had been appointed apostolic administrator of the vicariate following Bishop Rego's return to Spain.

By early 1941 the first of the 10,000 Japanese troops stationed in Pohnpei arrived, and their military commander formally requested of the local Jesuit superior, Fr. Quirino Fernandez, the use of the Kolonia church to quarter some of the troops. Fr. Quirino pleaded that he did not have the authority to grant this request and would first have to contact higher ecclesiastical authorities, but the commander insisted and the church was appropriated by the military. When new shipments of army troops arrived in late 1943, the Japanese military command began to use the church as a storage depot rather than a barracks. Later the magnificent building was taken apart and the stones used for defensive structures around the island. The mission personnel and their lay helpers stayed on the mission premises, even when the Japanese military commandeered the other mission buildings one by one. Finally the Jesuits and Mercedarian Sisters were forced to leave Kolonia and take refuge further inland.

To bolster the religious fervor of their people, the Jesuits decided to hold a solemn Christmas Eve mass, notwithstanding the Japanese prohibition of public masses. An elegant little dinner prepared for a bonze who was also a high-ranking officer, and gifts of tobacco to several of the troops and their officers forestalled any objections on the part of the military. Word was sent out to the surrounding areas inviting all Pohnpeians to the celebration. A clearing was prepared in back of the houses, and branches were strewn around to provide seating for the congregation. Then on Christmas Eve 1944, in the presence of a Japanese bonze who asked to be allowed to watch, a congregation of 400 Pohnpeians sang "Silent Night" in their own language to begin the solemn mass. Over 40 children made their first communion that evening, and the celebrant, Fr. Quirino, was so moved by the spectacle that he could barely speak when it came time for his homily. In a world at war, this celebration of the coming of the Prince of Peace was a consoling foretaste of the peace and joy that Christians hoped would soon be theirs.



Fr. Faustino Hernandez, Fr. Jaime Battle and Br. Tudanca in Chuuk
(Jesuit Archives, Granada)





Fr. Edwin McManus in Chuuk, 1947

American Jesuits

Into American Hands

The transfer of the islands of Micronesia from Japan to the United States at the end of World War II meant another shuffling of mission sponsorship. By a papal decree of July 1946, the Northern Mariana Islands were formally attached to the Vicariate of Guam, while the Caroline and Marshall Islands were constituted a separate vicariate. The two island groups would remain joined for the next half century, until the Marshalls became a separate prefecture in 1996.

With the American conquest of the islands, the U.S. Government insisted that the mission be placed in the hands of American priests. Accordingly, the Caroline-Marshall mission was entrusted to American Jesuits and Fr. Vincent Kennally was appointed the Jesuit Superior and Apostolic Administrator. The call for volunteers for the new mission went out to all Jesuit provinces in the United States. Fr. Fred Bailey and Fr. Thomas Feeney from the New England Province, Fr. Tom Donohue from the Wisconsin Province, and Fr. Bill Rively from the Maryland Province responded to this call. From the New York Province,



Fr. Espinal, Br. Martin and Br. Espuny in Chuuk

Fr. Ed McManus, Fr. Hugh Costigan, and Fr. George McGowan were also assigned to the mission. Then, in 1948, New York Province was asked to take full responsibility for the mission.

But what would become of the Spanish Jesuits who had survived the war, many of them with years of experience in the islands? Besides the six who had been killed by the Japanese in late 1944, a few other Spanish missionaries died within the next year or two, perhaps as a result of the harsh conditions they endured during the war. Yet, there were others who remained active, including Fr. Juan Bizkarra, who had arrived in Japan just before the war and was forced to remain there until hostilities ended. At first the U.S. Navy wanted to exclude any missionaries who were not U.S. citizens, but after a long correspondence between Fr. Kennally and Admiral Nimitz permission was finally granted for the veteran Spanish Jesuits to remain in the islands. While their American brother Jesuits were learning their way around, the Spaniards served as a valuable link between the church and its island people. Some of them continued their work for another 30 or 40 years.

The first order of business was an assessment of the state of the mission. For this purpose Fr. Vincent Kennally, the new superior, and Fr. Edwin McManus, the first Jesuit after him assigned to the mission, traveled from place to place in 1946. Everywhere they visited they found the same thing: the church buildings in ruins, but the Catholic community surprisingly vibrant.



Fr. Vincent Kennally with U.S. naval officers





During his ten days on Yap, Fr. McManus was impressed to find that over 200 had gathered at the bombed-out church in Colonia on Sunday morning to recite the rosary, as they did every day. As he went from village to village he met many unbaptized adults who wanted to become Christians. Working through an interpreter, he tried to re-establish some of the church structures that may have been lost through the war years. New catechists were appointed and plans were made to instruct those who wanted baptism. On his visit to Palau, Fr. McManus found much the same intense devotion among Catholics. Everywhere the people were coming to church in unprecedented numbers to recite the rosary, counting the Hail Marys on their fingers since they had no rosary beads. Attendance at the weekday mass in Koror was about a hundred, and the church was filled in the evenings for rosary and night prayers. The Spanish Jesuits who served the people in Yap and Palau were gone, but the results of their efforts were unmistakable. This post-war fervor was all that earlier missionaries had worked for and longed for so desperately.

In the eastern part of the mission, however, the Spanish priests and brothers who had survived the war had already begun the reconstruction of the church. When Fr. Kennally first arrived in Chuuk in January 1946, he found the Spanish Jesuits staffing the parishes once again and continuing the pastoral activity that had been interrupted by the war. There were priests stationed on Fefan, Weno and Udot who were making pastoral visits to more remote communities. The rectories, which had all been greatly damaged in the bombing, were hastily repaired or replaced with temporary quarters. Br. Casasayas, the man who constructed nearly all the mission buildings in Chuuk during Japanese times, had returned to Chuuk to begin rebuilding what had been destroyed in the war. One of his most important projects was the completion of the wooden church in Tunnuk, which by then had

replaced Tonoas as the central mission residence in Chuuk. It would soon become the seat of the new vicariate.

On Pohnpei the magnificent Kolonia church, once the pride of the mission, lay in ruins with only its belltower and a small part of the dome standing. The convent, the rectory, the worksheds and sawmill, and the other houses on the mission property were nothing but rubble. The mission stations in other parts of the island had suffered much less damage, but some of these were still badly in need of replacement. The Jesuit brothers in the mission who normally would have been charged with the job of rebuilding were either dead or too feeble to perform this work any longer. Br. Fernando Hernandez had died in 1945, and Br. Aniceto Arizaleta, who had spent nearly 20 years putting up churches throughout the Mortlocks before his transfer to Pohnpei during the war, died the following year. Br. Gojenola, the man who had built just about every altar on Pohnpei and many of the churches besides, was now crippled with rheumatism and confined to his room. Most of the Spanish priests, however, were still relatively young with several years of good service in Pohnpei ahead of them, and they resumed their parish work immediately at the close of the war.

Rebuilding on Pohnpei

In late 1947, the first of the American Jesuits, Fr. Hugh Costigan, arrived at Pohnpei and was immediately made local superior. Upon surveying the dismal assortment of buildings thrown up of salvaged material, the priest set out to work rebuilding the ruined mission in Kolonia. After completing the school, he began work on a new church to replace the temporary wood and thatch building that had served the parish since the end of the war.



■ Ruins of the cathedral

Meanwhile, the Spanish Jesuits continued to bear the brunt of the pastoral work on Pohnpei during these post-war years, since the influx of new American Jesuits was very slow. The new personnel, few as they were, made it possible for the church to do further building and expansion. Fr. John Nicholson, who arrived in 1949, was stationed in Wone, Kitti, where he set up a sawmill to provide the lumber needed for rebuilding the dilapidated church and residence that had been built years earlier as "temporary" structures. Before his transfer to Seinwar in 1956, Fr. Nicholson replaced the church and rectory and put up a school and a convent for the Mercedarians who would soon come to teach there. When Fr. Costigan was transferred in 1954 to Madolenihmw, where he could pursue the agricultural projects in which he had become interested, Br. William Condon

took over the supervision of the construction work that Fr. Costigan had directed for the past several years. The new Kolonia church, a large building even if not as imposing as the old German cathedral, had already been completed and dedicated in December 1953. With the girls dormitory and the aspirants house also finished, Br. Condon began work on the new school, the sisters convent and the rectory.

The religious fervor that swept the island after the war had not died down yet and parish life was at a peak during these years. Mass attendance was impressive and devotions such as the daily rosary were well attended. The parish congregations flourished, especially the organization founded to help nurture the devotion of young men. One island-wide meeting in Kitti drew so many people



■ Spanish Jesuit brothers on Pohnpei at the end of the war: (standing) Br. Oroquieta and Br. Ariceta; (seated) Br. Belinchon, Br. Gojenola, Br. Cobo.



■
*Dedication
of the new
church in
Kolonias
in 1953*



that mass had to be celebrated in the open air to accommodate the crowd. The Spanish priests also resumed their preached retreats to parish groups around the island, an important ministry that had to be abandoned during the war and the years of reorganization immediately afterwards. Normal parish life resumed for the first time in years. Fr. Berganza, the veteran from prewar days, was installed as pastor of Kolonia where he would remain for the next 16 years, and the Jesuits had the manpower to staff all the regular parishes on the island.

Perhaps the most striking event of this period was the return of Fr. Paulino Cantero, a Pohnpeian who had left his island in 1923 to enter the seminary in Manila and had been ordained a Jesuit priest. Although others had left for the seminary at different times, Fr. Cantero was the only one who reached ordination. He was the first Micronesians from the Carolines to be ordained to the priesthood. His homecoming was cause for an island-wide celebration. There were 1,500 Pohnpeians at the dock to greet him when he arrived. On the day before the feast of St. Joseph, the patron of his parish, Fr. Cantero

rode into Awak in an open jeep to the cheers and songs of his people. Pohnpei now had its own priest, despite the lengthy and rigorous period of training required for the priesthood. To ensure that this lesson was not lost on other young Micronesians considering a vocation, Fr. Cantero was sent around to the other island groups in the mission during subsequent years.

Reorganization in Chuuk

With Spanish Jesuits staffing the parishes of Weno, Fefan and Udot, they next turned their attention to Tol in the extreme western part of the lagoon. In 1947, Fr. McManus, then the Jesuit Superior in Chuuk, decided that the sprawling parish with its many distant stations needed a large central church and residence that was within walking or boating distance from all sections of the island. Accordingly, he exchanged the mission site at Pwelle, once the main residence, for a piece of land at Netutu. Br. Casasayas was sent there to begin building the large church and rectory, and Fr. George McGowan, who



■
*Fr. Paulino Cantero at his return
to Pohnpei*

■
*Fr. George
McGowan in front
of the new Tunnuk
church*



arrived in the mission just a few months earlier, was promptly assigned as pastor of Tol.

Even after the departure of Br. Casasayas in 1950, the building fever continued in Chuuk. Many of the cement churches that were in use for years afterwards were begun during the early 1950s: St. Michael's on Uman, St. Francis of Assisi on Udot, St. Clara on Fanapanges, Sacred Heart on Piis, and St. Ignatius on Fono, in addition to the four village chapels on Fefan. Most of these were constructed of coral block plastered with cement, the style favored by the Spanish mission builders. They were designed and built for the most part by Chuukese craftsmen who had worked with Br. Casasayas. At about the same time, Br. John Walter was assigned to Chuuk to carry on the construction work that Br. Casasayas had begun.

As on Pohnpei, there were signs of a remarkable spiritual vitality in the church during this period. Fr. Faustino Hernandez inaugurated the Mwichen



■ *Procession from the church in Kolonia*

Apostolado (Apostleship of Prayer) on Weno, holding meetings after the Sunday mass in different villages by rotation, a practice that continues to the present. This organization proved to be both a source of inspiration for



Catholics and a successful means of upgrading the knowledge of church lay leaders. Within a short time the Mwichen Apostolado was holding large inter-parish meetings. One of the first, held at Sapore, Fefan, in December 1950, was attended by 1,500 people representing nearly all the islands in the lagoon. Public displays of religious belief were an important feature in the life of the Catholic communities and the priests made good use of them. There were candlelight processions on First Fridays, and for the opening of a new chapel at Iras on Weno Catholics processed from the churches at Nepukos and Tunnuk, meeting at the site of the chapel for a formal dedication ceremony. At a gigantic two-day religious gathering in August 1951 that was attended by people from all over Chuuk, visitors were met at the dock and led in procession to the Tunnuk church. There the Blessed Sacrament was exposed all night as parish groups sang and prayed, and after a solemn high mass the Chuuk Mission was formally consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The Mercedarian sisters began going from village to village giving extensive catechetical instruction, while the priests continued giving retreats to lay groups throughout the lagoon.

The mission received another boost when, in September 1951, Thomas Feeney was consecrated the first American bishop of the vicariate. He arrived in Chuuk in early 1952, just as Fr. Vincent Kennally was assigned to the Philippines. Hence, Chuuk once again became the episcopal seat of the vicariate, with Immaculate Heart of Mary Church at Tunnuk, Weno, serving as the new cathedral. When Bishop Feeney died three years later, Vincent Kennally replaced him as bishop. The man who had served as apostolic administrator after the war and had been instrumental in rebuilding the mission, served as bishop of the vicariate from 1957 until his retirement in 1972.



■ Religious gathering in Chuuk



■ Chuukese working on the new cathedral, 1955



■ Bishop Feeney with the High Commissioner of the Trust Territory (College of Micronesia FSM)

The outer islands were still receiving only sporadic visits from the priests as occasion offered. When Fr. McManus visited the Namonuitos in early 1947, he learned that he was the first priest to set foot on the island in 13 years. During the long absence of a priest, the Catholics on the island had been sustaining their devotion by meeting for rosary and prayers each day. Thereafter, the missionaries tried to visit the Namonuitos and Western Islands once or twice a year; and on one of these pastoral visits a small rectory was put up on Puluwat and temporary chapels were opened on ten of the islands in all. Even the Mortlocks, which had a resident priest throughout Japanese times, were without priestly care for a few years until Fr. Espinal returned there for a short time in 1947.

Fr. Espinal was unable to return permanently because of the difficulty he had traveling at his age. To remedy this situation, Fr. William Rively, a new arrival in Chuuk, was assigned to care for the outer islands. In the course of one of his visits to the atolls—his first trip to the Mortlocks, in November 1949—he was caught in a typhoon while at sea in an outrigger canoe, driven off course and lost at sea for three days. It was 12 days in all before he returned to Chuuk, and the experience convinced him and his superiors of the need for a sea-going ship that could be used for excursions to the outer islands. Two years later, in August 1951, Fr. Rively and a small crew brought a schooner, renamed *Star of the Sea*, through the pass and into an anchorage off Tunnuk amid the cheers and songs of well-wishers. Fr. John Fahey, the next Jesuit priest to arrive in

Chuuk, shared with Fr. Rively the responsibility for the outer islands for the next few years until the area was finally divided into two parishes. Each of the two men served the outer islands for more than 35 years.

■ Fr. John Fahey being rowed out to the *Star of the Sea*





Restoring the Church in the West

In September 1947, Fr. Fredrick Bailey arrived as the first resident American priest in Yap. He lived in a small quonset hut and said mass at first in the former house of the Japanese governor and later in what later became the Maryknoll convent. Br. Gregorio Oroquieta, who had spent 25 years in the Marianas, arrived in Yap a year later to help him. Within a short time Br. Gregorio had put in the foundation for a new concrete church in Colonia and had made extensive repairs on the old German-built house, which was being readied for Maryknoll Sisters. Once a few of the chapels in other villages were restored, Fr. Bailey began making regular visits to the villages just as the priests before him had. After the arrival of Fr. Frank Cosgrove in 1951, the two priests divided the work on Yap proper. New mission stations were opened in the villages outside of the district center: the new church of St. Catherine's was dedicated in Tomor, Tomil, and chapels were also set up or repaired on Maap and Rumung. Not all the efforts were focused on churches, however.

Fr. Bailey began intensive work with families to develop family prayer and devotions. "Every family is a church" was the motto he used, as a statue of Our Lady was circulated from one Yapese home to another for a week at a time. He also inaugurated in the villages the weekly Friday evening holy hours, at which men would renew their promise to abstain from alcohol.

A new generation of Yapese catechists had come of age during the war and were now serving the needs of their church. Joseph Yug, who had become devoted to the faith while recuperating from tuberculosis before the war, traveled throughout Gagil and Tomil giving religious instruction and preparing people for the sacraments. Matthew Mar, later ordained one of the first deacons, began an active ministry in his own Delipebinau. In time he was not only teaching catechism to the students of village schools but also accompanying Fr. Bailey on his pastoral visits and preaching after mass. He also helped in the rebuilding of the Colonia church and did the major work in the construction of the new church in Delipebinau. The chief catechist during these years, however, was Pagel, a free spirit who

moved throughout the entire island preaching and teaching the faith. Like the disciples in the gospel, he traveled without a purse and staff, stopping wherever there was need and eating from the same pot as the low caste people he catechized.

