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MISCELLANY

THE CALIFORNIA CHRONICLE OF FRANCIS SADOC VILARRASA, O.P., 1850-1874

By

PAUL M. STARRS*

On the night of December 6, 1850,¹ the steamer *Columbus* sailed into San Francisco Bay carrying among her passengers the newly appointed Bishop of California, Joseph Sadoc Alemany, O.P., and two fellow Dominicans who had come with him to establish their order in the newly-admitted state, Sister Mary Goemaere, foundress of the Dominican Sisters of the Congregation of the Holy Name, whose motherhouse is now located at San Rafael, and Francis Sadoc Vilarrasa, O.P., the founder of the Province of the Holy Name of the Order of Preachers.

The document which follows is a translation of a "Chronicle" written by Father Vilarrasa, in which he records the history of the first twenty-four years of his work in establishing the Dominican friars in California. However, before presenting the text of the "Chronicle" a few words about Vilarrasa and his document will not be out of place.

Francis Sadoc Vilarrasa² was born on August 9, 1814, in the little town of La Pobla de Lillet in Catalonia. He entered the Order of Preachers at the convent of St. Catherine in Barcelona at a very early age, and on September 23, 1830,³ he made his religious profession which was perpetual and solemn according to the law then in force in the order. It is

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¹ There has been some confusion over the date of the arrival of Bishop Alemany and his party. As we shall see, Vilarrasa himself gives the date as December 7. The truth of the matter seems to be that the ship entered the harbor at eleven o'clock on the night of the sixth, but that the passengers did not disembark until the following morning. For a recent description of the arrival of the Alemany party cf. John B. McGloin, S.J., *Eloquent Indian* (Stanford, 1949), pp. 14-18, where excerpts from the newspapers of the day are given.

² A brief sketch of the life of Vilarrasa appeared in the *Acta* of the Biennial Congregation of California for the year 1888. A manuscript copy of these *Acta* is preserved in the Archives of the Province of the Holy Name (hereafter APOP). They were printed in San Francisco in the same year. The biography of Vilarrasa is on pages 12-14 of the printed text.

³ The profession book of the convent of St. Catherine of Barcelona contains the following entry: "Die 25 mensis Septembris, anni 1830, hora nona cum

worthy of note that this profession took place just six weeks after he had completed his sixteenth year, that age being the minimum required for a valid religious profession.

After his profession the young religious evidently remained in the convent of St. Catherine where he completed the philosophical curriculum and began the study of theology. The register entitled "Nombres y apelidos de los religiosos y religiosas de la Provincia de Aragón" indicated that on December 16, 1832, he was still in that convent.⁴ A copy of the *Calendar* or *Ordo* of the Province of Aragon for the year 1834, now in the archives of the Province of the Holy Name, bears the note on the title page that it is granted to Brother Sadoc Vilarrasa y Costa of the convent of St. Catherine of Barcelona for his use, and at the end of this *Ordo* there is, in Vilarrasa's handwriting, a list of the religious who died during the year in "this convent of St. Catherine of Barcelona."

By the summer of 1834 religious persecution had begun in Spain and in July of that year the Dominican convent in Madrid was attacked and several religious killed while reciting the office in choir. By spring of the following year the persecution was widespread in the provinces, and on July 25, 1835, several religious houses in Barcelona, the convent of St. Catherine among them, were attacked by mobs and burned. Eighteen religious were killed during these riots.⁵

Faced with this situation, Vilarrasa, together with other members of the Aragon Province of the Dominicans, among them Joseph Sadoc Alemany, availed himself of the invitation of the Master General of the Order, Father Thomas Cipoletti, to come to Italy. The year 1836 found Vilarrasa

dimidio matutina in aula capitulari hujus conventus S^{mo} Catharinae V^a et M^a Barchinonensis in manibus A.R.P. Mtri Fr. Joannis Geius (?) Prioris ejusdem solemnem emisserunt professionem uti filii praefati Conventus . . . Fr. Franciscus Sadocus Villarassa [*sic*] baptizatus in parochiali ecclesia S^{mo} Mariae de la Pobla de Lillet, Diocesis Salsoncinensis die 10 Augusti 1814."

⁴ The entry is as follows: "Convento de S^a Catalina V y M de Barcelona en 16 de Diciembre de 1832 . . . nº 55, Sadoch Vilarrasa, edad 19, professio 3." There were seventy-eight religious in the convent at that time, Brother Sadoc occupying the fifty-fifth place in the order of religious profession.

⁵ E. Allison Peers in his *Spain, the Church and the Orders* (London, 1939), p. 70, gives the following information: "These [repercussions in the provinces] began in April 1835 at Saragossa and were continually repeated during the summer. . . . On July 22 Franciscan and Carmelite houses were destroyed at Reus. Three days later took place the worst of all the outbreaks—that of Barcelona. In the initial attack, eighteen religious were killed and the houses of Carmelites, Dominicans, Augustinians and Trinitarians were burned to the ground."

at the convent of La Quercia near Viterbo where he continued his theological studies.⁶ He was ordained to the priesthood in 1837. O'Daniel noted that "his first signature for saying Mass is on May 18, 1837" and he concluded that this "most likely means that he was ordained the day previous, and by Archbishop (later Cardinal) Gaspar Bernard Pianetti of Viterbo."⁷ Vilarrasa remained in La Quercia for two years and during this time exercised the office of assistant to the master of novices. In 1839 he was sent to Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome where in 1841 he took the Dominican degree of lector in sacred theology. He then returned to La Quercia where he again filled the office of assistant to the master of novices and where he taught theology.⁸

It is said that Vilarrasa had under him as novices at La Quercia Fathers Alexandre Vincent Jandel, who was to become in 1850 vicar general and in 1855 master general of the order, and Henri Dominique Lacordaire.⁹ This statement is borne out by the dates given by O'Daniel¹⁰ for the two periods during which Vilarrasa filled the position of assistant novice master. Lacordaire received the habit at the Minerva in Rome on April 9, 1839,¹¹ and arrived at La Quercia to begin his canonical novitiate a few days later. Since Vilarrasa did not go to the Minerva until the opening of the academic year in the fall of 1839, he would have spent several months with the future restorer of the order in France. Jandel received the habit on May 15, 1841,¹² and would have been in the midst of his novitiate when Vilarrasa returned from the Minerva with the lectorate to resume his duties as assistant master of novices.

Vilarrasa remained at La Quercia until the fall of 1844. O'Daniel noted that his last Mass listed there was on September 26, and concluded that it was then that he started his journey to the United States.¹³ Father George A. J. Wilson, Provincial of St. Joseph's Province in the United States, was in Europe at the time and it was no doubt due to association with him that Vilarrasa volunteered for the American mission. He embarked at Le Havre on November 17, 1844, having as his traveling com-

⁶ Cf. Victor Francis O'Daniel, O.P., *The Dominican Province of Saint Joseph* (New York, 1942), p. 173.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 173-174.

