



THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF HAVANA

FR. JOHN J. KELLY, OSA



"Developing Leaders For Life"

Letter from
Rev. Monsignor Franklyn M. Casale
President
St. Thomas University
16401 NW 37th Avenue
Miami Gardens, FL 33054

Gratitude prompts me to extend congratulations to Fr. Kelly, the author of this great work about Universidad de Santo Tomás de Villanueva. Fr. Kelly is a dedicated priest who became an outstanding educational leader, an inspiration for St. Thomas University since its founding in 1961, and a friend of this current president for the last 10 years.

The history of the great Catholic university in Havana, Cuba, has now been elegantly described and will be memorialized for the years ahead. I am proud to say that the manuscript for this history will be one of the first items placed in the newly acquired Virage-Endeavor digital archive at St. Thomas University. The fitting connection between this history and the most modern technology typifies the link between the two universities, and also the quality of Catholic education afforded to many successful graduates who have become the most important people in our communities.

Thanks be to God that Fr. Kelly has been given the years and the wisdom to chronicle the important episode in Catholic higher education that Santo Tomás de Villanueva and St. Thomas University together represent.

Sincerely yours,

Reverend Monsignor Franklyn M. Casale

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OF HAVANA**

1946 --- 1961

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P R E F A C E

The Catholic University of Havana, better known as the Universidad de Villanueva, owes its existence and extraordinary performance to the work of Fr. Lorenzo Spirali, OSA, a one time adopted child in Rapino, Italy, where he worked on the fields and elsewhere, until age 20. Then he became a street sweeper in newly adopted U.S.A. in the city of Philadelphia on Spruce St. between Broad and 20th.

Can you imagine a street sweeper, with a three year primary education, praying every day after work at the stable-chapel of St. Rita, and going to night school, then to the professorium in Villanova, and later becoming an Augustinian Priest, very much engaged for eleven years in the Parish of St. Rita, and then sent to Havana, Cuba, to be Pastor of Santo Cristo del Buen Viaje? Then he was called to Rome to be the Econome of the General and finally to Almendares, Havana, to a better section where he built three Churches.... and of course the seven major buildings of the Catholic University of Havana in nearby Biltmore, with the help of many, many Cuban friends and supporters of all his works.

The 'Street Sweeper of God' received one of the first honorary degrees, along with Cuban's President Prio Socarras and American Ambassador Robert Butler, from his own University. We must say to ourselves, "Who better?"

Acknowledgements

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Chapter One

Rev. Lorenzo Spirali, OSA, founder and promoter.

The Universidad de Villanueva, Catholic University of Havana, was begun, supported and promoted by an extraordinary and competent priest, Fr. Spirali. There is a bit of mystery surrounding his origin in Guardialegre on Dec. 26, 1882, for he was born of "patribus ignotis", baptized in Santa Maria Maggiore Parish there on Dec. 31 as Lorenzo Spirali. Likewise a few miles away in Rapino, Donato and Philomena Michelli lost their first child and discovered the newly born child in Guardialegre and adopted him...all in eastern Italy, in the Abruzzi mountains, Province of Chieti.

Lorenzo was raised in the typical Michelli backwoods family, with about three years of formal education and years in various activities as a youngster with great ambitions to somehow serve the Good Lord, guided and supported by his mother, Philomena. After working at various occupations, he finally found himself ready to leave Italy and work in a Philadelphia area as a street sweeper, near St. Rita Church under construction. There he found himself among the Augustinian Fathers, and finally the opportunity to become a religious priest in the Augustinian Order. As an Italian expert he found himself assigned to the Italian area of St. Rita for years, where he found himself attending to his own people with much success, like a new St. Paul, as Cardinal Dougherty once observed.

During the Provincial Chapter of 1926 he was assigned to a new place, Cuba, in Old Havana, as Prior and Pastor of very old Santo Cristo del Buen Viaje Parish, and the adjacent school for boys. In 1932 he was appointed to Rome as Procurator General at the St. Monica house next door to St. Peter Basilica, where the Holy Father resides. After a few splendid years of working for a better Augustinian presence, he was again assigned to Cuba, as Pastor of a new developing Parish in Almendares, across the river from Vedado and old Havana. It was here that he began the building of several Churches and after a few years the construction of the buildings of the Catholic University of Havana.

It all began with the development of Havana, when many Catholic schools moved into more prosperous areas, Vedado, Almendares, Biltmore etc. Consideration was given to the movement of old St. Augustine School of Old Havana to the new areas. Fr. Spirali placed the matter before his many

helpful friends, especially Dr. Agustin Batista, President of The Trust Company of Cuba.