In Palau, Fr. Juan Bizkarra continued making the rounds of the Catholic communities, especially those on Angaur and Peleliu. Over the next several months. When he was not on pastoral visits, the priest was supervising the repair of the churches. With the repair work completed on the Koror church, the mission staff could turn its attention to the churches in Babeldaob that had been ruined in the war. In August 1948, Fr. Ed McManus was sent to Palau in August 1948 to help out on what was expected to be a temporary basis, but within a year his assignment was made permanent. He became the local Jesuit superior and soon afterwards the pastor of Koror as well. In the meantime, Palau picked up another priest in the person of Fr. Thomas Lewis, who was given charge of Babeldaob, while Fr. Bizkarra was made pastor of Angaur and Peleliu.

As in Yap, Palauans played a large but generally unsung role in the rebuilding of their own post-war church. Maria Obkal, affectionately called "Mamang," led daily rosary and evening prayers in Koror for years, and taught catechism to public school students three times a week. She as much as any one person epitomized what a dedicated lay person could contribute to the pre-Vatican church. An equally zealous woman, Maria Asuncion Elsei, became known as the catechist for Babeldaob during those same years. Strong-willed and afire with her faith, Asuncion tirelessly trekked from one village to another like one of the early apostles, instructing and encouraging her fellow Christians. During her final days when she was housebound, she continued her ministry with those who came to see her and would never tire of telling the visiting priest that she was praying for him and her people. Another woman, Natalia Mekurur, spent much of her time ministering to the people of Ollei. She also made excursions to



Fr. Edwin McManus with Palauan students at Mindszenty School

other places to help in church work, often with food and monetary support provided by Joseph Ngiradelemel, whose zeal was the equal of hers. There were others who contributed to the task of building the church over these years: Cesario Ngeluk and Francisco Delong, who served as catechists when they were not doing carpentry work for the church; Bernardino Rdulaol, who directed the church choir for years; and Emiliano Ingereklii, the pilot of the mission boat *Javier*.

The Golden Age of Catholic Education

Everywhere in the mission church leaders enthusiastically welcomed the opportunity to resume the Catholic school work that had to be abandoned during the Japanese period. On Pohnpei the parish school, now named Our Lady of Mercy and run by the Mercedarian Sisters, enrolled over 300 students, many of them boarders. An American couple, Dick and Kay Finn, taught in the school and ran the mechanics and carpentry shops that were the envy of the public schools of the day. The church's educational work soon expanded to other parts of the island as well. By 1950 Fr. Costigan had built another



Fr. Fred Bailey blessing a Yapese child



Maryknoll Sisters arrive on Yap



school at Awak, along with the living quarters for the three Mercedarian sisters who taught in it. Within another two years there was a new school in Wone, later to be staffed by Mercedarians, and another in Seinwar. By 1953 there were four mission schools on the island with a total enrollment of nearly 500 students.

After the Mercedarian sisters returned to Chuuk after the war to find their old Margarita School in ruins, they decided to relocate their school on Weno and rename it Cecilia School. With a thirst for education sweeping the islands in these early post-war years, the students were growing in numbers and the sisters somehow found room for 50 girl boarders. Within a few years, the enrollment of Cecilia School had reached over 200, with almost half of them boarders. Meanwhile, the ruins of the old Margarita school on Fefan were used as the foundation for a boys school that came to be called St. Thomas School. By 1952 St. Thomas had an enrollment of over 100 students, more than any of the public schools on the island. Over the next few years, expansion of Catholic education would continue with the opening of new Catholic schools on Tol and on Tonoas.

In Palau the arrival of three Maryknoll sisters in September 1948 was a much heralded event, for it meant that a Catholic school could be opened there for the first time since 1915. The three sisters were installed in the old German convent, which had been appropriated by the Japanese and used as a military police headquarters during the war. Meanwhile, a jumbo quonset hut was readied for use as the original Mindszenty School. As the school expanded, so did the number of teaching sisters. The Maryknoll community soon grew to six, as the school enrollment reached 200 by 1950. Catholic education took another step forward when Maris Stella was opened as an elementary school in the fall of 1957. With the founding of this new school for grades 1-6, Mindszenty could become an intermediate school, as junior high schools were then called. Nearly two years later four Mercedarians, two Spanish and two Palauan sisters, arrived to take over teaching responsibilities at Maris Stella. By this time the Catholic Church in Palau had an education complex that extended from kindergarten through 9th grade and enrolled 550 students from all over the island group.



Girls from St. Cecilia School in Chuuk waving to the Star of the Sea



Class at Our Lady of Mercy School on Pohnpei



Fr. Dick Roszel with school children in Koror

Yap, too, opened its first mission school since German times when three Maryknoll sisters were assigned there in 1953. St. Mary's School in Colonia experienced the usual shortage of materials and trained teachers, but there were other difficulties as well. Children had to come from great distances to attend classes each day, and the influence of the school over students' lives was limited to the few hours a day they were actually on the premises. Plans were made to set up dormitories for the school children, but they were never built. Instead, a small building was set up to house boys from the outer islands who were attending the school.

But the church's most celebrated educational institution began in September 1952, when a formidable-looking cement fortress that had served as a Japanese naval communications center during the war was converted into a minor seminary and admitted its first candidates, twenty Chuukese boys. A year later, the seminary was transformed into a full-fledged high school enrolling students from every part of the vicariate. Since then, Xavier High School has been one of the most visible apostolic works of the mission; its alumni include some of the most distinguished political and civic leaders in Micronesia. The opening of the first Catholic high school in the islands brought another boon—a stream of young Jesuits from the New York Province, almost all of whom returned after ordination for permanent assignment to the mission. In the 1970s Xavier High School formally became a Jesuit school and has continued to educate hundreds of young Micronesians up to the present.

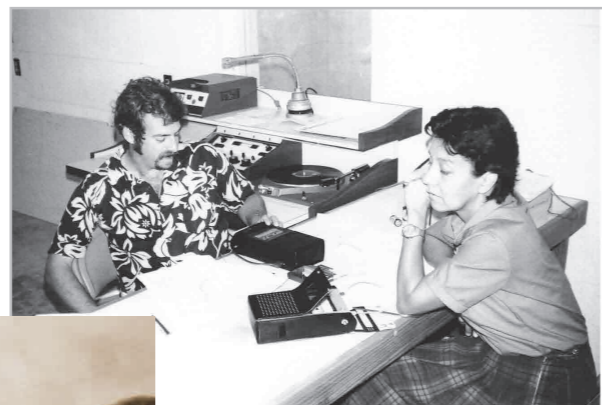


Xavier High School in 1953



The commitment of the mission to schools was quick to bear fruit for the Mercedarian Sisters. A few women—Elena Ebud and Johanna Tellei from Palau, Rita Amor from Pohnpei, and Perpetua Hallers and Magdalena Narruhn from Chuuk—had already taken the habit by 1950. The Mercedarians had already begun a formal program for aspirants, postulants and novices on Pohnpei and a building program for facilities was planned for the near future. Afterwards, a steady stream of girls who had attended one of the Catholic schools began entering the convent. In 1954 alone ten young Palauan girls went off to begin religious life. Soon a large two-story building to house the girls was completed on the church property in Kolonia, Pohnpei. During the 1950s the number of postulants had grown from twelve to nearly 30. A few years later more than a dozen girls from Chuuk alone were preparing to take or had already taken their first vows as Mercedarians. Even after the Mercedarian formation program was moved from Pohnpei to Saipan in 1961, the number of candidates remained high. The old hope that the Catholic schools would become a seedbed of vocations began to be realized—at least for a time. By the late 1960s, however, prospects for the

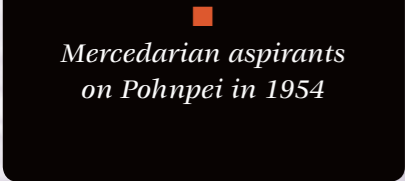
mission elementary schools had dimmed considerably. The past decade had seen a tremendous build-up in the public school system; new schools were opened on every island and staffed in part by American contract teachers and Peace Corps volunteers. Catholic schools, lacking the resources to improve facilities and teaching staffs, found their enrollments dropping in most places. Moreover, the number of Mercedarian sisters available for the classroom began to fall off sharply as younger Micronesian sisters were sent away to college or left the institute. With the closing of three schools on Pohnpei and two on Chuuk, as well as the declining enrollment in other Catholic schools, it was apparent that the heyday of the Catholic elementary school had passed.



■
Sr. Leticia and a Peace Corps volunteer record a radio program on Pohnpei, 1972



■
Mercedarian aspirants on Pohnpei in 1954



■
Mercedarian Sisters on Saipan, 1955



The Conquest of the Outer Islands

With the arrival of Fr. William Walter in 1949, the outer islands of Yap were to find a devoted pastor for the next 27 years. Fr. Walter visited every island three or four times a year. From the very beginning Fr. Walter put great emphasis on the construction of churches on the different islands, for he found that on islands where churches or chapels existed the people would gather three times a day to recite prayers. On islands that had no church, on the other hand, people were poorly instructed and less devout. His church construction program for the outer islands, then, was intended to improve catechesis and the spiritual life of the people, although it offered other benefits as well.

The Spanish priests had laid a good foundation for Christianity on some of the islands, especially those they had visited frequently or for a longer period, such as Ulithi, Woleai and Lamotrek. Many of the other islands, however, had only a small minority of Christians and they were

hounded by their chiefs because of their opposition to many of the ancient customs. Christians, for example, would not participate in the community ceremonies to propitiate the gods of the sea before canoes set out to fish. Such was the situation in places like Sorol, Ngulu, Ifalik, Fachailap and Satawal in the late 1940s as Fr. Walter began his work in the outer islands with the help of Joseph Hasedol and other catechists. The next five or six years saw some surprising changes on those islands. Sorol, which had no Christians at all in 1949, had half of its population baptized a few years later. On Ifalik, where there were only five Christians formerly, one hundred people were baptized in a single year. The atoll soon had two churches and a Christian majority of the population. Fachailap was a similar story: 45 people sought baptism in 1952, and the island soon had over a hundred Christians.

The institutional changes that accompanied these conversions were no less surprising than the conversions themselves. An old man from Ngulu by the name of Antonio had insisted that his body be buried on land rather than at sea, the customary mode of burial. The chiefs of Ifalik, despite their fear of natural calamities if old burial customs were not followed, yielded to Fr. Walter's request to allow land burials. The isolation of women in menstrual houses during their monthly period was also falling into disuse on many islands, because women could not otherwise attend church for daily prayers. The priest also noticed that island magicians and medicine men who died were not being replaced on those islands with predominantly Christian populations.



■
Fr. William Walter saying mass in an island chapel



■ *Bishop Kennally on Star of the Sea*

By the late 1950s the outer islands had been essentially christianized. There were still pagans, sometimes a significant minority, on some of the islands, but the Catholic religion had become the prevailing force in island life. The conquest of the outer islands was best symbolized by a voyage to these islands that Bishop Kennally made in 1960, three years after his ordination as bishop. The voyage on the mission schooner *Star of the Sea* ranged over 2,600 miles and covered all the major atolls of the area. This was the first time that the island people had ever been visited by a bishop. Even the fury of typhoon Ophelia, which devastated the islands just a month later, did not diminish the new-found fervor of the people. In each of the islands of Ulithi the people found refuge from the storm in the newly built concrete churches, and on Asor they were forced to huddle around the elevated altar to escape the rising sea that flooded the very floor of the church. In the end they were spared their lives despite the destruction of all their houses and property, and Fr. Walter's church construction program was vindicated once and for all.

Church and Development

By the early 1960s, with the church rebuilding nearly complete and Catholic schools operating everywhere, the post-war religious enthusiasm was beginning to wane. The American push toward modernization, initiated at this time, was having effects on the people like those experienced during the Japanese build-up of the islands during the 1930s. Many of the American Jesuits working in the islands felt the need to modify their pastoral approach. If they could somehow boost the standard of living of their people, they would be improving the social environment at the same time. The way to a person's soul, in other words, was through his diet, housing and income.

Fr. Hugh Costigan, as pastor in Madolenihmw, led the way. After replanting the old coconut plantation there that the mission had long owned, he added a cacao plantation of 10,000 trees and set up an animal farm that served as a model and training center for people from the surrounding area. Next he began planning for a full-fledged agricultural institute that would provide formal instruction in agricultural methods and animal husbandry to Pohnpeians from all around the island. But successful agriculture demanded good mechanics, still in short supply on the island, so he added a component in mechanics to his plans for the institute. Finally, he added a third component, construction, since the problem of inadequate housing was widespread on the island. His vision of an agricultural institute had expanded in scope to embrace mechanics and construction as well. This was the seed from which the Catholic vocational high school would grow in coming years.

Pohnpei Agriculture and Trade School (PATS) first opened its doors to young men from all over Micronesia in 1965. Fr. Edward Soucie arrived in Pohnpei that same year to become principal and head of the agriculture department. Within a few



■ *Russ Varner and students in the machine shop at PATS*

years, Fr. Richard Becker was sent to Pohnpei to teach construction, in time becoming the assistant director of the school, and Fr. Charles Crowley later became a permanent member of the faculty. From the outset, PATS had to employ numerous lay teachers; many of these positions soon came to be filled by Micronesians, with several of them drawn from the school's own alumni. For 40 years, until its closing in 2005, the school produced skilled tradesmen and farmers, even as it was propagating its own future teachers. Throughout its history, in keeping with its pioneering role in economic development, the school spawned experiments in commercial poultry production, banana production, and coconut oil processing. Even while it grew in size and complexity, PATS kept some of the features of the model farm, the kernel from which it had grown.

The social apostolate was taken up in other parts of the mission, too. Appalled at the lack of income on one of the islands he served, Fr. Jack Fogelsanger in Chuuk distributed fishing lines to the people and founded the Piis Fishing Cooperative in 1960. Other cooperatives and credit unions followed, and within a few years the groundwork was laid for the church-run Social Action Center. In time the center developed a life of its own; it formed the successful Federation of Fishing Coops and built a refrigeration facility for fish brought to market by local fishermen. Its name was later changed to the Apostolic Center and its range of activities was expanded to include such diverse projects as ferro-cement boat-building, natural family planning, and radio program production. Meanwhile, Fr. Andrew



■ *Catholic school students in Yap, 1965*

Connolly in Chuuk and Fr. Joseph Cavanagh on Pohnpei founded cooperatives and credit unions of their own as part of their parish work, now seen as embracing the full human development of the community as the underpinning for genuine religious growth.

The Era of Regional Planning

If any year can be cited as a watershed for the mission, it is probably 1968. It was in the summer of that year that the first general meeting of Jesuits in the Caroline-Marshall Mission was held. Never before in the long history of the mission had the clergy gathered to discuss regional planning. The week-long meeting in Chuuk, which resulted in consensus on a number of pastoral questions, signaled the end of the long era of the "independent pastor" and marked the beginning of the first serious attempt at mission-wide collaboration. Plans were laid for a vicariate planning council, involving Jesuits, sisters and lay people, to be held within the next few years.



■ *Liturgy at session of Vicariate Pastoral Planning Council in 1971*

Jesuits at the first mission-wide meeting in Chuuk, 1968



The Vicariate Pastoral Planning Council (VPPC), as the congress was called, was held in Chuuk in two sessions: the first in 1971 and the second a year later. The church priorities endorsed by the VPPC were the training of Micronesians for leadership roles in the church and the “conscientization” of the general population to help them cope with the problems brought on by rapid social change. Besides endorsing the new diaconate program and the general thrust towards indigenization, the VPPC created a number of new mission-wide programs. Perhaps the most significant of these was a research-pastoral institute known as the Micronesian Seminar. It was charged with overseeing the renewal of mission personnel, stimulating socio-theological reflection on contemporary issues, and providing resources that would enable the parishes to conduct their own community education programs.

When Bishop Vincent Kennally retired in 1972, Bishop Martin Neylon assumed full responsibility for the vicariate. One of his first major tasks was to implement the new thrust in church work that had emerged from the VPPC: greater collaboration among pastors, and between pastors and laity, to address what were felt to be the major problem areas in Micronesia. Fr. William McGarry, the

newly appointed Jesuit mission superior, worked closely with him in guiding the church in these new directions during the 1970s.

Soon central offices for catechetics, media and human development were established to better coordinate the efforts that were being mounted in each of the major island groups. For years pastors had struggled to meet the pastoral needs in these areas on their own. During the 1970s, with the new thrust on collaboration, these vicariate offices worked with counterparts at the island level to share products, stimulate new approaches, and bring about an improvement in the quality of the programs everywhere.



Bishop Neylon with a young friend, 1981

A rash of initiatives designed to reflect the new directions the church was taking broke out everywhere in the region. In Yap, the church produced weekly religious radio programs for broadcast throughout the island group. On Pohnpei a team headed by Sr. Dasko William did the same, but they added another weekly program, designed to reach an even wider audience, that probed life themes and social issues. Soon Chuuk had begun to create its own radio programs with religious and more general themes. Palau was slower in implementing this new type of ministry, but by the early 1980s, after the arrival of Fr. Amal Amalanathan and the construction of a new media studio, the church there was producing religious videos as well as its weekly radio programs.