⁹ Cf. the sketch in the *Acta congregationis biennalis 1888 . . . celebratae* (San Francisco, 1888), p. 12.

¹⁰ O'Daniel, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

¹¹ Cf. Angelus Walz, O.P., *Compendium historiae Ordinis Praedicatorum* (Rome, 1947), p. 557.

¹² Cf. Hyacinthe-Marie Cormier, *Vie du révérendissime Père Alexandre-Vincent Jandel* (Paris, 1896), p. 87.

¹³ O'Daniel, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

panions Fathers Januarius Mannes D'Arco and James Aloysius Orengo, two Italian Dominicans who had also volunteered to go to America, and Fathers Langdon Thomas Grace and Nicholas Raymond Young, members of St. Joseph's Province who had been sent to Italy to complete their studies and had just been granted the Dominican lectorate in sacred theology.¹⁴

Father Vilarrasa himself gives us some account of the journey in a letter written to his family from St. Joseph's Priory near Somerset, Ohio, and dated January 12, 1845. He wrote:

. . . After forty-eight days of sailing and without having encountered any danger, we landed at New York, thank God. We disembarked on January 3, at midday. On the ninth in the afternoon we arrived at Somerset, half an hour's ride from this convent, which is, one might say, built in the middle of the woods.

He gave other details of the trip, noting that they left New York at four o'clock in the afternoon of the day of their arrival and went by train to Philadelphia, where they remained till the sixth and then traveled to Baltimore, remaining there only over night. From there they traveled about 300 miles by rail to a city, "the name of which I do not remember." The rest of the journey to Somerset was made by stagecoach, and "after two days and nights of continual running and bumping" they arrived at Somerset.¹⁵

Two weeks after his arrival at St. Joseph's, Vilarrasa was "again in the novitiate" having been put in charge of the eight novices in the convent.¹⁶ He did not remain long in this office, however, for before the end of the year 1845 Father Joseph T. Jarboe resigned as prior of St. Joseph's and Vilarrasa was chosen to take his place.¹⁷ He ruled the growing community in Ohio until 1849 when, in company with Alemany he sailed for Europe, having been chosen as definitor to represent St. Joseph's Province at the general chapter to be held at Naples. It is at this point that his chronicle began.

Three copies of this document exist at the present time. Two are in the archives of Holy Name Province, while a third is in the archives

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

¹⁵ *Revista Católica*, VI (June, 1845), 526-527. Eight letters written by Vilarrasa—four from Ohio, two from San Francisco, and two from Monterey—were published between the years 1845-1852 in the *Revista Católica*, a review devoted to the missions and published at Barcelona.

¹⁶ Letter of Vilarrasa dated April 5, 1845, *Revista Católica*, VI (June, 1845), 529.

¹⁷ O'Daniel, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

of the master general in Rome. One of the copies in the provincial archives is evidently a first draft, for a great many corrections and additions are made to it. The manuscript of this first draft is incomplete, ending with the entry for 1868. Evidently the last page has been lost. The second copy is made from this corrected draft. The copy in the master general's archives is almost identical with this second revision. All three copies are done in Vilarrasa's own careful script and the work is in simple but correct Latin. In its finished form the "Chronicle" fills twelve pages of ruled paper $7\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ inches in size.

The "Chronicle" is not a record of the events noted at the time they occurred, but was written all at once, evidently at the end of 1873. The second draft was dated December 31, 1873, but then two entries for 1874 were added and the date changed to February 12, 1874. In the translation of the "Chronicle" which follows an attempt has been made to be as literal as is in keeping with good English usage. Such notes have been added as could be gathered from the sources now available.

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CHRONICLE FOR THE HISTORY OF THE ORDER OF FRIARS PREACHERS IN CALIFORNIA

California is a region situated in the western part of North America, extending along the shores of the Pacific Ocean, and is divided into Upper and Lower California. The lower or southern part, which properly bears the name of the peninsula of California, is under the Mexican government, while the upper or northern part, beginning with the city of San Diego and going north, constitutes one of the states of the republic of the United States of North America. This state, famous for its deposits of gold, possesses a climate that is extremely healthful and pleasing, and soil that is almost everywhere fertile, and has made such rapid advances both as to the number of its inhabitants and their culture that scarcely any similar example is found in history. At the time of the domination of Spain, there were some very flourishing missions there, where many thousands of Indians were educated in religion, the arts, and civil life. Toward the end of the period of Spanish domination the missions of Upper California were committed to the Fathers Minor of the Observance; the missions of Lower California, to our Fathers of the Mexican Province. These missions, however, when they were secularized by the Mexican government in 1837 and their administration removed

from the care of the Fathers, began to decline so rapidly that by the year 1846 they had almost completely disappeared.

In the year 1840, on October 4, Father Francis Garcia Diego, of the Order of Minors of the Observance, was consecrated the first Bishop of both Californias. He died in the city of Santa Barbara on April 30, 1846.

The following has been transcribed from the Acts of the General Chapter of our Order held at Rome in 1777, which are conserved in the Archives of the Most Reverend Master of the Order:¹

We announce that the Catholic King of the Spanish, Charles III, in accordance with his singular kindness toward our Order, has assigned to the Brethren of our Province of St. James of Mexico the care of 14 missions in the region of California, and that 23 priests of our Order, together with two lay-brothers went there at the royal expense, and these, having landed there, began to cultivate the vineyard granted to them with such solicitude that in a short time with the help of God they had led more than two thousand idolators to the Christian religion and had erected two new missions. Wherefore we are led to hope that it may happen that all those barbarians may be led from the miserable servitude of the demons to the knowledge and worship of the one true God.

1849²

We must not, above all, omit from this Chronicle mention of Father Peter Augustine Anderson, an American by nationality and a convert to the Catholic faith from Protestantism. He was a member of the Prov-

¹ The first draft of the "Chronicle" originally began with the entry for the year 1850. The first three paragraphs of the text as given here were written on a separate page and are pasted to the top of the original first page, above the title. The actual text from the *Acta* of the general chapter does not appear, probably because Vilarrasa had a copy of it at hand and did not wish to bother copying it out in this first rough draft. The first sentence of this addition originally read: "California is a peninsula of the Pacific Ocean, divided into an upper and a lower part." This is corrected in pencil to the reading here given which appears thus also in the second and third drafts.

² This paragraph on Father Anderson is on a page marked *Addenda* in the original draft.