Fr. Jack Fogelsanger and Monica Kincho in the Chuuk recording studio, 1970

Meanwhile, prayer groups modeled after those used by Basic Christian Communities in Latin America began springing up in Palau under the direction of Fr. Richard Hoar. Later the same kind of prayer groups were initiated by the pastors on Pohnpei. Other islands used bible study as the means of initiating a renewal in personal prayer.

As parish schools went into decline, pastors were beginning to employ other means of doing educational work. There was growing emphasis on adult education through a variety of means, old and new. Pohnpei took the lead in establishing adult mobile teams as one innovative method for accomplishing this. After a week or two of preparation, teams of four or five men would spend a week or two in a village leading presentations and discussions on a theme related to both church and local society. This format, later adopted by other parts of the mission, was a training experience for a new generation of church leaders even as it drove home to them the close relationship between church and world. For several years adult mobile teams continued to provide religious education opportunities for rural Pohnpeians, until later they were supplanted by youth mobile teams of the same sort. Chuuk later initiated a mobile team program of its own.



Media studio on Pohnpei



One of the most enduring programs from this era was the research-pastoral institute that went under the name of the Micronesian Seminar (MicSem). This office, headed by Fr. Francis Hezel, was given the mandate of helping people, whether church members or the general public, grow in their awareness of the key issues currently facing them as individuals and communities. The Micronesian Seminar, operating out of Xavier High School, began a series of annual conferences on various issues attended by participants from all parts of Micronesia. It also produced papers addressing issues such as political status, economic development, and education. In more recent years the Micronesian Seminar has turned increasingly towards social problems. After its transfer to Pohnpei in the early 1990s, MicSem also began disseminating regular newsletters on social issues and producing videos on contemporary themes for broadcast on local television. Later it went on to host a popular website that became a vehicle for discussion of island matters.

Amid all these new programs, the vicariate continued to place importance on the training of its catechists. Over the years, the lay catechists had been the heart and soul of the local church. Many had carried the faith to those remote areas that had not yet been visited by priests. During the absence of the priests, whether for years at a time or for shorter periods between visits by the pastor, they provided regular leadership for the church community. Catechists had proven indispensable in the past, and the church had no intention of neglecting them now. Indeed, training of catechists became more institutionalized in many parts of the mission during the 1970s. In some places, most notably Chuuk, the training in pastoral theology and practice was done through summer workshops as well as through the in-parish sessions held from month to month. Catechists had long served as the bridge between the era of the foreign missionary and the age of local leadership in the church of Micronesia. They pointed ahead to an age in which full leadership of the church would be assumed by islanders.



■ *Group discussion in the Micronesian Seminar office*



■ *Religious procession in Yap, 1971*





A Micronesian Diocese

Elevation to a Diocese

February 2, 1980, was a landmark in the history of the Micronesian church. On this day the Vicariate of the Caroline and Marshall Islands was formally elevated to the status of a diocese. The event was a sign that the missionary church, first evangelized nearly a century before, had come of age. Thereafter, the new diocese would be transferred from the U.S. Episcopal Conference to the Pacific Conference of Bishops, where it would take its place among the other churches of the Pacific. Bishop Martin Neylon would continue to hold episcopal authority over a church that encompassed an area of some two million square miles with a population of about 120,000.

The new diocese embraced the three new nations—Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands—that were just then beginning to assume full self-government for the first time since colonization. The episcopal seat would remain in Chuuk as it had been since Bishop Santiago de Rego was appointed bishop of the vicariate in 1923. The parish church of Immaculate Heart of Mary in Tunnuk, Weno, was to be recognized as the cathedral for the new diocese. There Bishop Thomas Feeney, Bishop Vincent Kennally and Bishop Martin Neylon had presided since 1952.



Elevation to a Diocese: liturgical celebration in Chuuk

The diocese was soon partitioned into five vicariates: Chuuk, Pohnpei, Marshall Islands, Palau and Yap. For each of these an episcopal vicar was appointed from among the active clergy to represent the bishop while supervising the inter-parish programs and overseeing ordinary church affairs. These vicariates were destined to grow in importance over the coming years, and the vicars would come to serve jointly as an advisory board to the bishop.

February 2nd has been celebrated as Diocese Day each year since. The day has something of the air of a coming-out party for a young woman who has made the transition from childhood to adulthood. In Chuuk the celebration is usually marked by a large gathering of church members from all the parishes that may last a day or longer. This gathering has become much more than the

occasion for the traditional speech-making and food. It has taken on the spirit of a joyful celebration of the local features of the church, organized as it is around a liturgy incorporating local ritual, chants and songs. Likewise, in the other vicariates of the diocese the celebration reflects the distinctive cultural forms of each place. On this day, a collection is taken up for the needs of the church in the islands to signal the importance of self-reliance. In the past nearly all church work was supported by gifts from abroad, but in the future the church must assume much more of the responsibility of supporting itself. Diocese Day is not just a look backward to an event that symbolized how far the church in the islands had come, but a celebration of the promise that this church would be a truly local church in the future.



Diocese Day celebration in Chuuk



Deacons and Church Leadership

From the early 1970s on, as we have seen, lay people were invited to take an ever more active role in church life. Select lay leaders began to participate in the renewal programs and summer workshops for religious and clergy that were held every other year during the 1970s and into the early 1980s. These summer workshops, which normally would last for two weeks and were attended by 50 or 60 religious, offered participants an opportunity to update their theology while reflecting on ways to improve their ministry. But even by the late 1970s lay people had begun to assume a growing share in church ministry. Directors of vicariate catechetical programs were often lay men and women, and so were the heads of the media centers. Why should key individuals like these be denied participation in these workshops? As the lines between religious and laity blurred, some lay leaders even received invitations to attend the infrequent diocesan workshops at which the clergy and religious would evaluate programs and plan for the future. Catechists and other lay people had always played an important role in the life of the church, but now lay people had begun working alongside clergy and religious in mapping out the future directions of the church.

One outgrowth of the new directions of the church, something envisioned in its early regional planning, was the ordination of local married deacons. As training for lay leaders continued in the different island groups, some of the men with outstanding ability and commitment to ministry were invited to become permanent deacons. The training of permanent deacons began on Pohnpei in 1970 with seven candidates. Each month for two or three days the candidates and their wives would attend a training session at which they would be instructed in their own language in scripture, basic theology and pastoral practice. In June 1973, the first four Pohnpeian men were



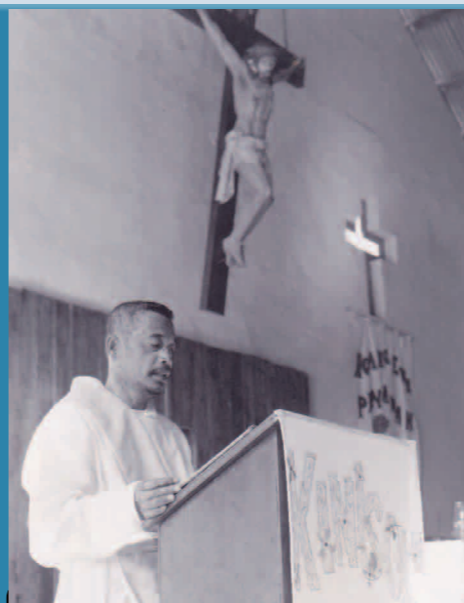
Deacon Koropin Kerman giving out communion with Deacon Lorens Iohanis assisting, Pohnpei

ordained deacons: Selerino Selestin, Jerry Victor, Etwel Pelep and Lorens Iohanis. The following year another three were ordained: Misael Pelep, Manuel Amor and Koropin Kerman. The deacons were then assigned to different parishes around the island; some of them became administrators and virtual pastors in those parishes that had no resident priests.

The diaconate program soon spread to other parts of the diocese. Yap saw six men admitted to the diaconate in 1975: Simeon Fanoway, Matthew Mar, Ignatio Bapilung, Francisco Filecho, Augustine Alkan, and Donald Fachibman. Most of them were already de facto leaders of their village church communities. Another man, John Rulmal, was ordained to the diaconate in Ulithi on the same day that Fr. Nick Rahoy was ordained a priest in 1977. These were the first persons from the outer islands of Yap to become members of the clergy.

Chuuk, too, picked up the program. Eight Chuukese were ordained deacons in 1977 after three years of formal training: Andreas Nimas, Nori Oneitam, Tobias Simiron, Wangko Wasan, Antasio Rousan, Marcello Hartmann, Kintin Rawit and Roke Rokop. Two of their number were sent to work in the outer islands to strengthen the faith that had been planted there by Chuukese laymen years earlier. These eight deacons were followed by another twenty during the 1980s, and ten more during the 1990s.

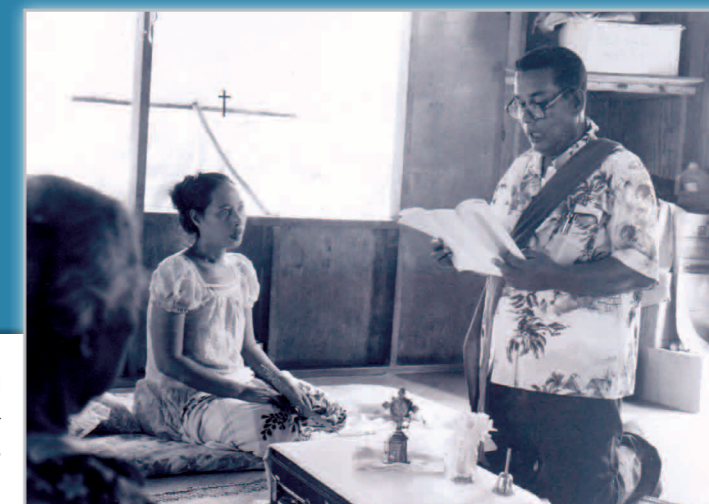
Deacons in Chuuk



Deacon Roke Rokob preaching on Tol



Deacon Tobias preaching on Toloas



Deacon Marcello visiting the sick

In some parishes deacons have long functioned as pastors, presiding at the Sunday services when no priest is available, baptizing the newly born and visiting the sick, and taking on the ordinary chores of parish administration. In other parishes, the role of the deacon is more limited: it is to assist the pastor at liturgy as well as to provide the day-to-day presence in community life that the pastor cannot always provide. Deacons today provide the local church leadership that catechists had once exercised in the absence of priests, but the role of the deacon extends well beyond that of the catechist into the sacramental life of the church. More than 50 Micronesian deacons are currently serving the church in the diocese and some of the neighboring areas in which there are large concentrations of emigrants. For more than 25 years now permanent deacons have been a vital element in the pastoral life of the diocese.

While the Micronesian church was training a new generation of leaders, it was also making available the spiritual resources to feed its flock. The translation of scripture into the local languages was a project that had gone on for decades. Mission presses had produced copies of select parts of the Old and New Testaments from earliest missionary days, but not until the 1980s had the Catholic Church ever collaborated in the translation of the entire bible in a local tongue. Then, as a result of their joint efforts with the American Bible Society and Protestant churches in the islands, Catholics saw the publication of a number of translations of the bible. Under the supervision of Harold Hanlon and Howard Hatten of the American Bible Society, Fr. Paulino Cantero worked on the Pohnpeian text and Monica Kincho devoted her time to the Chuukese. A full translation of the bible in the Chuukese language was published in 1991, and the Pohnpeian version was issued in 1994. Translations of the entire bible into Yapese and Palauan followed in the early 2000s.

Young seminarians at the entrance to St. Ignatius House of Studies on Guam, 2000



St. Ignatius House students and staff in 1989



A Micronesian Clergy

Developing a Micronesian clergy to lead the island church has been one of the fundamental goals of the mission from the start, but for many years an elusive one. Groups of young men had been sent off to the seminary from time to time—in 1923, in 1926, in 1928, and again in 1951—but all of the seminarians except one or two returned home after a few years away. Only Fr. Paulino Cantero, the Pohnpeian who left his island in 1923, reached ordination and returned to minister to his people. Two Palauans were ordained in the 1960s, but one of them left the priesthood just a few years later. The other, Fr. Felix Yaoch, who departed from Palau for the seminary in 1954 and was ordained a Jesuit priest in 1967, played a major role in the church for 35 years until his death in 2002. Besides serving as the first director of the Jesuit novitiate in Palau and later as Jesuit regional superior, Fr. Felix was the guiding force in the church of Palau throughout his life-long ministry.

The next two local priests were ordained in 1977: Fr. Nicholas Rahoy from Ulithi and Fr. Amando Samo from Moch, a small island in the Mortlocks that would spawn many more vocations in the years that followed. For years Fr. Nick served as pastor of the outer islands of Yap, building on the foundation that his predecessor, Fr. William Walter, had established. He rebuilt churches there, and later in Chuuk, before returning to Ulithi to serve his people in retirement. Fr. Amando undertook building programs of his own, but he also introduced a variety of new pastoral programs in Chuuk even as he was being prepared for a larger leadership role in the new diocese.

Back in 1968 the Jesuits first opened St. Ignatius House of Studies, a pre-seminary on Guam for young men who were considering a vocation to the priesthood or religious life. Those who entered were offered an introduction to the spiritual life while they enrolled in college at the University of Guam. Fr. Martin Neylon, a recent arrival from New York where he had served as

director of novices for twelve years, supervised the house until 1970 when he was named coadjutor bishop of the Caroline-Marshall Islands. During the 30 years the program remained in operation, perhaps 45 or 50 young men attended St. Ignatius House. Although the number of those who have actually gone on to the major seminary has been small by comparison, the house served as a seed bed of vocations during the 1980s and 1990s. Fr. Apollo Thall from Yap, who was ordained a Jesuit in 1983, had begun his training there. He was followed by Fr. Julio Angkel, a Chuukese, ordained in 1984. Two more priests from Yap, Fr. John Hagileiram and Fr. Cuthbert Yiftheg, were ordained over the next few years. By the end of the decade, the new diocese had eight Micronesian priests ministering to its people, four of these priests from the vicariate of Yap.

The flow of new priests continued through the following decade. In 1990 three new priests were ordained in the diocese: Adalbert Umwech and David Lewis from Chuuk, and John Paul Ililau from Palau. This was followed by the ordination of four more Chuukese (Kirino Halley, Florentinus Akkin, Basilio Dilipiy, and Edmond Ludwik), Rusk Saburo from Palau, and Etwel Pelep and Rex Edwin from Pohnpei. Even with two losses from among this number, another eight ordained men were added to the growing list of local priests in the diocese.

*Bishop Neylon
with four island priests:
Cuthbert Yiftheg, John Paul Ililau,
Julio Angkel, and Felix Yaoch*

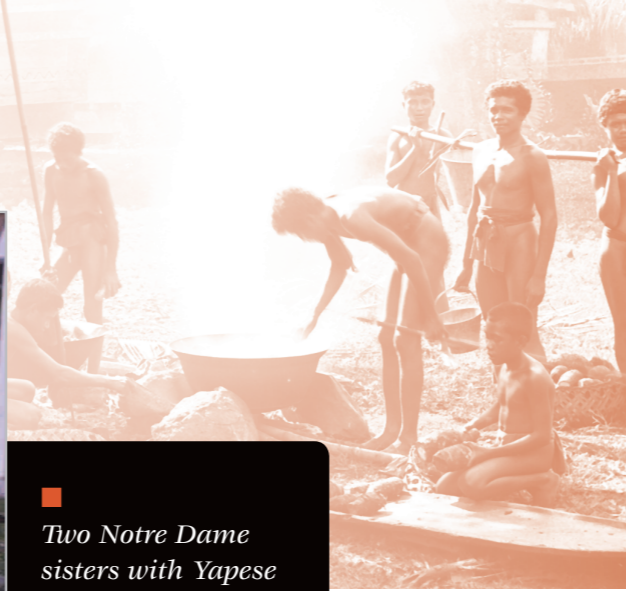


Today there are 22 Micronesian priests exercising their ministry in the diocese: twelve Chuukese, six Yapese, three Palauan, and one Pohnpeian. Each of their ordinations drew an enormous gathering of Christians who shared a manifest pride that one of their own people was occupying a church office that once had been exclusively held by foreigners. Progress in the growth of a local clergy can be measured decade by decade: in 1970 there were only two Micronesian priests, both Jesuits; in 1980 there were four; in 1990 there were eight; and in 2000 there were 16 ordained local priests in the diocese. In each of the vicariates except Pohnpei, the size of the local clergy today is sufficient to carry out ordinary pastoral responsibilities there even without the help of foreign missionaries. The church in the Carolines, after a century or more of reliance on outside manpower, is finally in a position to produce the church leadership it needs to sustain itself.