Many of the details concerning Anderson and his work in California will probably always remain a mystery. Brief notes on him are given in Victor Francis O'Daniel, O.P., *The Dominican Province of Saint Joseph* (New York, 1942), p. 84, and in Henry L. Walsh, S.J., *Hallowed Were the Gold Dust Trails* (Santa Clara, 1946), pp. 447-448, 514. John B. McGloin, S.J., also contributed an article on Anderson to the special issue of the *Superior California Catholic Herald*, April 28, 1950, wherein is commemorated the centenary of the first Mass in Sacramento. The following facts on Father Anderson seem certain: He was born in New Jersey in 1817 (not 1812 as McGloin says). He was professed in the Dominican Order at St. Rose's Priory, Kentucky, on August 4,

ince of St. Joseph in North America and in the year 1849, having obtained permission from his superiors to devote himself to the missions, traveled to California for the purpose of establishing the Order there if possible. There in those difficult times he exercised the sacred ministry with indefatigable zeal, never sparing himself anything. He erected the first church³ in the city of Sacramento under the title of St. Rose of Lima. He was in San Francisco and suffering from ill health when he heard that the plague which is called cholera had broken out in the city of Sacramento, and though another priest⁴ offered to go there, our Anderson, even though himself sick, immediately hastened to that city with evident danger to his life and there indeed shortly afterward, stricken by the plague and duly fortified by the Sacraments, died a victim of charity on November

1833, and was ordained to the priesthood there on April 4, 1840, by Bishop Richard P. Miles, O.P., Bishop of Nashville, who as prior of St. Rose had received his profession almost seven years before. He spent some time at St. Joseph's Priory in Ohio (not St. Joseph's in New Jersey as Walsh states, *op. cit.*, p. 514, n. 268). Walsh says that he resigned as procurator of St. Joseph's in September, 1846, and from this time until September 24, 1847, was in Canada and came over the plains in 1849 (*ibid.*). O'Daniel says that he was sent to California in 1849 by Father Alemany who was then provincial; but that while in New York awaiting passage to Panama, he became aware of the plight of the Irish immigrants in Canada who were dying of ship fever and went there to aid them, thus delaying his arrival in California until "about the summer of 1850" (*op. cit.*, p. 84).

³ In a letter written from San Francisco on December 18, 1850 [*Revista Católica*, XVIII (April, 1851), 356] Vilarrasa says that Anderson had "*already begun to build a church in Sacramento*" (italics mine). Walsh (*op. cit.*, p. 447) says: "According to Doctor Gregory Phelan, a Catholic pioneer, who had been the city physician from 1849, and who resided in Sacramento for the following forty years, Father Anderson said Mass wherever he could upon his arrival in Sacramento, but the Catholics shortly secured for him a frame structure on S Street near Fifth, which was fitted up as a chapel with a sort of sacristy in back which served as a temporary residence for the priest." Then, less than a month before Anderson's death, Peter Burnett, the first Governor of California and a convert to Catholicism, deeded to the parish the block bounded by Seventh and Eighth, and J and K Streets. The governor headed a committee to provide for a church building which was almost completed by November 26 when it collapsed in a violent windstorm.

The fallen structure was rebuilt by Anderson's successor and was dedicated by Archbishop Alemany on February 23, 1851. Cf. Walsh, *op. cit.*, p. 448.

⁴ Probably Father Anthony Langlois, then pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Church in San Francisco and vicar for the northern part of the Diocese of California. Walsh records that Langlois assisted Anderson on his deathbed (*ibid.*).

27, 1850, in the 33rd⁵ year of his life and the 17th⁵ of his religious profession. His body, which was first buried in the church erected by him, was transferred to Benicia in the month of October, 1854, and there the exequies were carried out according to the ritual of the Order and he was buried beneath the church.⁶

1850

In the year 1850 on June 30 the Very Reverend Father Joseph Sadoc Alemany, a son of the convent of Vich of the Province of Aragon in Spain, assigned in the Province of St. Joseph of the United States of North America, and at that time the Prior Provincial of that Province, while on his way to the elective General Chapter convoked at Naples,⁷ spent some time in Rome and was consecrated Bishop of Monterey by His Eminence Cardinal Fransoni in the church of St. Charles *al Corso*.⁸

(Father Charles Pius Montgomery, ex-Provincial of our Province of St. Joseph, had been named Bishop of Monterey, but refused to accept the bishopric.)⁹

Monterey is a city of Upper California, founded by the Spaniards and was, at the time of the Spanish domination, the capital of California.

Since I, Brother Francis Sadoc Vilarrasa, a son of the convent of Barcelona of the Province of Aragon, also assigned in the Province of St. Joseph of the United States of North America, and elected a definitor

⁵ In the original draft blanks were left in these places and the figures inserted later.

⁶ Anderson's body now lies in the community cemetery in Benicia.

⁷ This chapter was never held. Early in 1850 Father Vincent Ajello, then master general, was obliged to flee from Rome as a result of political unrest there. On October 1 Pope Pius IX in a letter to the whole order declared that the general chapter could not be held under the circumstances and appointed Jandel as vicar general of the order. Cf. Angelus Walz, O.P., *Compendium historiae Ordinis Praedicatorum* (Rome, 1947), p. 523. Hyacinthe-Marie Cormier, *Vie du révérendissime Père Alexandre-Vincent Jandel* (Paris, 1896), pp. 179 ff. D. A. Mortier, O.P., *Histoire des maîtres généraux de l'ordre des frères prêcheurs* (Paris, 1903-1914), VII, 482 ff.

⁸ O'Daniel (*op. cit.*, p. 171, n. 12) declares himself puzzled as to which of the Roman churches bearing the name of St. Charles was the scene of this consecration. He is evidently not aware of Vilarrasa's designation of it as St. Charles *al Corso* which makes it clear that it is the St. Charles on the Corso Umberto just a few blocks from the Piazza del Popolo and near the Mausoleum of Augustus.

⁹ This paragraph does not appear at all in the first draft. It is written in at the top of page 3 of the second draft. On Montgomery cf. O'Daniel, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-72, and *passim*.

to the same General Chapter from the aforementioned Province of St. Joseph, was then at Rome, Bishop Alemany, before his consecration, invited me to accompany him to California. I freely gave my assent to this invitation, with, however, this express condition, that I should not go there for any other reason than that I might provide for the spread of the Order there. This condition he accepted, and by letters given at Rome on July 18, 1850, the Most Reverend Father Jerome Gigli, Vicar General of the Master of the Order, assigned me to the missions of California under the obedience of Bishop Alemany, giving power to the aforementioned Bishop or to the temporary superior to assign me to any convent or house whatsoever within the boundaries of the aforementioned mission.