Through the years Micronesians have entered religious congregations, too. Some of the earliest ordained Micronesian priests were Jesuits—Fr. Paulino Cantero, Fr. Felix Yaoch and Fr. Apollo Thall—along with another Jesuit, Br. Cypriano Moses, who died in 1970 while serving in Chuuk. Over the years enough young men have been inspired to enter the Jesuits that a novitiate was finally opened in Palau in 1987. Even after the novitiate was closed a few years later, occasional candidates have appeared and were sent off to another province for training. At present there are three local Jesuit priests and one brother, while another young man has just begun novitiate in the U.S.



Two Notre Dame sisters with Yapese children



Mercedarian Sisters at a regional meeting, 1985



Sr. Cabrini Taitano and the Mercy Sisters in Chuuk, 2000

Meanwhile, young women have continued to find a religious home with the Mercedarian Sisters, who first came to work on Pohnpei in 1928 and ten years later expanded their field to Chuuk. The early Spanish sisters, who began the mission in Micronesia, were in time supplemented by religious from the U.S. and Latin America, but local vocations have grown rapidly since World War II. Dozens of young women from every part of the islands have become Mercedarian Sisters. Their apostolate today has expanded from teaching in local Catholic schools to retreat work, educational administration, and the social apostolate. Of the 38 Mercedarian Sisters residing in the Micronesian region today, 32 are locally born. The Mercedarians currently run a formation programs for their candidates on Saipan.

Other girls have found a vocation with the Sisters of Maria Auxiliatrice, a congregation that first took up work in the diocese in 1980 when three Japanese nuns arrived on Pohnpei to begin catechetical ministry. Some years later the community opened a novitiate in Awak and have received into their order several girls from Chuuk and Pohnpei. In addition, a few young women have entered other congregations based on Guam: the Notre Dame Sisters, who assisted in the Catholic elementary school on Yap throughout the 1970s and 1980s, and worked in Chuuk during the 1990s; and the Mercy Sisters, who have assisted at Saramen Chuuk High School and in the diocesan office from 1996 to the present.

A Micronesian Bishop

Surely one of the most striking symbols of the progress in the indigenization of the Micronesian church was the ordination of a Micronesian bishop in the Diocese of the Caroline-Marshall Islands. On August 15, 1987, Amando Samo was raised to the episcopacy to serve as auxiliary bishop for the diocese and as vicar for Chuuk. Bishop Amando was ordained to the priesthood just ten years earlier, the first Chuukese to have reached ordination. Born on Moch, he graduated from the public high school in Chuuk and had begun college in Hawaii before he entered the seminary there. Like many of the other Micronesians who followed him, he completed his theological studies at Pacific Regional Seminary in Fiji.

breadfruit was carried at traditional feasts. Cultural features, including island chants and marches, were soon worked into special liturgical celebrations in Chuuk. The theme of his efforts from the very beginning of his episcopacy has been to integrate faith and culture into the life of the church and its members. In his dedication to this, he has worked to achieve a goal that has guided foreign missionaries since the early 1970s.

Under his influence a wave of church renovation swept over the vicariate during these years, with major construction completed at Holy Family Church on Weno, Sacred Heart Church on Fefan, Holy Cross Church on Uman, and St. Ignatius Church on his own island of Moch. These churches are among the largest and best furnished in the diocese. Bishop Amando introduced into Chuuk new pastoral programs,

Bishop Amando's time as vicar of Chuuk was marked by a confident and sustained effort to continue the localization of the church in the islands. His episcopal shield features a cross planted in the large oval-shaped wooden bowl in which pounded



Ordination of Amando Samo as bishop in 1987



Young Mercedarian Sisters on Saipan, 1995



beginning with Marriage Encounter, and he revived the summer workshops that were once such an important element in the training of the laity. Before long he was building a new vicariate high school for Chuuk that was given the name Saramen Chuuk Academy and opened in 1990.

On June 6, 1995, shortly after Bishop Martin Neylon reached the age of mandatory retirement, Bishop Amando formally succeeded him as the Ordinary of the Diocese of the Caroline Islands. At about the same time, the Marshall Islands, which had been linked to the Caroline Islands as a single ecclesiastical unit for the past 75 years, was separated from the latter to become a prefecture apostolic of its own. A year later, Monsignor James Gould was named Prefect Apostolic of the Marshall Islands. The Caroline Islands, joined at times during their ecclesiastical history with the Mariana Islands and the Marshall Islands, was now severed from these other island groups and became a diocese in its own right. More importantly, for the first time ever, the people of the Caroline Islands had as bishop one of their own.

With his elevation to the position of authority over the church in the Caroline Islands, Bishop Amando became the most convincing sign that the church in Micronesia had finally come of age. He encouraged the growth of vocations to the priesthood through other routes, even after the closing of St. Ignatius House on Guam, so as to create an indigenous clergy that could care for its own people. As leadership of the parishes and the

episcopacy passed over to islanders, the missionary goal of planting a truly local church was finally being realized.

Current Thrust of the Church

In recent years, the Diocese of the Carolines has shown the same high regard for Catholic education that the missionary church did years before. Catholic elementary schools have long since declined in numbers, and the enrollment of the ones that survived has fluctuated at times, but they remain an important part of the church's mission. Today there is one Catholic elementary school operating in each of the four vicariates. The area of great expansion, on the other hand, has been in the church's commitment to secondary education. For years there was only one church-run high school apart from the Jesuit institutions of Xavier High School and Pohnpei Agriculture and Trade School: that was Mindszenty High School in Palau. During the early 1990s the church founded Saramen Chuuk as a vicariate high school. In 2009 Pohnpei acquired a new Catholic high school when Our Lady of Mercy Vocational School, originally started for girls of high school age who were not accepted into the public school, was converted into a full four-year high school for boys and girls. In 2011, a new high school was opened on Yap. At present, then, each vicariate maintains one Catholic elementary school and one high school.



Installation of Amando as Bishop of the Diocese



The church has made the bold move of becoming engaged in tertiary education as well. In 2008, Bishop Amando founded the Chuuk College and Pastoral Institute to serve multiple purposes. CCPI, as it is known, is affiliated with Chaminade College in Hawaii and so can grant associate degrees to its students. But the institution also serves as an initiation program for candidates to the priesthood, much as St. Ignatius House once did on Guam, and it offers a program of short courses for updating deacons and lay leaders in theology.

Meanwhile, parish life remains strong under the leadership of Micronesian pastors. Of the 28 parishes in the diocese, all but two are administered by Micronesian priests or deacons. The range of programs to strengthen parish life remains varied and rewarding. Youth organizations, one of the real strengths of the Micronesian church, continue to flourish, and retreats for parish leaders are regularly offered. Everywhere there are occasional events each year that draw the parishes together for a vicariate-wide celebration of its shared faith.

The Micronesian church of the future must work to remain outward-looking, for islanders are leaving home in greater numbers than ever to seek employment abroad. An estimated 50,000 people from the Federated States of Micronesia now live in the United States and its territories. In response, the diocese has been sending priests and deacons to Guam and Hawaii to minister to the Micronesian migrants living there and to enlist their support for church projects in the diocese. Chuukese priests have

been making three-month pastoral visits to Hawaii, even as deacons from Pohnpei and Yap now serve in Guam and Hawaii on a part-time basis. Moreover, as its own clergy has grown since the early 1990s, the diocese has also been supplying priests to fill teaching and staff positions at Pacific Regional Seminary in Fiji. Fr. Apollo Thall, Fr. Adalbert Umwech, Fr. Julio Angkel, and Fr. Edmond Ludwik are among those who have served for a time on the staff of the seminary.

Each year the diocese moves closer to realizing the goal of becoming self-supporting. Just as local clergy has replaced foreign priests, so local funding is replacing the subsidies from abroad that sustained missionary efforts in the islands for so long. Although the diocese still receives some financial support from Rome and the U.S., an ever increasing amount is being raised in the diocese itself. As an indication of the progress made, the Diocese Day celebration and fundraising effort in 2013 is expected to yield \$400,000.

Challenges remain, to be sure, but the diocese is well prepared to nurture the faith life of its people just as the mission did for so many years before. The church in the Caroline Islands is now rooted in island soil after a long process of cultivation by missionaries of different religious orders and various nationalities. We can look back with gratitude to those, both foreign-born and local, who have planted the seeds from which others will reap. We can also look forward to a future in which church life will reflect island culture even as the diocese is led by its own deacons, priests and bishop.



The
7
Paroline
Islands



The
Parishes

Immaculate Heart of Mary Cathedral

WENO

In 1915, the German Capuchins had just acquired a parcel of land in Tunnuk, but they were forced to abandon their efforts to build a church there because of the hostility they faced.

Only in 1922, after the Jesuits arrived, did Catholic work begin in earnest on the island of Weno. Late in that year a small church named Immaculate Heart of Mary was opened in Tunnuk. The church was little more than a small way-station with a single-room hut for the overnight stay of a visiting priest. The main mission residence on Weno at that time was on the other side of the island at Nepukos.

After the war, the tiny church in Tunnuk was rebuilt from whatever materials were available. An American author who visited Chuuk in 1947 described the rebuilt church as “framed with the wood of the breadfruit tree and roofed with gasoline tins.”

In 1958, after St. Cecilia School had been erected, Br. John Walter began directing work on the construction of the new cathedral. The new building would be a cathedral, not merely a church, because Bishop Vincent Kennally, the newly appointed bishop of the Carolines and Marshalls, presided at liturgies there. The village was now the location of the main Jesuit residence in Chuuk. People from the parish cleaned the site and gathered stones to be used for the foundation. In 1960 the frames for the new cathedral were raised, the foundation was poured, and the walls began to go up. All the villages of the island contributed to the labor, with a different village working each day of the week. The new cathedral was to be a product of the work of many hands, people from all parts of Weno and beyond.



Immaculate Heart of Mary Cathedral, 1997

By 1963 the new building was being used for regular church services, although it was another two years before it was completed. Finally, on September 8, 1967, Immaculate Heart of Mary Cathedral was formally dedicated. Bishop Kennally presided at the liturgy, which was attended by the Bishop of Guam and the Superior of the Capuchins.

Meanwhile, the Mercedarian sisters had opened, in 1947, the elementary school that they called St. Cecilia School. Br. Walter headed the construction of the two-story structure that became the main school building. The school soon became one of the very best in Chuuk with a peak enrollment of over 700 in the early 1990s. Since then, the enrollment has dropped off sharply but the school continues to operate as the only Catholic elementary school in Chuuk.

A large parish center was built in the 1990s next to the cathedral, and parish offices were relocated to this new building. During the following decade the cathedral was renovated and expanded. Bishop Neylon, the last of the Americans to hold this office, was buried next to the altar in the cathedral.

Other Churches in Parish:

- St. Ignatius Loyola, on the nearby small island of Fono, was first begun in 1948. The church was rebuilt in 1956, and replaced in 1975 with a cement structure.



Entrance to the old church, 1952



Cecilia School class, 1954



Bishops in procession outside the cathedral for mass celebrating the elevation to a diocese, 1980



Old church, rebuilt after the war

Holy Family

WENO

An early attempt by the German Capuchins in 1915 to build a church in Fais, not far from the present airport, ended in disaster. Br. Melchior Majewsky, the master builder, was killed when he slipped and was crushed by a piece of wood he was carrying.

It was only in 1927 that the first church was built on the western side of the island in the village of Nepukos. A few years later, Br. Salvador Casasayas replaced it with a new church building and a belltower. The new church of St. Peter Canisius was dedicated in 1935 in a celebration that was attended by Protestants as well as Catholics.

The church, which had been destroyed in the war, had to be replaced afterwards. A temporary building was put up in 1948, but a larger cement structure was built in 1956 and the church was renamed St. Teresa. Later the original name of the parish, St. Peter Canisius, was restored. For years this served as the secondary church on Weno and remained a part of the Tunnuk parish. During the 1970s the Apostolic Center, under the direction of Fr. Jack Fogelsanger, operated out of the building next to the church. The activities of

the Center included the management of a fishing cooperative, ferro-cement boat-building, production of radio programs, and bible translation.

As the population of the island grew during the 1960s and 1970s, however, it became clear that a much larger church was needed in what had become the town area. A new church, designed by some of the parishioners working with Bishop Amando, was erected in 1989. One of the concrete belltowers from the old church, however, was preserved as a link to the past. At the construction of the new church the name of the parish was changed once again, this time to its current name: Holy Family. At about this time Holy Family was named a separate parish.

The building program at Nepukos initiated by Bishop Amando continued for the next twenty years. The parish center was expanded to include meeting space for the parish as well as vicariate and diocesan offices. Saramen Chuuk, a Catholic high school for the vicariate, was founded in 1990 on land next to the church. A few years later a gym that also served as a meeting center was built behind the school. Two convents were built for Mercy Sisters and another religious order invited to teach at Saramen Chuuk. Another educational institution, Chuuk College and Pastoral



Bishop Amando in front of Holy Family church, 1990



Interior of new church



Saramen Chuuk High School

Institute, was built and opened in 2006. At present, the land that once housed a small church and a tiny residence in prewar days now contains a complex of buildings, including two schools, two convents, a large parish hall and the church itself.

Other Churches in the Parish:

- Sacred Heart, Wichap, was opened in 1924, rebuilt in 1975, and renovated entirely in 2003.
- Sacred Heart, Piis-Weno, was opened in 1923, but rebuilt of coral and cement in 1956.



Bishop and clergy gathered in front of Holy Family church



St. Peter Canisius church, 1970

St. Anthony

TONOAS

This was the first church established in Chuuk after the German Capuchin missionaries began work there in 1912.

They built a tiny wooden frame chapel with walls and roof of thatch on top of a hill in the village of Enin. Upon the arrival of the Spanish Jesuits in 1921, the church and the mission residence next to it were enlarged. Throughout the next twenty years the parish became the seat of Bishop Santiago de Rego, while the rectory served as the main residence for the Jesuits in Chuuk. The island of Tonoas was at that time the headquarters for the Japanese government.

After the war, American Jesuits moved their main mission station to the island of Weno, which the US military had established as the new administrative center for Chuuk. The church on Toloas, destroyed during the war, was rebuilt in 1946. For the next ten years it was no more than an out-

station, visited occasionally by a priest. Then, in 1955, Fr. Gerald Cuddy was assigned to the parish. With help from Br. John Walter and Fr. John Nicholson, who succeeded him as pastor for the next ten years, he rebuilt the church of cement and opened a parish school. Both were completed in 1960. The sisters who were expected to teach in the school never arrived, however, and the school was closed some years later.



St. Anthony Church in 1935

First German-built church on Tonoas



Fr. Ignatius and Sr. Natalia and some Tonoas people welcome the German district officer and his wife, 1912

When the church suffered typhoon damage in the early 1980s, church services were held in the old school building for a few years. The church was finally renovated and expanded in 1987. The parish has thrived since then under the care of Fr. Julio Angkel and a long list of other Micronesian priests who have served as pastors of St. Anthony.



Fr. Amando with Emmanuel outside Tonoas church, 1978



St Anthony Church today

Holy Cross

U M A N

German Capuchins built the first church, a thatched chapel, in Nukunap in 1918 and named it for St. Michael.

Even before the arrival of the first priest a few Catholics could be found on the island, partly through the influence of the Narruhn family and others who had been educated in the mission school on Pohnpei. At first, opposition to Catholicism was very strong on the island, which had been the seat of Protestant church work 40 years earlier. Then the younger brother of the island chief defied his family, became a Catholic, and secured land for a church at Nukunap.

Throughout the Japanese administration, the Catholic congregation on Uman steadily increased until it greatly outgrew its modest church. In 1955, a new church was built from stone; this was expanded with the addition of two wings in 1978. The structure was rebuilt in 1999 and renamed

Holy Cross. Today there are four churches on the island to serve a population that is overwhelmingly Catholic. At times it has had its own resident pastor, but at others it has been served by the priest residing on Toloas. Currently Fr. Lomano Kaufaetupu is the pastor of Uman.



Holy Cross Church, 2010



St. Michael's church, c1980



Deacon Andreas, Deacon Carlos and Sr. Magdalena in front of the church, 1978



Holy Cross Church



Other Churches in the Parish:

- Our Lady of Fatima, Mwanukun, was put up in 1954. Later the church was torn down and mass celebrated in a meeting house for several years. The church was rebuilt in the 1980s and has been used occasionally up to the present.
- Assumption, Sopou, was first built in 1956. The church was relocated and rebuilt of cement in 1977.
- St. John, Sopotiw, was opened in the 1990s.

Sacred Heart

FEFAN

Even before the arrival of the first missionaries in Chuuk in 1912, a handful of young people from Fefan attended the mission school on Pohnpei where they became Catholics.

Upon their return home after school, they began to spread word of the faith and teach prayers to others in their family. The first church on the island was founded in Fouchuen in 1914. With the assistance of members of the Hallers family and Felix Muritok, the first pastor, Fr. Gebhard Rudell, made many conversions on the island.