At my request and that of Bishop Alemany, the Most Reverend Gigli, by a rescript dated July 21, 1850, granted authority to erect a new Province of the Order under the title of the Most Holy Name of Jesus of both Californias, and granted other things for the ruling of that same Province,¹⁰ which, since they were revoked by the Most Reverend Master of the Order by the Encyclical dated July 30, 1864, can be omitted here.¹¹

On December 7, 1850, Bishop Alemany and I landed at the city of San Francisco. A Belgian Sister, by name Mary of the Cross Goemaere, professed in the Third Order at Paris, came with us with the intention of founding a monastery of the Third Order for the education of girls.¹²

¹⁰ Neither this rescript nor the letter of July 18 can be found in the provincial archives. A search of the master general's archives has also thus far failed to uncover them.

¹¹ This subsequent revocation may explain the absence of the rescript from the archives. It is possible that the document was destroyed when it ceased to have legal force. The encyclical of July 30, 1864, will be discussed later.

¹² Father Vilarrasa gives a detailed account of the entire journey in a letter written from San Francisco, December 14, 1850 [*Revista Católica*, XVIII (April, 1851), 354]. The principal events are as follows:

In Toulouse Vilarrasa was joined by two sisters from the Dominican convent there who wished to go to Somerset. On August 26 they left Toulouse and met Bishop Alemany in Paris two days later. The bishop had meanwhile obtained a volunteer for the California missions in the person of Sister Mary Goemaere, a novice about to make profession at the Dominican convent of the Holy Cross in Paris. On August 30 Alemany departed for Ireland, hoping to gain some recruits for his diocese from the clergy there. On September 3 Vilarrasa and the nuns set out for Boulogne and from there sailed for England. After a few days in London they went to Liverpool where they met Bishop Alemany on the eleventh and that same day sailed for New York on the *Columbus*, a sailing ship. The trip was uneventful. The two priests were able to say Mass "the greater part of the time" and on Sundays the bishop preached to about 500 passengers and members of the crew.

They arrived in New York on October 11. Vilarrasa took the two nuns from

1851

The most Reverend Father Alexandre Vincent Jandel, Vicar General of the Order, in a letter dated at Rome, February 25, 1851, instituted me his Commissary that I might be able to erect convents of our Order in California, and by this same letter incorporated into the Order convents that might be so erected from that time, granting them all the rights and privileges of convents rightly instituted. Furthermore, he constituted me Superior of these convents, with all the authority usually joined to the office of Prior Provincial.¹³

On May 2, 1851, the Most Reverend Bishop committed to me the care of the church of St. Charles in the mission called "Carmel" which was one of the missions founded by the Franciscan Fathers four English miles from Monterey, where some of the dispersed Indians still wandered about. On every other Sunday, therefore, I went to this church, having first celebrated Mass in Monterey, to celebrate another Mass there and give a sermon.¹⁴

1852

On February 4, 1852, by a letter dated at Monterey, I erected in that same city a convent with a novitiate under the title of our holy Father,

Toulouse to Somerset and spent some time at St. Joseph's Priory gathering his and Alemany's belongings. Meanwhile the bishop traveled to Baltimore for a visit with Archbishop Samuel Eccleston.

They met again in New York on October 27 and the following day the two clergymen and Sister Mary Goemaere sailed on the steamer *Crescent City* for the Isthmus of Panama. They arrived at Chagres during the night of November 6 and the following morning set out on the river in a small boat "guided and worked by three Indians." They were three and a half days on the river, traveling by day and spending the nights in Indian huts or small inns. Before dinner on the tenth they arrived at the town of Las Cruces and on the following day departed on muleback for Panama City, arriving on the twelfth. They stayed at the seminary there and Vilarrasa sang a solemn Mass at which the bishop preached. On the sixteenth they sailed on the steamer *Columbus* (it is curious to note that this ship bore the same name as the sailing ship which carried them from Liverpool to New York), arrived at Acapulco on November 24 and after a few hours' stop sailed again arriving in San Francisco Bay at eleven o'clock on the night of December 6.

¹³ This letter cannot be found in the provincial archives.

¹⁴ Vilarrasa mentions his work at Carmel also in his letter to his family dated October 2, 1851 [*Revista Católica*, XX (January, 1852), 93]. Zephyrin Engelhardt, O.F.M., in his *The Missions and Missionaries of California* (San Francisco, 1915), IV, 690, says that Vilarrasa was put in charge of the mission on August 8, 1851. The same author in his *Mission San Carlos Borromeo* (Santa

Dominic.¹⁵ On this same day I clothed six young men from Spain with the habit of the clerics of the Order. Among them were Brothers Vincent Vinyes and Dominic Costa.¹⁶

The same day, in the evening, we all gathered in choir, where certain regulations made by me for the orderly administration of the convent and for regular observance¹⁷ were made public by Father Ignatius Ramirez

Barbara, 1934), p. 248, indicates that Vilarrasa's work ended there on February 28 (or 26), 1854.

¹⁵ A copy of the letter of erection is found at the beginning of the "Book of Minutes of the Conventual Council" (hereafter "Minutes") of St. Dominic's Convent, Monterey, and later Benicia. This volume is now in APOP.

¹⁶ According to the letter of Vilarrasa dated October 2, 1851 [*Revista Católica*, XX (January, 1852), 93], the six young Catalans left Paris for Le Havre on July 12. A letter of May 2, 1852 [*Revista Católica*, XXI (July, 1852), 91], informs us that they arrived at Monterey on December 26, 1851.

The record of their reception is found in the "Book of Receptions and Professions" (hereafter "Profession Book") now in APOP. The entries are in Vilarrasa's own hand. The six novices are listed as: Brothers Vincent Vinyes, Thomas Fossas, Raymond Cervera, Dominic Costa, Louis Berenguer, and Hyacinth Soler.

Opposite the names of Fossas and Soler there is the note that they "put off the habit." No date is given. The other four made their solemn profession on March 7, 1853, at "about nine o'clock in the morning" ("Profession Book," p. 8).

Brother Louis Berenguer died in Benicia on November 5, 1856. Brother Raymond Cervera evidently returned to Spain at a date we have not been able to determine, but before ordination. A *Catalogus* of the Dominicans in California was first printed in 1861. His name does not appear there, nor does it appear until 1878 when he is listed among those "outside the province" in the College of St. Dominic in Ocaña, Spain. He continues to be so listed until 1900. The *Catalogus omnium conventuum et domorum provinciarum et congregationum sacri Ordinis Praedicatorum* (Rome, 1910), i.e., a general list of all Dominicans throughout the world, lists him (p. 195) as still in Ocaña. The *Analecta S.O.P.*, XII (1915), 161, publishes a brief obituary noting that he died in Ocaña on December 7, 1911.