When Spanish Jesuits assumed responsibility for the mission in 1921, a resident pastor was again appointed for Fefan. Fr. Faustino Hernandez served as pastor throughout most of the pre-war period, 1927-1940. Fr. Hernandez, always energetic and full of ideas, ran successful adult education classes and catechetical programs for children. In 1936,

following a visit by Sr. Margarita Maturana, the foundress of the Mercedarian Missionaries of Berriz, four sisters arrived to open a new school in the parish. The girls school, known as Margarita School, drew students from other parishes and operated very successfully until the outbreak of the war.

After the war, little remained intact on the mission compound. Yet, the church was quickly repaired and Fr. Jaime Battle began a twenty-year term as pastor, serving from 1945 until his death in 1965. Since the Mercedarian Sisters transferred their girls school to Weno after the war, Margarita School never reopened again. During these years, however, St. Thomas was opened as a parish elementary school.

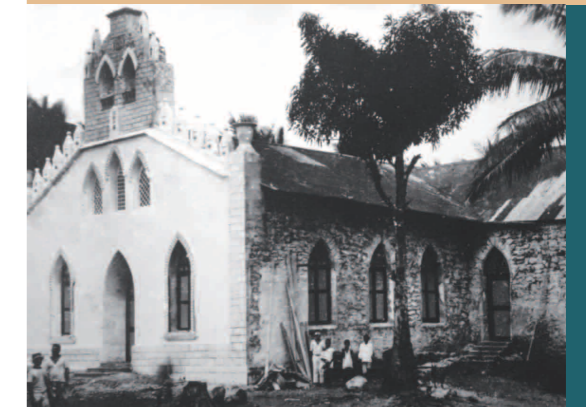
Chapel in the village of Sepetiw, 1932



Group of Catholics at Fouchuen, 1930

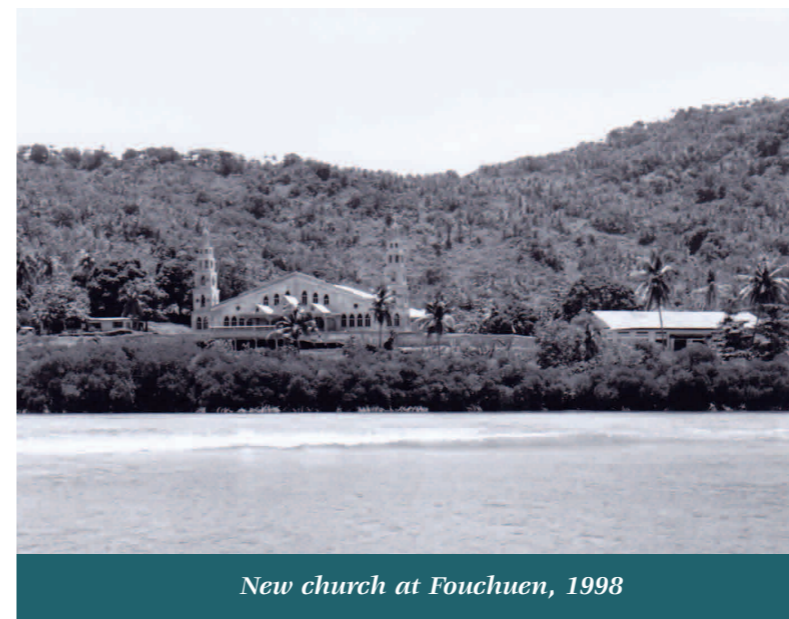
Fr. John Nicholson, another long-time pastor, served there between 1969 and 1987. During his tenure he improved the parish rectory and rebuilt the church, which was rededicated in 1973. Fr. Nicholson was succeeded by a series of Micronesian priests, each of whom spent just a few years on Fefan. During this period the old church was taken down and replaced by a much larger cement building that was completed and dedicated in 1996.

For the past several years the parish has been under the care of Deacon Iowaness Reim.



Church at Fouchuen, 1938

New church at Fouchuen, 1998



Other Churches in the Parish:

- St. Elizabeth, Sis, was opened as a station in 1915, and rebuilt of coral during the 1930s. The church was entirely rebuilt in the late 1990s.
- Our Lady of Fatima, Sapore, was opened in 1917. The church was rebuilt in 1956, and then rebuilt again in 1980.
- Nativity of Mary, Parem, was erected in 1918 as St. Fidelis Church. It was later moved to a new site and rebuilt in 1937. When the war-damaged building was rebuilt in 1966, the church was renamed Nativity of Mary. The structure was enlarged and renovated in 1995.
- Holy Family, Sepeta, was put up in 1918. The church was continually being improved over the years: it was rebuilt in 1938, rebuilt again in 1950, and redone in cement block in 1966.

St. Francis of Assisi

UDOT

In 1914, two years after the arrival of the German Capuchins, the first Catholic missionaries in Chuuk, Fr. Siegbert Gasser was sent to Udot to open a station there.

Building a small church from mangrove wood, Fr. Siegbert soon had a growing Catholic community on the island. Within a few years he also had churches for the small but growing communities on the two nearby islands of Romanum and Fanapanges. Even the tiny island of Eot just off Udot soon had its own chapel. Before he left the island in 1919, Fr. Siegbert is said to have stuck his leg in a hole that was reputedly home to dangerous nature spirits in order to encourage his people to reject their old beliefs in these spirits.

The Spanish Jesuits never had the manpower to station a priest on Udot, but relegated it to the status of a sub-parish and covered it through occasional pastoral visits to the island. Because of the people's reputation for devotion and tenacity

to the faith, the Spanish Jesuits felt that Udot and its neighboring islands did not require the same attention as some of the other places. Instead, they developed a strong network of village catechists to lead prayers and instruct people in the faith.

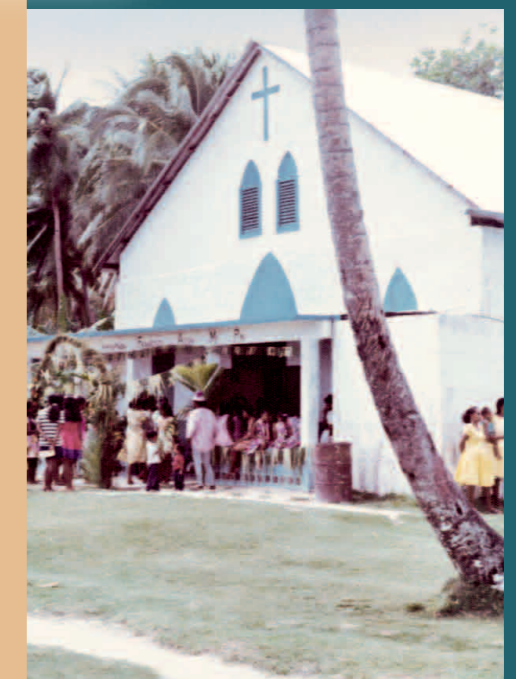
During the final two years of the war, 1943-1945, all the Jesuits who remained in Chuuk were forced to move to Udot where they found shelter with the Irons family. At the end of the war, Fr. Martin Espinal was assigned as pastor of Udot and remained there until his departure from the mission in 1951. A few years later, in 1956, the church was moved to the village of Fonomwe and rebuilt in coral. The most recent major renovation of the church occurred in 1972, when Fr. George McGowan was pastor.



Fr. Ken Hezel celebrating mass with Deacon Marcello, 1978

Other Churches in the Parish:

- St. Joseph, Romanum, was opened in 1919. The church was moved to Unong and rebuilt about 1922. After this, in 1925, it was moved again to Netimaras. Due to war damage, the church had to be rebuilt in 1947. It was renovated, enlarged and dedicated in Winisi in 1975.
- St. Clara, Fanapanges, was started in 1918. The church was rebuilt in stone in 1950, and it was enlarged and rebuilt in concrete in 1999.
- Our Lady of Rosary, Udot, was opened in the village of Faninen in 1995 and dedicated on April 27, 2002.



St. Francis Assisi church



St. Francis Assisi church, 1985



St. Clara church on Romanum, c1960

Assumption

TOL

This parish covers the largest land mass in Chuuk, containing four different municipalities: Tol, Paata, Wonei and Pwelle.

Soon after the German Capuchins began work in Chuuk, Fr. Siegbert Gasser established the first church in 1913. The church, originally named Immaculate Conception and located in the village of Sopou, Pwelle, was very different from the usual thatched hut that was put up until the parish grew large enough to warrant a more permanent church. The first church there was a large two-story structure built of iron, with the rectory above the church. Fr. Lorenz Bollig served as pastor until the evacuation of the German Capuchins in 1919.

At the arrival of the Spanish Jesuits, there were five churches situated on the island complex. By 1923, three more were opened in other parts of the island—two in Tol and another in Paata. Because the pastors appointed had to cover other islands as well, they did not usually reside in the parish during these years. The catechists had to provide much of the leadership in the church communities throughout.

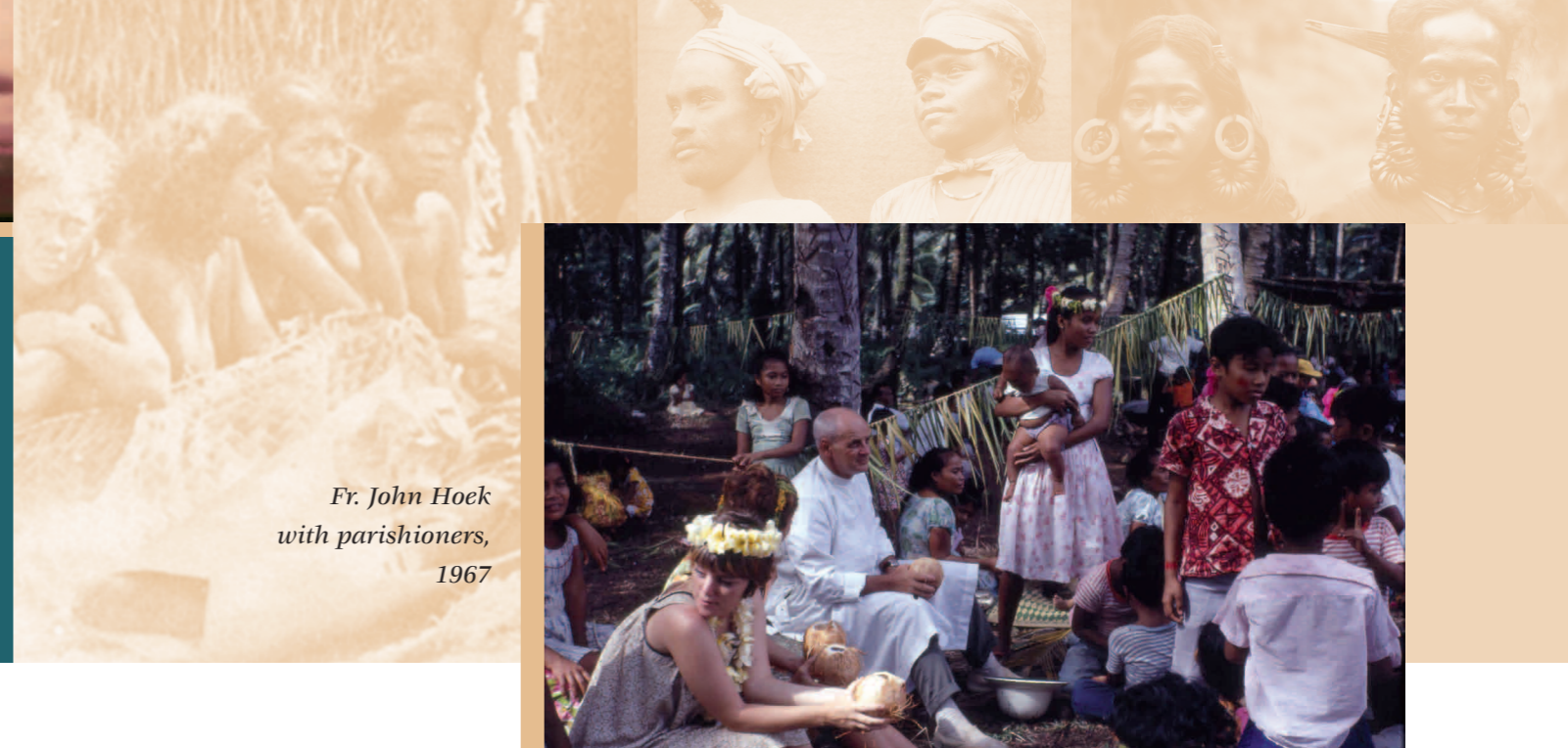
After the war, the Jesuits decided to move the parish center from Pwelle to the centrally located

village of Netutu in Tol. Work was begun on a church that would be named Assumption and become the focal point of parish work. Soon the Mercedarian Sisters arrived to staff St. Julia, the parish school. The parish had a number of short-term pastors until the arrival of Fr. John Hoek, who served there from 1957 until 1969. Among other things, he built a new school building and sisters convent.

The parish elementary school was closed about 2000, but catechetical work continues among the young in the villages. Pastors have served short terms in the parish, but the deacons and catechists have provided the continuity over the years throughout this widely dispersed parish. Fr. Fernando Titus is currently serving as pastor of Assumption.

Other Churches in the Parish:

- St. Francis Xavier, Wonei, was opened in 1918 in the village of Sopotiw. The church was rebuilt in cement in 1980, and was rebuilt again in 2003.
- St. Ann, Tol, was opened in Unifei in 1922. The small church, then named St. Andrew, was rebuilt several times: in 1929, then in 1947, and finally in 1982 when the church was changed to its present name.
- Sacred Heart, Paata, was dedicated in 1923 in the village of Sapata. The church was renovated in 1982, and has been most recently redone in 2003.
- Our Lady of Fatima, Wonei, was opened in Peniata in 1946. It was rebuilt in cement and dedicated in 1979.
- Nativity of Our Lady, Pwelle, was opened in 1950 in the village of Neirenom. The church was rebuilt in cement and dedicated in 1979.
- Corpus Christi, Pwelle, was opened in Neton in 1970, and rebuilt in cement in 1985.



Fr. John Hoek with parishioners, 1967



Sr. Perpetua Hallers and Assumption Church, 1955

Church at Unifei, 1935



Dedication of the new St. Julia School and convent, 1965

Mortlocks

After the devastating typhoon of 1907 that swept their islands, many Mortlockese were resettled on Pohnpei where some became Catholics.

At their invitation, Fr. Gebhard Rudell came to the Mortlocks to begin work on Lukunoch, where he built the first church in 1911. Fr. Severin Oppermann replaced him the following year and remained until the German Capuchins were evacuated in 1919. Working out of Sacred Heart Church in Lukunoch, Fr. Severin set about visiting the other islands in the group even as he prepared hundreds of people on Lukunoch for baptism.

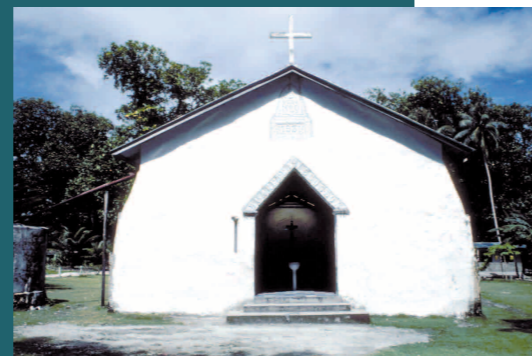
In 1921, after Spanish Jesuits replaced the German Capuchins in the mission, Fr. Martin Espinal began a 20-year tenure as pastor of the Mortlocks. While his companion, Br. Aniceta Arizaleta built an imposing stone church on Lukunoch, Fr. Espinal established a string of small churches on other islands in the Mortlocks: Moch, Satawan, Ettal and Kuttu. The purchase of a large sailboat, *San Ignacio*, made it easier for him to visit these islands regularly. Under Fr. Espinal's care, the Christian community grew in numbers and strength throughout this period.

After the war, the Mortlocks were fortunate enough to have another pastor who gave them long years of dedicated service. Fr. William Rively began work there in 1952 and, with

Original German-built church on Lukunoch, with the Capuchin residence above



Church on Lukunoch, 1970



Church on Etal, 1975

the exception of a four year interlude, remained the pastor until 1993. Like Fr. Espinal, he made his residence on Lukunoch, and visited the other islands on his schooner *Star of the Sea*. Lukunoch



Fr. Amando with his family after his ordination on Moch in 1977

had a Catholic elementary school in operation during much of this time.

During the past thirty years the church community on Moch has grown to the point where this island is now sometimes considered the center of the parish. Twice ordinations have been held there—for Fr. Amando Samo in 1977, and for David Lewis and Adalbert Umwech in 1990. An impressive church, as large as any in Chuuk, was completed on Moch just a few years ago.