Vincent Vinyes and Dominic Costa will appear again in the "Chronicle."

¹⁷ Vilarrasa gives us some notion of the observance in his letter dated May 2, 1852 [*Revista Católica*, XXI (July, 1852, 91)]. "In our convent, by way of observance, we do not know the taste of meat, but we do have good fish and eggs. Daily at three in the morning we say Matins; at six we have meditation, Prime, Conventual Mass, and at seven we have coffee and then have recreation for a half hour. At eleven thirty we say the Rosary, then Tierce and Sext. If it is a fast day we say None. Dinner follows. At two in the afternoon we have Vespers and at six fifteen Compline, Salve, meditation, spiritual reading, supper and recreation. This is the life we lead from the first of January until the feast of St. Sylvester. The intervening hours are devoted to classes, studies, etc."

de Arellano,¹⁸ of the Mexican Province. All of these regulations the Most Reverend Vicar General of the Order later confirmed, adding certain corrections. Then Compline was sung with the *Salve* and *O Lumen*. Bishop Alemany was present at all these ceremonies as one who always, when he is in the city, assiduously assists at all the activities of the community.¹⁹

In the beginning of the foundation the Brethren suffered most serious inconveniences. The Order thus far possessed no income in California, and even though the strictest economy was observed, the alms and other offerings did not in the least suffice to supply food and clothing. We could not therefore make plans to build a real convent. Two small and very humble houses about 200 yards apart had been obtained. In the better house a rectangular room was selected for a church and choir, another room for study and recreation, another for a common dormitory, and a fourth for a parlor for seculars; in the other house the refectory and kitchen were found. When saying "grace" after dinner in procession as is customary in the Order²⁰ it was necessary to pass out into the open. The Brethren were subjected to these and to other inconveniences for the whole time that they remained at Monterey, nor was their condition much better at the beginning of the transfer of the convent to the city of Benicia.

On February 26, 1852 the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, granted, in a rescript requested by Bishop Alemany, that convents of our Order and of the Order of Minors of the Observance might be founded.²¹

¹⁸ Ramirez in 1840 was in Lower California at the San Antonio white pueblo and was the vice-president of the missions there (Engelhardt, *The Missions and Missionaries of California*, IV, 238). In 1846 he was still in San Antonio but was now president of the Dominicans in Lower California (*ibid.*, IV, 515). He evidently came to Monterey in March of 1849 (*ibid.*, IV, 604). He alternated with a Protestant minister in reading a prayer at the opening of each session of the constitutional convention of 1849 (*ibid.*, IV, 654, n. 2). His last baptism at Monterey was February 2, 1853, and Engelhardt concluded that he was then recalled to Mexico (*ibid.*, IV, 692, n. 19).

¹⁹ In a document dated April 4, 1852, the Holy See granted a request made by Alemany that he might follow the Dominican rite whenever he was in a convent or church of his order. This document is preserved in the Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco (hereafter AASF), "Roman Decrees," H 21, n. 26.

²⁰ The custom referred to is that of chanting the *Miserere* (Psalm 50) while proceeding processionally from the refectory to chapel.

²¹ The text of Alemany's petition and the concession by the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide are reproduced in the *Acta congregationis biennalis . . . celebratae . . . 1865* (San Francisco, 1866), pp. 6-7. Engelhardt gives an English translation in *The Missions and Missionaries of California*, IV, 700-701. The original is in AASF, "Roman Decrees," H 21, n. 21.

1853

In this year the diocese of Monterey was divided and there was erected in the city of San Francisco an archiepiscopal see to which Bishop Alemany was transferred as Archbishop; Monsignor Thaddeus Amat of the Congregation of the Mission was placed over the see of Monterey.

1854

In order that I might the easier provide for the spread of the Order, having previously obtained authorization from the Most Reverend Vicar General of the Order on July 10, 1853 and from the Archbishop of San Francisco on March 20 of the following year, I transferred the convent of Monterey to Benicia by a letter dated March 31, 1854.²²

Benicia is a small city located on the straits of the Sacramento River which are called Carquinez, and is a distance of twenty-seven English miles from the city of San Francisco. This city was founded in the year 1847 by the Mexican general Senor Mariano Vallejo, who gave it the name of his wife, Benicia, so called from St. Philip Benitio.

There already then existed at Benicia a church recently built and intended for a parish²³ but not at all finished and furthermore burdened with a debt of two thousand dollars. This the Archbishop gave to the Order. We built a very humble house without cells, such as we had at Monterey, and for this purpose the Archbishop assisted us with a sum of five hundred dollars. Before the beginning of the year 1859, thanks to the donations of the faithful of the city of Benicia, who, though few in number and destitute of the goods of fortune, nevertheless excel in generosity, the church was completed, a sacristy had been added together with a choir behind the altar, and all the debts were paid.

There was then committed to our Brethren the care of the parishes of Benicia and Martinez, which latter is a town situated across the Sacramento River almost opposite Benicia. There was already a small church there under the title of St. Catherine of Siena. Both parishes then embraced a vast territory.

The Church of Benicia was solemnly blessed by the Archbishop under the title of our holy Father Dominic on June 18, 1854.

²² A copy of the letter of translation in Vilarrasa's own hand is found in "Minutes," p. 10. It is evidently not the original, however, since it is indicated as being "registered" on page 12.

²³ The church was started by Father Hugh Gallagher, a priest from the Diocese of Pittsburgh who had come to California as a result of the appeal made by Alemany at the First Plenary Council of Baltimore. For a brief but highly informative sketch of Gallagher cf. the article by Richard J. Purcell in the *Dictionary of American Biography*, VII, 102.

The old missionaries of California of our Order and of the Order of Minors of the Observance had for many years observed an agreement concerning suffrages for the deceased brethren of the two Orders. Lest after the destruction of the missions so praiseworthy a practice should be abandoned, a new agreement was made by us on May 15, 1854, with the Friars Minor of the Observance of the Apostolic College recently founded in the city of Santa Barbara. This agreement later obtained the approbation of the Most Reverend Master of the Order, Father Jandel.²⁴

1855

In this year a part of the convent of Benicia was built, and in the following year we enlarged the same convent. This building, however, remained burdened with a debt of more than seventeen thousand dollars which, however, has been almost all paid off little by little in a space of fourteen years.

1857

On December 19, 1857, Brothers Vincent Vinyes and Dominic Costa received the Order of the Priesthood at the hands of the Most Reverend Archbishop Alemany in the church at Benicia. They were the first priests of the Order to be ordained in California.²⁵

1860

In this year the Archdiocese of San Francisco was divided and the Vicariate Apostolic of Marysville constituted. This Vicariate was in the year 1868 made into the Diocese of Grass Valley. Over this Vicariate and later over this Diocese was placed Monsignor Eugene O'Connell, who in the year 1866 entered our Third Order.

On May 21, 1860, by the authority of the Most Reverend Master of the Order specially committed to me, I constituted Reverend Father Vincent Vinyes a Lector of Philosophy and Sacred Theology²⁶ and the same day installed him as Vicar of the convent of Benicia.

²⁴ The text of the agreement in Spanish is found in "Minutes," p. 11. Engelhardt refers to it in *The Missions and Missionaries of California*, IV, 708-709. For the earlier agreement between the two orders alluded to, cf. *ibid.*, I, 482.

²⁵ In the original draft the name of the ordaining prelate was given as Peter Losa, Bishop of Sonora. This is crossed out and Archbishop Alemany's name entered in its place. Losa was exiled from his see in Sonora and spent some time in San Francisco as a guest of Alemany, assisting at various episcopal functions. Archdiocesan records show, however, that it was the archbishop who ordained on this occasion ("Liber A Diocesis Sancti Francisci in California superiori . . .," AASF, H 5, p. 20). Bishop Losa did ordain other Dominicans at a later date, which explains the momentary slip of Vilarrasa's pen.

²⁶ The Dominican degree of lector of sacred theology can ordinarily be conferred only in a *studium generale*, i.e., one that meets certain specified require-

1863

On a lot which we had bought at an opportune moment in the city of San Francisco, which was rapidly growing into a very noble city, it was determined to build a church, to which a convent would later be joined. Since, however, it seemed very difficult for the Brethren to subsist there without a parish, and the Archbishop was of the opinion that all parish churches should belong to the Ordinary, an agreement was reached with the Archbishop on April 28, 1863, that we should sell him a portion of our lot so that a parish church could be built there, while we should buy another lot to build a convent without a parish.²⁷ On the lot bought from us by the Archbishop, then, the parish church of St. Brigid was erected and was solemnly blessed by the Archbishop on February 14, 1864, and committed to our care.²⁸ To the house annexed to it was given the name

ments as to number of students, professors, and quality of courses. Vinyes was granted the degree in virtue of special powers conferred on Vilarrasa by the master general. These powers were conveyed in a letter of Jandel dated at Rome, April 18, 1857. The letter itself is no longer extant, but a copy of parts of it was transcribed by Vilarrasa into a book bearing the title "Record" now in APOP. The transcription is on page 18. Among other things it is provided that if there are not enough lectors to conduct the oral examination—five are usually required—other fathers may be substituted. The master general suggests that Archbishop Alemany be invited to take part in the examination and that he may have a vote as to the outcome.

²⁷ "Minutes" under date of August 13, 1863, records a decision to sell two lots in San Francisco "for a parish church." The convent referred to here is evidently not a convent to be attached to the parish church, but another convent which should have a conventual church attached to it, for on October 6, 1863, we find Alemany granting Vilarrasa permission to build a house of the order with a public church in the city of San Francisco between the squares called Lafayette, Hamilton, and Alta. These squares bound the area occupied by St. Dominic's Church. A copy of the permission in Vilarrasa's hand is preserved together with copies of other documents from the Holy See and the archbishop on a loose folio among Vilarrasa's papers in APOP.

In a report written at the Minerva in Rome on July 3, 1864, Vilarrasa refers to the committing of St. Brigid's Church to the brethren, noting that they assumed it "with a view to preparing the way for the erection of a convent. After this convent shall have been erected and the church completed, the church of St. Brigid, together with the parish, will be put back into the hands of the Archbishop." The report adds: "It is of the greatest importance to our Order to have a convent in San Francisco, which is one of the most important and richest cities in the whole of America and even of the world." A photostat of this "Report" is preserved in APOP.

²⁸ St. Brigid's Church was administered by the Dominicans from its beginnings until 1875 when it was turned over to the diocesan clergy.

of the Holy Rosary with which title it was then our intention to adorn the future convent of the city of San Francisco.

On October 13, 1863, having obtained permission of the Most Reverend Master of the Order to make a journey to Rome, principally that I might speak with him concerning the affairs of the Order, I set out for Europe, taking with me for the purpose of studies Brother Pius Murphy, a professed novice.²⁹ Father Vincent Vinyes was left by me as Vicar General with full authority.

1864

On February 24, 1864, our Most Holy Lord Pope Pius IX, by his rescript given through the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars granted that, the proper formalities being observed, three other convents of the Order might be founded in the Archdiocese of San Francisco.³⁰

On October 20, 1864, with the consent of the Master of the Order, I made an agreement with our Province of England for the education of novices and students of California there.³¹

The Most Reverend Master of the Order, by his Encyclical dated July 30, 1864, established certain things for regular observance and orderly administration in California.³²

²⁹ John Pius Murphy was born in Quebec on June 23, 1844. He came to California with his parents in the early days of the gold rush, and received his early education from the fathers in the convent at Benicia. From the time he was eleven years old he wore the Dominican habit as an "oblate," and was formally admitted to the novitiate on July 2, 1859. He made first profession on the feast of St. Dominic, August 4, 1860, and solemn profession on the feast of St. Francis, October 4, 1863. Vilarrasa evidently took him to the convent of St. Maximin in France where he studied for a year and then was sent to the house of studies of the English province at Leicester. He was ordained a priest by William Joseph Hugo, Bishop of Clifton, on January 31, 1869, and remained in England until 1871 when he returned to Benicia. He was appointed the first prior of St. Dominic's in San Francisco when the house there was raised to the status of a priory on February 25, 1876. In 1892 he succeeded Father Vincent Vinyes as vicar general (the title has been changed from commissary general in 1889) of California. He held this office until 1908; he died in San Francisco on March 19, 1922.

³⁰ A copy of the text of this permission in Vilarrasa's hand is found in the folio mentioned in note 32.

³¹ As a result of this agreement a number of young men from England and Ireland volunteered for service in California and received their Dominican training in the English province. Some of the more outstanding students among them finished their theological studies at Louvain.

³² A printed copy of this encyclical is in St. Albert's College library in a

1865

On January 15 returning from Europe I landed in San Francisco, accompanied by Father Antoninus Migliorini of our Congregation of St. Mark.³³

In the month of March, 1865, Father Vincent Vinyes was instituted by me as head of the convent of Benicia.

On March 29, Father James Henry Aerden³⁴ was confirmed by me as vicar of the house of the Most Holy Rosary. He had actually fulfilled this office from the beginning of the foundation of that house.