Fr. Severin with Lukunoch people, 1913



Fr. Rively saying mass on *Star of the Sea*, 1959

Churches in the Parish:

- Sacred Heart, Lukunoch, was founded in 1911 and rebuilt in stone in 1928. Fr. Rively renovated the old church and built a rectory in 1956.
- St. Ignatius Loyola, Moch, was first built in 1922, but renovated in 1933. The present church, with its twin spires and choir loft, was completed and dedicated in 2000.
- St. Joseph, Satawan, was built in 1923 and renovated in 1950.
- Assumption, Ettal, was first put up in 1924 as Immaculate Conception. It was renovated and received its present name in 1950. A new cement building replaced the old church in 1985.
- St. Francis Xavier, Kuttu, was opened in 1925, rebuilt in 1934, and renovated in 1959. Finally, it was rebuilt in cement in 2000.
- Star of the Sea, Namoluk, was established in 1950 and rebuilt in 1960.



Kuttu church with typhoon damage in 1976

Pattiw

Even before the Spanish Jesuits made their first visit to Pattiw, atolls 200 miles west of Chuuk, catechists had already introduced the faith there.

Maka, a catechist from Toloas, visited Puluwat and Tamatam to form Catholic communities on these islands. In 1925 Fr. Antonio Guasch began visiting the islands yearly. Soon there was a community, even if not a church, on every island in Pattiw except on Pulusuk and Pulap. Br. Casasayas, together with two Chuukese catechists, continued visiting the islands during the early 1930s. By this time even Pulusuk and Pulap had small Catholic communities, thanks to the work of a Catholic couple from Toloas who had gone out to catechize these two places.

When the American Jesuits took up work in Chuuk after the war, they began to make yearly visits of the islands of Pattiw. In 1948, they had a small church built on each of these islands. The following year, Fr. John Fahey arrived and was soon named pastor of Pattiw, where he took up residence on Puluwat and provided pastoral care for 35 years. Over the years the churches were rebuilt as the Catholic congregations grew in size and dedication. Eventually, vocations began to spring from these islands, the last to be evangelized in Chuuk. In 1992 Kirino Halley from Pulusuk was ordained a priest, and in 1994 Basilio Dilipiy was raised to the priesthood on Puluwat.

Fr. Vincent Kennally outside the church on Puluwat, 1952

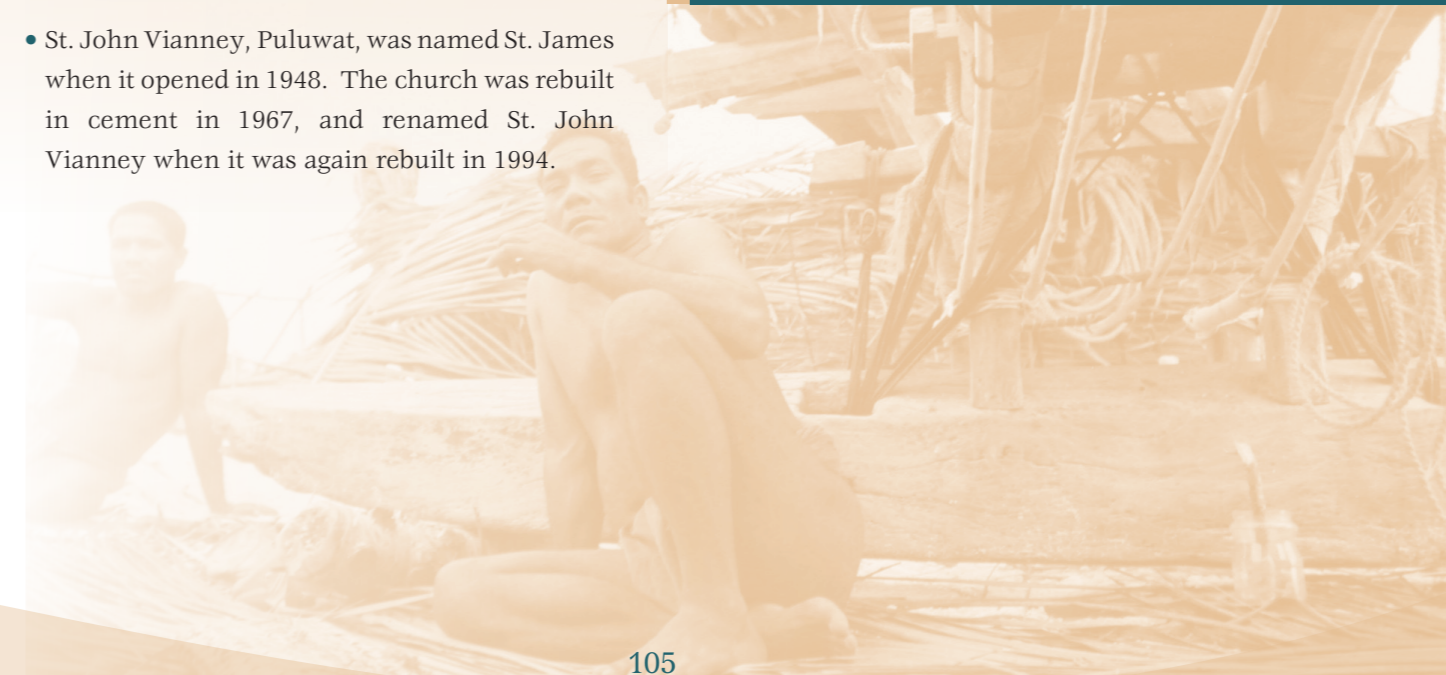
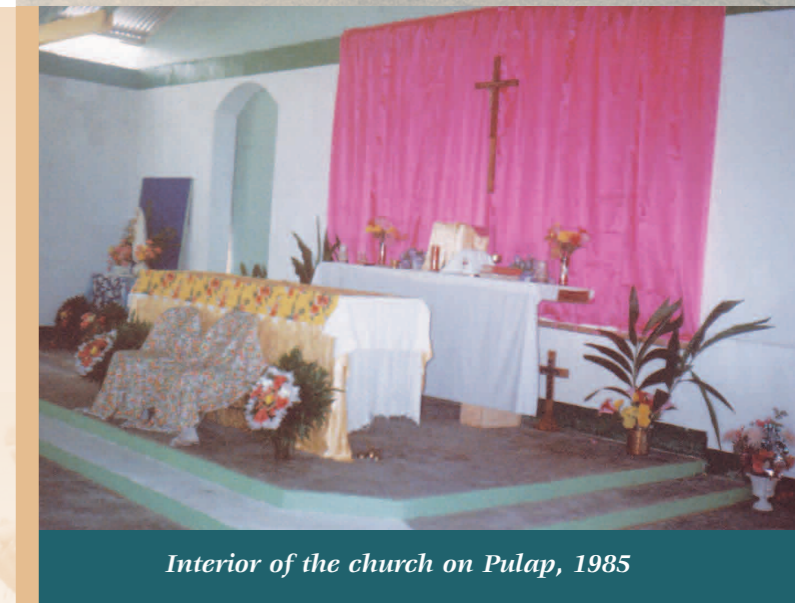


Until recently Pattiw and Weito were taken care of by a single priest. Now they have become separate parishes, with a different pastor assigned to each.

Churches in the Parish:

- St. Ignatius, Tamatam, was built in 1948. The church was rebuilt in cement in 1978.
- Sacred Heart, Pulap, was originally named St. Michael when it was set up in 1948. When it was rebuilt in coral in 1957, it was renamed Sacred Heart. The church was rebuilt in concrete and dedicated in 1985.
- St. Mary, Pulusuk, was put up in 1948. The church was rebuilt in coral block in 1956, renovated and enlarged in 1968, and entirely rebuilt in 1998.
- St. John Vianney, Puluwat, was named St. James when it opened in 1948. The church was rebuilt in cement in 1967, and renamed St. John Vianney when it was again rebuilt in 1994.

Interior of the church on Pulap, 1985



Weito

Fr. Antonio Guasch and Pedro Simiron, a Mortlockese catechist, visited the islands of Weito in 1925. At Onoun alone they baptized 150 people.

Within the next year or two, the population became almost entirely Catholic, in large part because of the influence of Mortlockese catechists on the people of Weito. The Spanish Jesuits made yearly visits to the islands during the early 1930s before the Japanese administration forced them to discontinue these visits.

After the war, an American Jesuit visited Weito and Pattiw in 1948, founding a church on each of the islands in these two groups. Visits by priests were sporadic for the next few years until finally Fr. John Fahey, who was made pastor of Pattiw, began visiting Weito regularly each year.

In time a number of young men from Weito entered the seminary, although most left before ordination. Florentinus Akkin, the first priest from Weito, was ordained in 1993 and now serves as pastor of the islands in which he was raised.



Church on Onoun, c1970



Fr. Morrison praying over a child



Fr. Florencio at his ordination, 1993



Sacred Heart Church on Onoun, 1987

Churches in the Parish:

- Immaculate Heart of Mary, Onari, was opened in 1948. The church was rebuilt in 1965 and again in 1977.
- St. Joseph, Ono, was put up in 1948. It was rebuilt in cement in 1978, and later relocated and enlarged in 2000.
- Sacred Heart, Onoun, was opened in 1948. Afterwards it was rebuilt several times—in 1965, again in 1985, and finally in 1999.
- Christ the King, Magur, was set up in 1948. The church was rebuilt in 1965 and again in 1982, before the present building was constructed during the 1990s.
- St. Peter, Piserach, was opened in 1948 and rebuilt in 1969.

Halls

St. John the Apostle, Nomwin, was built in 1925 and named St. Francis Xavier.

The chapel was closed when the island became Protestant. After the war a smaller church was built in 1949. It was rebuilt in 1978. When it was replaced once again in 2000, it was renamed St. John the Apostle.

- St. Teresita, Fananu, was opened in 1949, rebuilt in 1977, and renovated in 2001.
- Assumption, Ruo, was dedicated in 1952 and rebuilt in cement in 1965.
- St. Gabriel, Murilo, was opened as St. Paul in 1956. The church was renamed St. Gabriel when it was rebuilt in 1965.

Sacred Heart

KOROR

Shortly after the Spanish Capuchin missionaries began work in Palau, they built their first church in Koror.

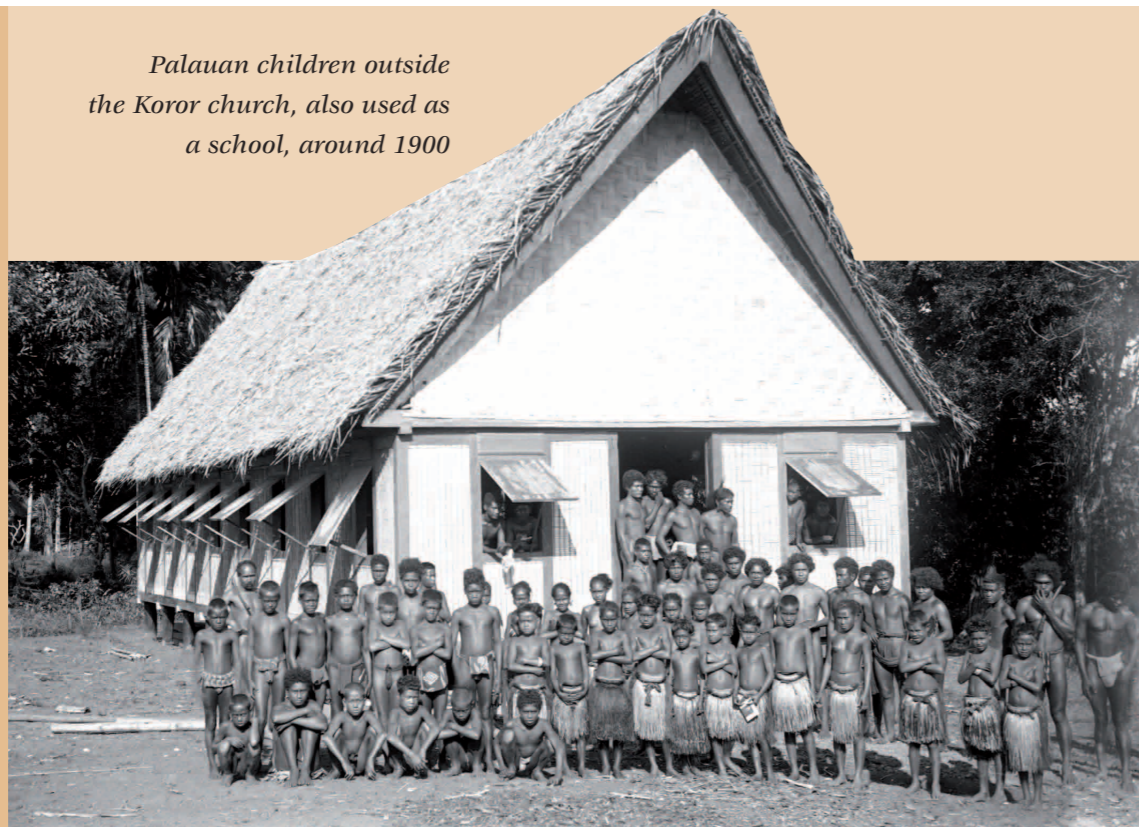
The church, a small shack built of sheet metal, was dedicated in April 1891. From the beginning there was a small school attached to the parish.

The German Capuchins, who soon replaced the Spanish, renovated and expanded the parish buildings in 1907. They replaced the old rectory with a larger building and opened a girls school alongside the boys school that had been in operation for some years. Two years later, Franciscan Sisters arrived to teach in the school.

The sisters were housed in a convent built by Br. Ivo Appelmann. With full support from the chiefs, the Catholic school in Koror flourished; 70 boys and 50 girls attended the school and were soon writing and speaking German with ease. In a few years the two schools were combined, with the sisters doing all the teaching. This allowed the Capuchins to convert the boys school into a church to replace the much smaller building that had been used for services. Fr. Salvador Walleser served as pastor during these years.



Fr Felix Yaoch in front of Sacred Heart church, 1985



Palauan children outside the Koror church, also used as a school, around 1900



Dedication of the new Koror church in 1935



Mindszenty High School

Mindszenty High School graduation in 1988

Even after the arrival of the Spanish Jesuits in 1921, the church continued to serve the small parish. After a typhoon destroyed the church and other parish buildings in 1927, Fr. Elias Fernandez designed a new cement church that was finally dedicated in 1935. At the time it was built, the church was one of the few cement buildings in Koror. Christians from all over Palau and high Japanese officials from Koror attended the solemn dedication. The basic structure of the building is being used even up to the present.



*Mission residence
in Koror, 1910*



Following World War II, when American Jesuits replaced their Spanish confreres, parish school work began anew. The elementary school, re-opened in 1948, was named Mindszenty School and was staffed by three Maryknoll sisters. Mindszenty became an intermediate school in

1957, when Maris Stella opened as the parish elementary school. Mindszenty was converted into a full high school in 1973, and moved into its present facilities in 2001. In the meantime, Fr. Richard Hoar completed the two-story building that Maris Stella occupies today.



Both Fr. Hoar and Fr. Richard Roszel served in turn as pastor of the parish during the 1950s and 1960s. With the ordination of Fr. Felix Yaoch in 1967, the parish had a Palauan pastor for the first time. He and Fr. Tom Smith cared for the parish for the next twenty years.

Fr. Felix oversaw the renovation of Sacred Heart church in 1976, and a new wing was added to the church in 1991. One of the distinctive features on the church grounds is an open meeting house, or *osiachl*, which has been used for meetings, retreats, social events and all sorts of other parish gatherings.

The Koror parish includes two other churches besides Sacred Heart.

- St. Joseph in Ngarekebesang, first built in 1926 but rebuilt and dedicated in 1977, mainly serves the immigrant community of people from the atolls of Sonsorol and Tobi.
- McManus Memorial Church in Ngerbeched, opened in 1974 and rebuilt in 1997, is a secondary church for the people of Koror.

*Br. Ivo Appelmann
sawing lumber with
two Palauans, 1908*



Babeldoab

The island of Babeldoab, with its several village churches, has been a single parish for the past 30 years, but without a resident pastor for most of that time.

St. Joseph, Melekeok, served as the main church on Babeldoab since the very early 1900s. After two unsuccessful attempts to set up a church in the northern part of the island, the German Capuchins finally found one there in 1903. For a few years the church had a resident pastor, but it was only in 1910 that a mission residence was established in Melekeok. In that year the people of Melekeok rebuilt the mission complex—a rectory and a school building that also served as a church. The whole complex was dedicated in the presence of German officials and most of the village population. Reklai, the sectional chief and one of the most influential leaders in Palau, offered his

whole-hearted support for the project. Fr. Basilius Graf served as pastor at the time.

After Franciscan sisters came there in 1911 to teach, the school grew rapidly and soon had an enrollment of 150, even larger than the mission school in Koror. To accommodate the growing number of students, the Capuchins built a bigger school building.

When the Jesuits took over the mission in 1921, they assigned Fr. Marino de la Hoz as resident pastor in Melekeok, but within a couple of years he found himself a pastor without a flock. Many

of the Melekeok people were already moving to Koror for education and jobs under the Japanese. Moreover, a typhoon in 1922 destroyed most of the mission buildings. By 1926 the Jesuits withdrew their full-time pastor and began providing pastoral care for the church in Melekeok, like the other churches on Babeldoab, by occasionally sending out a priest for mass on Sunday.