In the month of June, 1865, the church of St. Francis of Assisi in the city of San Francisco was committed to us. The church was weighed down by an enormous debt. It was administered by us until October, 1872, at which time the church edifice was elegantly completed and the debt on it paid in the most part.³⁵

Beginning August 8, 1865, under my presidency the first Biennial Congregation of California was held in the convent of Benicia. The Acts of this Congregation were confirmed by the Master of the Order on the

volume which bears the binder's title "Litterae Mag. Gen. 1855-72." The encyclical is concerned principally with regular monastic observance. It also provides for the biennial congregation to fill the place of the provincial chapter.

³³ Migliorini was born on January 5, 1830, and professed April 21, 1852. He is described as *praeses* of the convent at Benicia in "Minutes," pp. 20-21. He is last so noted in the entry for August 27, 1867. He returned to Europe on January 30, 1868.

³⁴ Aerden was a member of the Province of St. Rose in Belgium. He was born in that country on May 15, 1823, and made his religious profession in September, 1841. He was ordained a priest at Ghent on December 20, 1845. Five years later he came to California, arriving in San Francisco on February 23, 1851, a little more than two months after the arrival of Villarrasa. He labored for about six years among the Indians in northern California and Oregon. The first record of his presence in Benicia is on September 19, 1857, when he assisted at the ordination of Vincent Vinyes and Dominic Costa to the diaconate ("Liber A Diocesis Sancti Francisci . . .," AASF, H 5, p. 18). He died at Benicia on March 2, 1896. A brief obituary is found in *The Monitor*, March 7, 1896.

³⁵ This was the first church to be established in San Francisco after the Mission Dolores. The first frame structure was built in 1849 and the first Mass offered there by Father John Brouillet. A new building was begun in 1857 "around and over the little frame structure, where divine services continued to be held until the new church was roofed and the floor was laid." (Cf. *History of St. Francis* in the brochure published on the occasion of the centennial celebration of the parish held October 2, 1949.)

following January 1.³⁶ Those present were: Father Vincent Vinyes, superior of the convent of Benicia, Father James Henry Aerden, vicar of the house of the Most Holy Rosary, Father Antoninus Migliorini, Father Thomas O'Neill, Father Jordan Caldwell, and Father Louis Daniel.³⁷

On August 10, 1865, when Father Aerden took over the administration of the parish of St. Francis, I appointed Father Thomas O'Neill as vicar of the house of the Most Holy Rosary.

1866

From October 7 to 21 inclusive, under the presidency of the Most Reverend Martin John Spalding, Archbishop of Baltimore and Apostolic Legate, the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore was celebrated in the cathedral church of Baltimore. There were present seven archbishops, 38 bishops, one administrator, two abbots, 27 superiors of religious orders and 90 theologians. From our Order there were present: Most Reverend Alemany, Archbishop of San Francisco, Most Reverend Thomas Grace, Bishop of St. Paul, Very Reverend William Dominic O'Carroll, Provincial of the Province of St. Joseph, I as Commissary General of California and five theologians.³⁸ For the time that I was absent from California I left Father Vincent Vinyes as Vicar General with full authority.

1867

On March 13, 1867, Father Antoninus Migliorini was instituted by me as superior of the convent of Benicia, Father Mannes Doogan as vicar of the house of the Most Holy Rosary, and Father Vincent Vinyes vicar of the brethren in the parochial church of St. Francis of Assisi.

Beginning July 9, 1867, under my presidency the second Biennial Congregation of California was celebrated in the convent of Benicia. The Acts of this Congregation did not obtain confirmation from the Master of the Order.³⁹ Those present were: Father James Henry Aerden,

³⁶ This was the first biennial congregation held in accordance with the encyclical of the master general of June 30, 1864. A MS copy of these *Acta* is in the provincial archives. They were printed in San Francisco in 1865.

³⁷ This is the first mention in the "Chronicle" of Fathers O'Neill, Caldwell, and Daniel. They were among the earliest members of the congregation of California.

³⁸ Vilarrasa was evidently accompanied by Anthony Langlois as his theologian, for his name is listed in the *Acta* of the council [*Concilii plenarii Baltimorensis II . . . Acta et Decreta* (Baltimore, 1868), p. lxxv]. The other Dominican theologians mentioned were members of St. Joseph's Province. On Langlois cf. *infra*, n. 40.

³⁹ The MS copy of these *Acta* is still preserved in APOP. There is a note on them that they were not confirmed by the master general. No reason is given for the failure to obtain confirmation. They were, of course, not printed.

Father Vincent Vinyes, Father Augustine Langlois,⁴⁰ Father Mannes Doogan, and Father Patrick Callaghan.

On December 18, 1867, Father Thomas O'Neill was instituted by me as the first prior of the convent of Benicia and accepted the office on the following day.⁴¹

1868

On February 20, 1868, Father Vincent Vinyes was instituted by me as the first sub-prior of the convent of Benicia.

1869

Up to this time the houses in the city of San Francisco were joined to the convent at Benicia in such a way that the brethren assigned there remained under the jurisdiction of the prior of that convent and enjoyed all the rights of those assigned there; but on March 9, 1869, by order of the Most Reverend Master of the Order, I declared these houses entirely separated from the convent of Benicia.

⁴⁰ This is the same Father Langlois who, as pastor of St. Francis Church and vicar foraine for northern California welcomed Alemany and Vilarrasa to San Francisco in 1850. He was born on November 9, 1812, in the town of Saint Vallier in the Province of Quebec and was ordained to the priesthood in Quebec on May 1, 1838. He taught philosophy for a year at the College of Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pocatière and spent two years in parish work before coming to British Columbia as a missionary in 1842. While working in the Northwest he felt a call to the religious life and applied for admission to the Society of Jesus. His application was accepted and he set out for eastern Canada to enter the novitiate, intending evidently to make the journey by ship. He reached San Francisco early in 1849 and perceiving the needs of the Catholics there, joined Father Brouillet who was working among them. Consultation with the Jesuit superiors led to the decision that he should postpone his entrance into the society and remain in San Francisco.

His desire to enter a religious community persisted, however, and on August 28, 1853, he received the Dominican habit at Monterey, taking the name of Augustine. He made his solemn profession at Benicia on October 4 of the following year, and remained at Benicia until 1859 when he returned to Canada, serving at Grondines and at St. Hyacinthe until 1866. The *Catalogus* for 1862-1866 lists him as "absent in Canada" and in 1865 and 1866 his absence is explained as "because of illness." He returned to Benicia in 1866 and was secularized sometime in 1868. He served as pastor of Half Moon Bay, California, 1868-1872 and later was chaplain to the Christian Brothers first in Oakland and later at Martinez where he died on May 9, 1892.

⁴¹ The house in Benicia had not previously had enough religious there to enjoy the status of a priory.