Although Melekeok never again had a resident pastor, a new church, named Pieta, was built in a more central location in 1939. When that structure collapsed during mass one day in 1954, extensive repairs had to be made on the building. After a typhoon severely damaged the church in 1971, it was rebuilt and named Our Lady of Sorrows.

112

Palauans working on new school building in Melekeok, 1910



Our Lady of Mercy, Ngiwal, 1995

Dedication of St. Patrick church in Ollei, Ngerechelong in 1958

Other Churches in Babeldoab

- St. Ignatius in Aimeliik was opened in 1911 to care for the 400 Pohnpeian exiles who were brought to the village that year, but the parish was abandoned after the Pohnpeians were repatriated a few years later. A new church was built in the early 1960s after the Palauan Catholic community had grown large enough to warrant regular visits. Long afterwards, in 1999, the church was rebuilt and named St. Peter Chanel.
- Our Lady of Mercy, Ngiwal, was dedicated in 1912 but soon abandoned. The church was rebuilt in the 1970s and renovated in 1996.
- St. Francis Xavier, Ngaraard, was first opened in 1927 in the village of Ngkeklau. In 1951 it was rebuilt of simple materials, but was soon abandoned when a new church, Infant Jesus, was

opened in Ulimang a few years later. In 1962 the church was rebuilt in cement and relocated in Elab. For a few years it had a resident pastor and a small school, but this ended with the death of Fr. Edwin McManus in 1969. The site of the church shifted once again, in 1980, when a new church was dedicated in the original location, Ngkeklau.

- Holy Family, Ngchesar, was dedicated in the 1950s and rebuilt of cement in the 1960s.
- St. Joseph, Ngarchelong, was founded in 1893, but closed shortly afterwards. The church was relocated in the village of Ngatmel in 1911. In 1958 the church was moved to Ollei and re-named St. Patrick, but this church was later closed.

113

Angaur and Peleliu

The two churches on Peleliu and Angaur, two large islands south of Koror, now form a single parish.

For nearly 50 years, Fr. Juan Bizkarra cared for both churches while residing on Angaur. Since his death in 1998, however, the parish has been handled by a pastor residing in Koror. At present Fr. Wayne Tkel, a Palauan Jesuit, serves as pastor.

The first church on Angaur, Our Lady of the Rosary, was built by Chamorro Catholics working in the phosphate mines that were established in 1908 under the Germans and taken over by the Japanese. For years these Chamorros composed almost the entire Catholic congregation. The

church was dedicated in October 1921 and rebuilt in February 1927. Some years later, in 1940, the church was moved to a new site and rebuilt in cement and wood. This structure, like much of the rest of the island, was destroyed during the battle for the island during the Second World War in 1944. The church was rebuilt by the U.S. military in 1945, a few years before Fr. Juan Bizkarra moved to Angaur to become resident pastor for over four decades. The final renovation of the church was made in 1995, just three years before Fr. Bizkarra's death.



Fr. Juan Bizkarra and young man in the Angaur church, 1980



Fr. Juan Bizkarra with parishioners outside the church on Angaur, 1960



Our Lady of Lourdes church on Peleliu, 1974

The church on Peleliu, Our Lady of Lourdes, was dedicated about 1926. A new church was built in 1950, and rebuilt and rededicated in February 1975.

There are also churches on Tobi and Sonsorol, the sparsely populated atolls southwest of Palau. Churches were first erected there in 1930 and rebuilt since then. The atolls are visited occasionally by a priest from Palau.



Chapel on Tobi in 1946



Santa Maria Pilar in Sonsorol, c1980

Our Lady of Mercy

KOLONIA

The first church, *Divina Pastora*, was put up just two weeks after the Spanish Capuchins first arrived on Pohnpei in 1887.

The church was located in the Spanish colony, known as Santiago de la Ascension. After hostilities broke out between the Spanish troops and Pohnpeiians, the Capuchin residence was ransacked when the Spaniards were forced to retreat to a pontoon ship in harbor until peace was restored. The missionaries soon set up a small school as part of the parish.

The German Capuchins, who took over the mission in 1903, expanded the parish school, set up a lumber mill and carpentry shop, and began replacing the buildings lost in the 1905 typhoon. But their efforts did not end there. Over the next several years they made several improvements on the extensive parish property. Br. Kolomon Wiegand cut a channel and built a boathouse, cultivated a garden, and laid out paths leading to the church and residence. Meanwhile, Franciscan sisters were brought in to teach in the parish school. The most ambitious project, though, was

the construction of the imposing parish church, built of laid stone and complete with bell tower, that was dedicated in 1913. The church, renamed Christ the King, became the seat of the new vicariate when Salvator Wallerer was named bishop and was transferred to Pohnpei the following year.

During the years of Spanish Jesuit work, the parish was alive with congregations that would feed the piety of their members. The parish also featured the processions, public novenas, and other religious displays that nurtured Catholics of the period. After a succession of pastors for a year or two, Fr. Higinio Berganza became pastor in 1927 and retained that position until 1935. Following Fr. Quirino Fernandez's twelve-year term as pastor (1935-1947), Fr. Berganza again administered the parish for another sixteen years (1947-1963).



Mercedarian convent and girls dormitory known as "casa de piedra," in 1930

Despite Japanese restrictions on private schools, in 1927 the Jesuits opened a small school for boys along with a dormitory that put young people in close contact with the religious. Br. Burzaco ran the boys dormitory until 1937, when the legendary Br. Cobo replaced him and held the position for 40 years. The Mercedarian Sisters, who arrived in 1928, took over the care of the girls school and the dormitory and made a powerful impact on the parish over the years.

After World War II, Fr. Hugh Costigan supervised a construction program to rebuild all that was lost in the war. He put up a new school, a convent and dormitory for the girls, and a church that was dedicated in 1953 and re-named Our Lady of Mercy. The enrollment in the new school expanded quickly until it reached over 300 students. The school was eventually closed in 1977, but it was re-opened a few years later as a private school. Soon afterwards, the Mercedarian Sisters started a vocational training program for high school age girls who did not pass the public high school entrance test. In 2009, this school evolved into a full high school.

The parish hosted a number of innovative programs during the 1970s and 1980s when Fr. Bill McGarry, Fr. Jack Curran, and Fr. Joe Cavanagh



Parishioners outside Kolonia church, 1930

served a combined 14 years as pastor. It was under their leadership that the church radio ministry, the mobile teams, and the training of deacons was begun.

Two mission stations are served by the parish: St. John on Kosrae, opened during the 1980s, and under the care of Fr. Kenneth Urumulug, and St. Ignatius on Kapingamarangi, served by Deacon Ponciano Sehpin.



Br Ivo and another brother laying bricks for a new building on Pohnpei, c1910



Parishioners outside the church in Parem, c1908



German Capuchin with young men's group, c1908



Our Lady of Mercy church today

St. Joseph

AWAK

In 1894, the Spanish Capuchins obtained chiefly permission to set up a mission station in Awak, so a small chapel was dedicated there at the end of the year.

Religious tension persisted in the area for the next few years until it boiled over into an attack on Awak by foes from other parts of the island. With the help of Spanish troops the attack was put down, but the tension continued.

After the great typhoon of 1905, Br. Othmar Gesang was sent to Awak to rebuild the residence and the small church that also doubled as a school. Soon afterward the small Catholic community on Takaiu built their own church.

Parish life flourished in Awak in subsequent years and there was a steady stream of converts even

amid the religious animosity that flared up at times. When the church was suddenly burned to the ground in 1923, Br. Gojenola supervised its rebuilding. The new church, built over a stream, was an impressive structure with an ornate wooden altar. It was solemnly consecrated by Bishop Rego on December 8, 1926.

After the war, the mission buildings damaged during the bombing raids were repaired. But the parish soon saw other improvements as well. In 1950 a new school was put up, along with living quarters for the three Mercedarian sisters who were to teach in it. Soon afterwards, Fr. Paulino Cantero, who left Awak as a young boy to enter



Church in Awak, 1960



Fr. Paulino Cantero watching young boy receive medical treatment

the Jesuits, returned to Pohnpei and was named the pastor of Awak in 1952. For the next eleven years he worked effectively with his own people.

In the 1960s, during the pastorship of Fr. Berganza, a small chapel was erected in Saladak and used for some years until it was finally closed twenty years later.

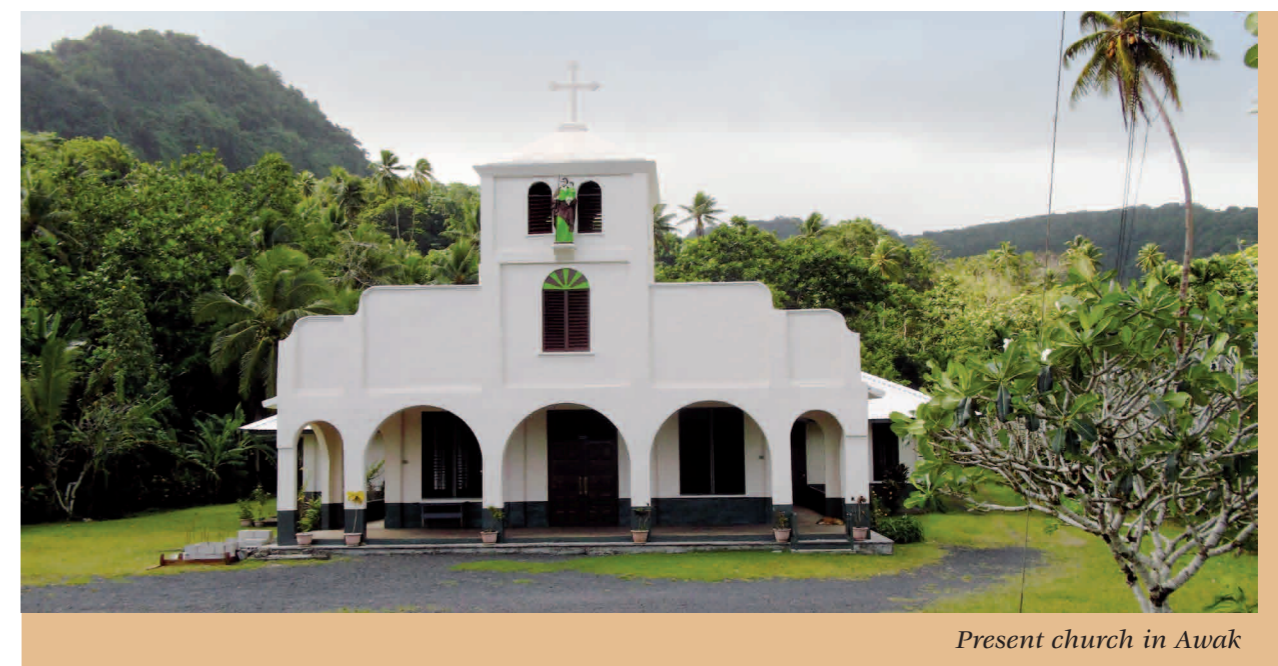
Over time age and termites had worked their damage on the old wooden church, and so Fr. Bill McGarry, pastor during most of the 1970s, made the decision to replace it. In 1983, the present church was completed and dedicated. The pastor at the time was Deacon Manuel Amor, the first in a line of deacons to assume responsibility for the parish.

The parish became the home of the Sisters of Maria Auxiliatrice when their new convent was built on the land above the church in the late 1980s.

The parish serves one other church: Sr. Fidelis on Takaiu, Uh, which was first opened in 1905.



Altar of the church in Awak, 1928



Present church in Awak

Christ the King

WONE

The first mission station in Kiti was opened in Aleniang in 1889 at the request of the high chief, or Nahnmwarki.

The dedication of the church, named St. Felix of Cantalacio, was celebrated with great fanfare by the Spanish government and its troops. A small boarding school was soon opened at the mission. Fr. Agustin, the first pastor, saw his tiny school grow in time and witnessed the baptism of the Nahnmwarki of Kiti. During the absence of the pastor, in 1899, the mission station was vandalized and left in ruins. Soon afterwards the decision was made to move the church to Pahnihso, Rohi.

During the next ten years, the Catholic population grew steadily until the parish had more members than Kolonia. Since many of the converts were

from Enipein, the German Capuchins decided to move the site of the church back to Wone, a site that was midway between Rohi and Enipein. On three hectares of land that they purchased, the missionaries built a church that they named Christ the King. The church was dedicated in 1918.

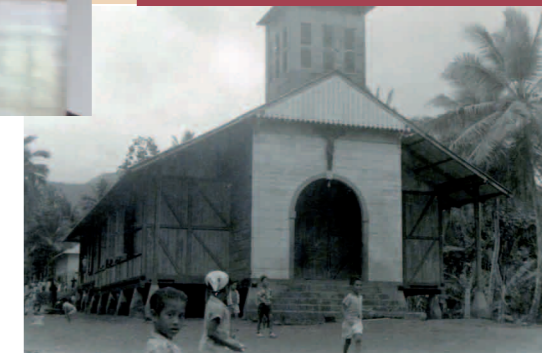
Between the arrival of the Spanish Jesuits in 1921 and the beginning of the war, Fr. Ramon Lasquibar was the dominant figure in the Kiti church. The pastor may have been old and infirm, but he was a stern and forceful figure in the pulpit. He guided the parish for all but three years of the 18-year period between the arrival of the Jesuits and the beginning of the war.



Current church in Wone, interior



Church in Wone, c1960



Old church in Wone, 1954

Fr. John Nicholson, the first American pastor after the war, set up a sawmill in the parish to provide the lumber needed for replacing the dilapidated mission buildings. Before his transfer in 1956, he replaced the church and rectory and built a school and a convent for the Mercedarian sisters who would teach there. His successor, Fr. Quirino, died in 1960 when his boat capsized as he was making a visit to a sub-station in the parish. Fr. Bill McGarry, a new arrival in the mission, was rushed in to take his place and served there for seven years. He was followed by

Fr. Joe Cavanagh, who was pastor until 1973. Thereafter, deacons have administered the parish.

The parish, which was once combined with Seinwar, was split in 1974. The church in Wone was entirely rebuilt and the new church dedicated in 1986. It was renovated in 2012.



Church in Wone, 1926



Church in Wone, 1960



Current church in Wone, exterior

Immaculate Heart of Mary

SEINWAR

The first church in Seinwar was established in 1919 by the German Capuchins shortly before they were expelled from Pohnpei.

The Catholic community there grew slowly at first. In 1935, the Spanish Jesuits reported, the Catholics of Seinwar were gathering money to build a suitable church for themselves. Meanwhile, a large meeting house was used for services.

By the end of the war, the community had its own church. The parish also opened its own newly built school in 1952. The parish school, the pride

of the community, operated until the early 1970s when it was taken over by the government. Meanwhile, Br. William Condon, working with local men, built a new church that was dedicated in 1961.

Since the transfer of Fr. Joe Cavanagh from Seinwar in 1973, the parish has been administered by deacons.



Current church in Seinwar



Capuchin priest and Pohnpeian parishioners in the village, c1910



Fr Crescenz with Pohnpeian helpers wading through a stream on way to saying mass c1910

Sacred Heart

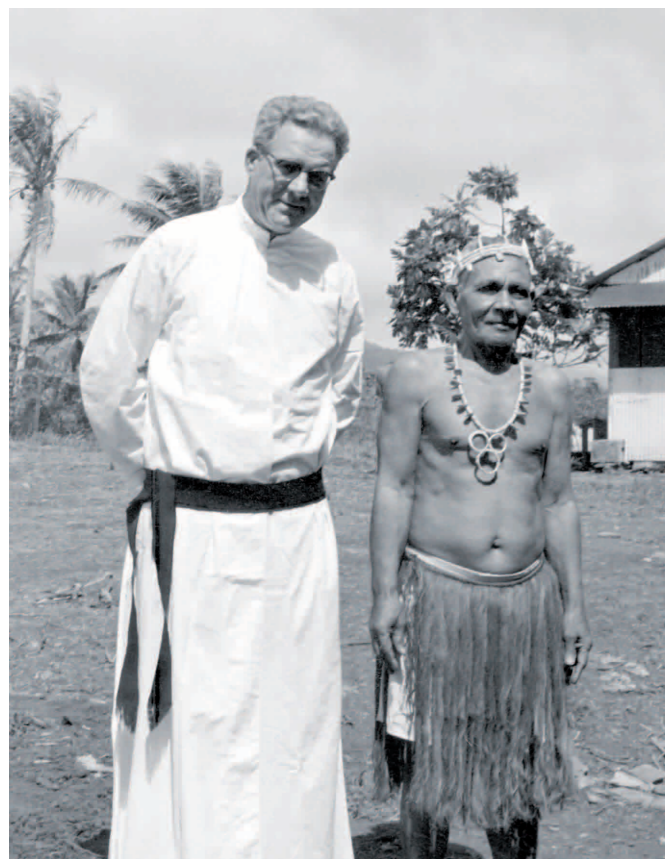
MADOLENIHMW

During the early years of their missionary work on Pohnpei, Catholic priests were not welcome in Madolenihmw because of the strong religious convictions of the Protestant high chiefs.