1870

In this year the Fathers began to give missions and retreats and from then on devoted themselves with great assiduity to these labors of the sacred ministry.⁴²

1871

On January 17 I confirmed the election made by the Fathers of Father Patrick Callaghan, until then assigned to the house of the Most Holy Rosary, as prior of the convent of Benicia, and he began his office on the 29th of the same month.⁴³

1872

On June 1, 1872 eight Brethren of our Province of Guatemala in Central America who had been forced into exile as a result of the impious and violent suppression of the regulars by the civil government arrived unexpectedly in San Francisco. They were received most charitably by us, as was only fitting, and absolutely nothing was left undone that they might feel that they had fallen not among strangers but indeed among their own Brethren. However, after they had remained among us for some months, they set out again, some for Spain, some for the republic of San Salvador, bordering upon Guatemala, leaving a professed novice in the convent of Benicia. These are their names: Very Reverend Father Joseph Casamitjana, prior of the convent of Guatemala and Vicar Provincial, Father Anthony Coll, Father John Boschmonar, Father Raphael Casadevall, Father Michael Pages, Father Vincent Marroquin, Brother William Dempflin, professed novice,⁴⁴ and Brother Leo Aguilar, lay brother.

⁴² There are, unfortunately, very few details available concerning these apostolic activities. The first detailed account of the preaching activities of the brethren is in a report for the year 1879 found among Vilarrasa's papers. During that year they gave thirteen missions, as many as five fathers sometimes being engaged in a single mission, six retreats, including those for the diocesan clergy of San Francisco and Los Angeles, and several *tridua*.

⁴³ In accordance with the constitutions of the order the first prior had been appointed (cf. n. 41). His three-year term having expired, his successor was elected by the vocals of the convent, as is the ordinary practice in the order.

⁴⁴ William Dempflin was born November 18, 1838, in the town of Wieblingen, Württemberg, Germany. He received the Dominican habit for, and presumably in, the Convent of St. Dominic, Guatemala City, and was professed there on January 18, 1872. He made solemn profession in Benicia on February 11, 1875, and was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Alemany on December 18 of that same year. Father William, as he was usually known, gained considerable fame as a missionary to the California Indians. An account of some of his missionary activities can be found in two articles in *The Monitor* for May 12, and May 19, 1881. He died on December 3, 1912.

1873

On June 29, 1873, amidst a great concourse of people the church recently built by us in the city of San Francisco was solemnly blessed by the Most Reverend Archbishop Alemany under the title of our Holy Father Dominic. The Very Reverend Father Masnata, superior of the Society of Jesus in California, celebrated the Solemn Mass, assisted by ministers and a master of ceremonies of the same Society. The Reverend Father John Harrington, pastor of the church of St. Francis preached a sermon during the Mass on the utility of the Religious Orders. There were, furthermore, present at this ceremony fourteen Brethren of our Order, one from the Order of Minors of the Observance, the Vicar General of the Archdiocese, as many priests of the secular clergy as could be present, and some young men from the altar boys' society in the church of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus.

On September 8, 1873 the religious house joined to the church—or more properly a part of the proposed convent that was clearly sufficient for the present and would house fifteen of the Brethren comfortably—was almost finished. This house was built under the direction of Brother Peter O'Leary, a Tertiary. After dinner on that day, then, the Most Reverend Archbishop blessed the house, and with the singing of Vespers the regular life was begun there. On that same day letters dated the third of the same month were made public appointing Father Benedict McGovern vicar of the aforementioned house. Five priests and two lay-brothers were assigned to the house at that time.⁴⁵ It can easily be seen that to complete these buildings it was necessary to contract heavy debts.⁴⁶

1874⁴⁷

On January 23, 1874, the Feast of St. Raymond, the Most Reverend Archbishop solemnly consecrated the main altar of our church in the city of San Francisco in honor of our holy Father Dominic, and enclosed in it the relics of the holy martyrs Aurelius and Modestus. He also granted to the faithful on that day an indulgence of one year, and to those visiting the church on the anniversary of the consecration, an indulgence of 40 days, according to the customary form of the Church.

⁴⁵ These were, besides McGovern, Fathers Dominic Joseph Lentz, Jordan Caldwell, Thomas Fitzsimons, and Vincent de Marzo, and Brothers Martin Cassin and Bernard Gaynor.

⁴⁶ The *Acta congregationis biennalis* . . . 1876 (p. 16) report a debt of \$18,386.93 "by reason of the building of the church and house in San Francisco."

⁴⁷ These entries for 1874 were added at the bottom of the page as mentioned in the Introduction, p. 5.

On February 10, 1874, I confirmed the election made by the Fathers of Father Vincent Vinyes as prior of the convent of Benicia and he began that office the same day.

This is a concise history of the Order in California from its beginnings to this day. The Order has progressed slowly up to now, but if it be recalled that only one Father was sent here in the beginning, that he was for a long time the only priest of his Order here, that the Order was completely destitute of any temporal help and furthermore that the Order received little or rather no incentive from the Archdiocese, indeed that grave impediments were placed in its way from time to time,⁴⁸ then it will seem wonderful that there are now found in California two houses of the Brethren with 17 priests, six students (including five still living in Europe) and six lay-brothers. It may be hoped, however, that with God's help and the foundations now having been laid, we may make more rapid progress, so that California may be soon erected into a new Province, for the spread of the Catholic Faith and the added luster of the Order. Fiat, Fiat.

Benicia in the convent of our holy Father Dominic,
February 12, 1874.

Bro. Francis Sadoc Vilarrasa, of the Order of Preachers,
Commissary General of California.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ The reason for this statement and the nature of the "impediments" are not evident from the extant documents. On the other hand, there are records of numerous acts of benevolence on the part of the archbishop toward the order. Sister Gertrude Mary Gray in her "A Preliminary Survey of the Life of the Most Reverend Joseph Sadoc Alemany, O.P., First Archbishop of San Francisco" (unpublished master's dissertation, The Catholic University of America, 1942), pp. 42-43, remarks:

"The Archbishop was always at heart a Dominican and, whenever he could, the visits to Benicia, but, far from favoring his own Order, he seemed to expect exceptional service from it for the diocese. In view of the rather strained relations which developed with Father Vilarassa [*sic*] over the jurisdiction an archbishop might exercise over the regular clergy in a missionary country, it is noteworthy that, when the Archbishop resigned the episcopate in 1884, he automatically resumed active membership in the Dominican Order and one of his first acts was to write to Father Vilarassa [*sic*] for certain immediate permissions regarding gifts of money."

⁴⁹ Vilarrasa continued to rule the order in California as commissary general until the day of his death, March 17, 1888.