When the German Capuchins bought 100 hectares of land in Tamworoi, however, the chiefs relented. In 1913 the first church and school were opened there. For years the small Catholic community, which enjoyed only occasional visits from a priest, met on its own for rosary and prayers. The school was forced to closed during the years of Japanese administration, but the church land was still used for producing copra.

In 1954, with the appointment of Fr. Hugh Costigan as pastor of Tamworoi, a new chapter in the life of the parish began. Fr. Costigan initiated on the parish land an extensive agricultural program that included cacao, bananas and other cash crops. He also set up an animal farm that was used for training purposes and established a housing coop that took on contract work for the government. Finally, in the early 1960s, he put up the buildings that would become the core of the new vocational school which formally opened in 1965.

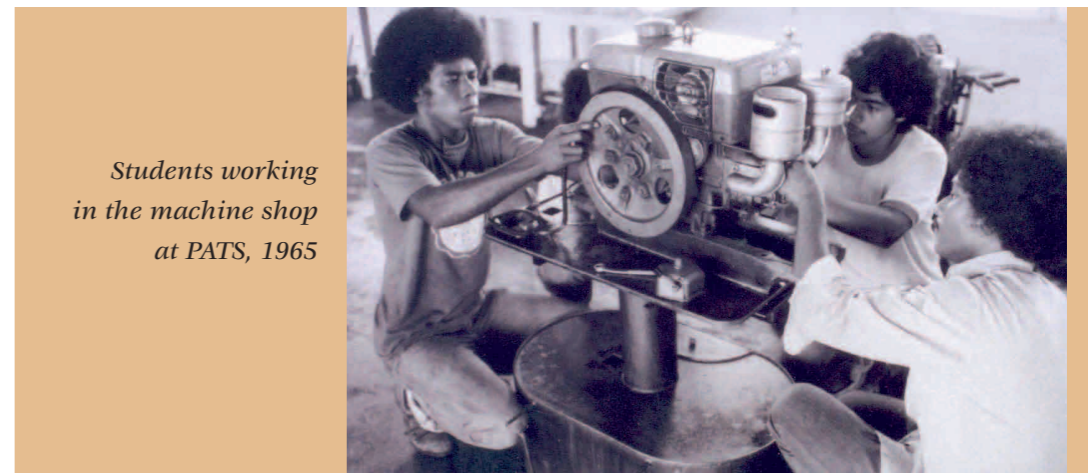
The new parish church, the foundations of which lay neglected for years, finally was completed in 1975. For the next 30 years, until Pohnpei Agriculture and Trade School (PATS) was closed in 2005, the fortunes of the parish were closely linked to that of the school. When much of the school land reverted to the parish after the closing, one of the buildings became a retreat and conference center for the Vicariate of Pohnpei.



Fr. Costigan with Nahnmwarki Moses



Fr. Costigan and young men in the old church in Tamworoi, c1960



Students working in the machine shop at PATS, 1965



Present church in Madolenihmw

St. Peter

SOKEHS

In response to a request from the high chief of Sokehs, the Spanish Capuchins established a church and school in 1894.

The church named St. Francis was situated in Denipei. Two years later the Wasai of Sokehs was baptized in a solemn ceremony that was witnessed by most of the Spanish government staff and their troops. The Spanish Capuchins continued their work in the parish until 1898, when most of the Spanish priests left the mission and Br. Julian was left to serve as a caretaker for the next four years. It was only in 1906 that the German Capuchins had enough priests to assign a pastor to the Sokehs parish.

Fr. Gebhard Rudell cared for the parish until 1911, when the people of Sokehs were exiled en masse to Palau following their uprising against the Germans. The parish was then closed and Fr. Gebhard sent to the Mortlocks to open the first mission there.

Catechists remained active among the Sokehs people even after the closing of the church, but for years there was no mission station or chapel in the area. When mass was said there on occasion,

Fr Gebhard with parishioners in front of his church in Sokehs, c 1908



Dedication of St. Peter's, 1996

it was celebrated in a meeting house in one or other of the villages. Only in the late 1980s were plans laid for the establishment of a new church. In 1996, 85 years after the closing of the original church in Denipei, the church of St. Peter, now located near the end of the causeway leading to the island of Sokehs, was dedicated.



The parish has one mission station on Pakin Atoll.



Present church in Sokehs

St. Paul

PALIKIR

This section of Sokehs was one of the last on Pohnpei to convert to Christianity.



German Capuchins working on Pohnpei reported that by 1910, after years of resistance, a number of people from Sokehs were beginning to ask for baptism.

A chapel was finally built in Palikir in 1953. It was rebuilt in 1965, renovated in 1975, and entirely renovated in 2009. When St. Paul was made a

parish about 1980, Deacon Etwel Pelep was made the parish administrator. Since then a deacon has always served as the head of the parish.

During the early 1990s a mission station was established in Paies, another section of Sokehs. This station became a separate parish in 1999.

St. Augustine

MADOLENIHMW

During the 1930s, Fr. Pedro Castro intensified his efforts to build up small Catholic communities in different parts of Madolenihmw.



One of the sections that appeared most promising at that time was Enimwahn. For years afterward the small Catholic community there remained an out-station under the care of the pastor of Tamworoi.

A church was built there and dedicated in 1994. Shortly after this, St. Augustine was designated a full parish and placed under the care of one of the permanent deacons.

St. Philip

MADOLENIHMW

The parish in Lukopw began as a mission station of Sacred Heart in Madolenihmw, but became a separate parish in 2000.



A church was built in Lukopw in 2000, and Fr. Ed Soucie served as pastor of both St. Philip and Sacred Heart until his death. A new rectory and meeting house next to the church were completed in 2009.

St. Barnabas

SOKEHS

The parish, situated in Paies, began as a mission station of St. Paul in Palikir during the 1990s.

A church was built and dedicated in 1999, and St. Barnabas in Paies became a parish at the same time.

Interior of St. Barnabas Church



Fr. Julio Angkel, the current Vicar of Pohnpei

Our Lady of Sorrows

SAPWUAFIK

Fr. Herrera and a Pohnpeian catechist visited Sapwuafik in 1922.

In the course of their two-week visit they received about 60 people into the church and made plans to build a chapel there on a future visit. The next year a small church was dedicated, and the Catholic community on the island received periodic visits by a priest after that.

The church on the island was rebuilt in 1964. About 1990 a permanent deacon was appointed to administer the parish.



St. Mary

COLONIA

Dedicated just two weeks after the arrival of the Spanish Capuchin missionaries in June 1886, this was the first Catholic church built in the Caroline Islands.

The church, known as Santa Maria, was a small thatched-roof structure that held very few people. From the beginning a school was attached to the parish and classes were held in an open building similar to a meeting house. Guamanian women living on the island taught the girls, while the friars instructed the young boys.

Three years later, in 1889, the Capuchins replaced the original church with a much larger wooden structure with a tin roof. The new church was

decorated with devotional frescoes and even contained a small organ. After a time, the school was expanded and a concrete convent was put up for the German Franciscan sisters who were brought in to teach there in 1907.

Shortly after their arrival in 1921, the Jesuits rebuilt the church in concrete on the spot where it is located today. Fr. Juan Pons was the pastor at the time. The school, however, was not reopened throughout the duration of Japanese administration in the islands. It was only reopened in



German Franciscan Sisters' convent in Yap, 1908

1953, after the American takeover following the war, when a contingent of Maryknoll sisters arrived to take charge of the parish school.

St. Mary's church, which was severely damaged during the war, was replaced by a temporary wooden church. When that was destroyed in a typhoon, a double quonset served for a church for a time. Soon afterwards, however, Br. Gregorio Oroquieta laid the foundations for a new cement church that was completed in 1956. Fr. Fred Bailey served as pastor during these early post-war years.



Capuchin mission residence in Aringel, Yap, c1908



Young people coming out of church in Colonia, 1910



Construction of the cement rectory in Colonia, Yap, c1905



Interior of St. Mary Church, 2006



Two Yapese youth praying under crucifix



Old church of Santa Cruz in Rul, 1914



Church in Fanif, 1981



St. Fidelis church in Kanif with typhoon damage, 2006



St. Ignatius Church in Kanfay, 1981

Since then the church has undergone only minor renovations, mostly in the form of interior redecoration. The school, however, has been replaced by a modern two-story building. For years a small building near the church served as a dormitory for students from the outer islands, but it is now used as office space for the parish.

Over the years the parish changed in composition to reflect the population shifts on the island. For many years it was a spiritual home for the heavy Chamorro population in Yap, but after the war the congregation was a mix of Yapese along with the outer islanders who were beginning to make their home there in ever larger numbers. The parish has had many pastors, Jesuits and diocesan priests, but none of them has been more influential than Fr. Apollo Thall, the Yapese Jesuit who was pastor for over ten years and who is now buried next to the church.

Other Churches in the Parish

- St. Francis of Assisi, Gilman, was the second parish opened on Yap and was located in the village of Guror. The church was first dedicated in 1887, then rebuilt about 1893. It was rebuilt again in 1976 and dedicated in 1980.
- St. Fidelis of Sigmaringa, Delipebinau, was dedicated in 1891. The church was relocated from the village of Aringel to Kanif in 1982.
- St. Ignatius, Kanfay, was first opened in 1891 in the village of Malay under the name of Divine Pastor. The church was rebuilt in Ngof in 1970 and renamed St. Ignatius.
- Holy Trinity, Fanif, was opened in the village of Ayrach in 1974. The church was rebuilt in 1983.

St. Joseph

G A G I L

When the Spanish Capuchins decided to establish the first church in the village of Wanyan, they neglected to ask permission of the village chief first.

Consequently, when the building materials were dropped off at the chosen site, the chief had his people dump the materials on the beach. He was arrested by Spanish authorities for this impertinence and the village people were forced to help build the new church. The church was dedicated in 1897 as St. Felix of Cantalacio. Because of the conflict between Wanyan and nearby Gachpar that broke out soon afterwards, however, the parish had a resident pastor only for a year or two. After this it was visited by a priest only occasionally.

The parish languished for more than 30 years before the Spanish Jesuit Fr. Bernardo de la Espriella began making regular visits to the community. Then, in the mid-1930s, the priest began work on what would become one of the most unusual churches in the entire mission. The cement church that he built was octagonal in shape, with the rectory situated above the church. This new church, renamed Sacred Heart, was dedicated in 1937.

With the Spanish-built church in ruins after the war, a new one was erected in 1949 and renamed St. Joseph. In 1985, a few years after he became resident pastor in Gagil, Fr. Neil Poulin rebuilt the church and had colorful designs painted on the exterior. Next to it was built a rectory for the resident priest. Both buildings are still being used today. Fr. Eddy Anthony, a Jesuit from Indonesia, is the current pastor.



Altar of the church in Gagil, 1935



Church in Tomil, 1964



Church in Tomil, 1981

Other Churches in the Parish

- St. Peter Chanel, Tomil, was opened in the village of Tomor in 1951 as St. Catherine. The church was rebuilt in 1978 and renamed St. Peter Chanel.
- St. Joseph, Maap, was built in the village of Toruw in 1892. The church was moved to Wocholab in 1960.
- St. John Baptist, Rumung, was first opened in 1893 as St. Veronica of Juliani in the village of Wenfara. The church was relocated to the village of Fal in 1950 and given its present name. The church was renovated in 1980.



Church in Gagil, 1990



Queen of Heaven

ULITHI

Queen of Heaven was originally founded as Regina Coeli on the island of Falalop.

This church, together with three other churches in Ulithi Atoll, were all founded in 1928 during the visit of Fr. Bernardo de la Espriella, the first priest to visit the atoll in 30 years. The other churches opened at this time were Assumption on Mogmog, Our Lady of Mercy on Asor, and Star of the Sea on Federai.

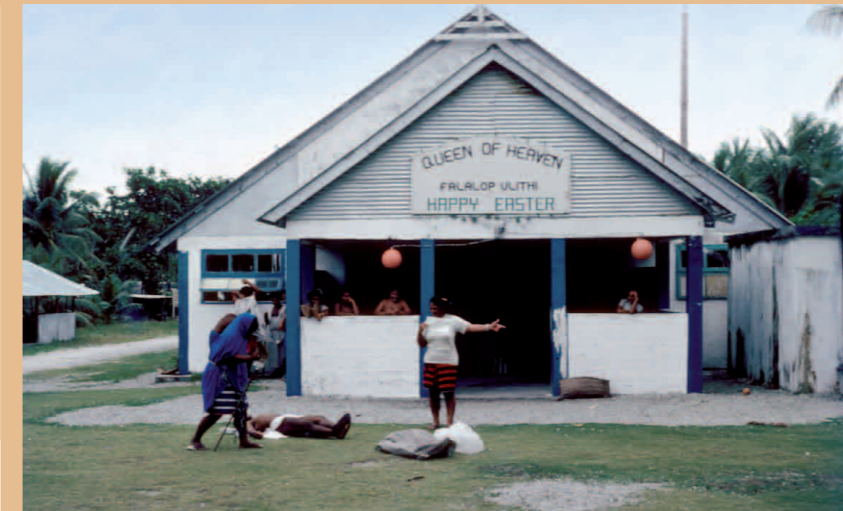
At the arrival of Fr. William Walter, SJ, in 1949, the church of Ulithi had its first resident pastor. Fr. Walter rebuilt the four churches in cement and served the more distant atolls until his death in 1975. Fr. Walter was buried just outside Assumption church on Mogmog.

At times there have been priests residing on Ulithi to care for the parish. These resident pastors include Fr. Nick Rahoy, himself from Ulithi. Over the years, however, Deacon John Rulmal remained the abiding voice of the church in the atoll with a great influence over island affairs.

Since Fr. Walter's day nearly all the churches have been renovated. Fr. Moses Tashibelit is the current pastor and is assisted by Deacon John Talugmai. In addition to the churches in Ulithi, he cares for the churches on two nearby islands: St. Matthew on Ngulu and St. Paul on Fais. Fr. Moses also serves as pastor of the Woleai parish and the other atolls that are part of that parish.



Fr. William Walter with Ulithi children, c1970



Church on Falalop, Ulithi, 1982



Two Ulithians holding a large cross outside the church on Mogmog, 1981

Other Churches in the Parish:

- Assumption, Mogmog, Ulithi, founded in 1928, and renovated in 1982.
- Our Lady of Mercy, Asor, Ulithi, opened in 1928.
- Star of the Sea, Federai, Ulithi, founded in 1928.
- St. Paul, Fais, dedicated in 1930.
- St. Matthew, Ngulu, dedicated in 1946.



Assumption church on Mogmog with grave of Fr. Walter next to it, 2006

St. Ignatius

WOLEAI

St. Ignatius, Woleai, was opened on the island of Falalop in 1932.

It was the first of the churches on Woleai to be founded and the only one in existence until after World War II. The church was rebuilt in 1980 and rededicated in 1986. St. Alphonsus Rodriguez was constructed on the island of Seliap in 1952. St. Peter Canisius was put up on Wottegai and St. Francis Xavier was built on Tagailap in 1954. St. Stanislaus, the last of the churches on Woleai, was opened on Falalus in 1960. All the churches on the atoll were renovated or rebuilt in the 1990s.

Since the late 1980s, Woleai has been constituted a separate parish from Ulithi and has had its own resident priest. For much of that time, Fr. John Hagileiram, SJ, has been pastor. Currently, however, Fr. Moses Tashibelit is caring for both parishes of Woleai and Ulithi.



Clergy on Eauripik at the ordination of Fr. John Hagileiram in 1985

Other Churches in the Parish:

- St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, Seliap, founded in 1952. The church was replaced by a concrete one in 1990.
- St. Peter Canisius, Wottegai, opened in 1954. It was rebuilt in concrete in 1999.
- St. Francis Xavier, Tagailap, opened in 1954. The church was replaced by a concrete building in 1990.
- St. Stanislaus, Falalus, founded in 1960. It was rebuilt in concrete in 1995.
- St. Joseph, Fachailap, first established in 1932, replaced with a concrete building and rededicated in 1998.
- St. Luke, Ifalik, opened in 1932, replaced with a concrete building in the 1990s.
- St. Mark, Eauripik, first begun in 1938, but rebuilt on its original stone foundation in 2003.
- St. Peter, Lamotrek, put up in 1938, but replaced with a new church in 2001 and renamed St. Louis.
- St. Robert Bellarmine, Elato, dedicated in 1951; replaced with a concrete building in 2009.
- St. Michael, Satawal, first built in 1952, but replaced in the late 1990s after the church was destroyed in a typhoon.



Interior of St. Ignatius church in Falalop, Woleai, 1982

Bishop Neylon celebrating the ordination mass of Fr. John Hagileiram in 1985



Church on Fachailap, 1989