"Well, Agustin, as you know, I want to build a church in the Biltmore, and a school for young people. I would like the Fathers who teach at San Agustin School in old Havana to come out there, and run a first class school, much like the other religious Orders" explained Fr. Spirali to the group.

Some one remarked, "It's too bad it could not be a Catholic University. That is what we really need here."

"Neither the Government, nor the University of Havana, would permit it" cautioned another. "But a church and school in the Biltmore would be a real boon for many people."

On that note the impromptu gathering broke up, but something remained in the mind of Fr. Spirali: a Catholic University is what is really needed. "A Catholic University!" he thought, "those are big words. A Catholic University. Hmm."

As time went along, Fr. Spirali continuously reminded the people of the new land he had acquired for a church and school for Catholic young people, knowing that they would want to help on this new project. No one was really startled at the news. They wondered when he would bring it into being.

Ground was broken on Feb. 24, 1944, and Cardinal Dougherty was again invited to preside the ceremony of the "first stone" for the new church, which would be titled Santo Tomas de Villanueva. Ricardo Mira, the designer, was a patron of the arts, had taken his Architect's degree at Catholic University, Washington, D. C., and was thrilled to have his life ambition fulfilled: designing and building a church in his own neighborhood, with his partner, civil engineer, Miguel Rosich.

As time went along Fr. Spirali was blessed with the new Augustinian priests assigned to him. Their background was not only theology, but also sciences, philosophy and business on the graduate level and newly acquired study of Spanish. With these new men the Pastor was more and more intrigued with the idea of a university. His mind was almost made up when Feb. 24, 1945 Cardinal Dougherty from Philadelphia again came to Cuba to dedicate the now finished Santo Tomas de Villanueva Church, and laid the

“first stone” for the school building. Fr. Spirali could not quite escape the constantly recurring thought: “What we really need here is a Catholic University”.

As the happy people of the Biltmore section congratulated Ricardo Mira and Miguel Rosich on the beautiful church, Fr. Spirali was thinking, “could we really do it? Could we, Catholic professional people, Cubans and Americans, institute a University, where Catholic philosophy can be taught, and Catholic interpretation of history be studied under Catholic auspices??? Why not? We have the professional personnel, and I can put up the buildings. All these good people here will help. They would want it and support it.”

He did not reveal his thoughts to his Superiors. The Provincial, Mortimer Sullivan, with offices at Villanova College, long delighted with Fr. Spirali's success, saw in the new venture a good location for the old downtown school, and approved and sent a request to the Archbishop for the authorization for a religious community to staff the church and school, Feb. 25, 1945. The rescript petitioned an institution for secondary and higher studies to be directed by the Augustinian Fathers. By the time the Archbishop received the authorization from the Holy See for a canonical foundation, April 14, 1945, Fr. Spirali was already thinking in terms rather of higher studies than secondary studies!!

Not many at the time seemed to realize that Fr. Spirali was thinking in terms of a University. When he addressed his Superior, or others, he talked in terms of a college, which they decided immediately was a poor Italian immigrant's translation of “colegio”. Which in Cuba means a private primary and secondary school!

As usual with a new project in view, Fr. Spirali invited his most influential friends to a meeting, exposed his plans, asked their advice and their help. This time he had a tremendous project for them: a Catholic University.

“Padre Spirale, you are the most successful Catholic Action priest in Cuba”, commented Dr. Jorge de Cubas, “but a University is fraught with difficulties and obstacles, legal, political and financial. There is no present legislation for private universities. It would not sit well with the National University. There would be constant growing financial needs. You might better think in terms of an informal center of higher studies... but not a full-fledged university.”

"But, Jorge," interposed Dr. Agustin Batista, "the Constitution provides for the creation of private universities. The supplementary law can be written and passed through the legislature. We need a Catholic University. I would like my children to attend a private university here, and not have them away from Cuba the whole academic year. We need a Catholic University, and I support the idea and will lend every effort to attain it!"

"There are too many vested interests in the State monopoly of university education," commented another, "the politicians would not go for it".

Among the group of influential people, Miguel A. Suarez, Dr. Enrique Arango, Dr. Jorge Casteleiro, Alfonso Fanjul, Lawrence Crosby, Dr. Nicolas Sierra, Ing. Manuel Gamba, Ing. Melchor Gaston, Dr. Jorge de Ona, Agustin Gehrels, Salomon Maduro, Leslie Pantin, and Miss Josefina Tarafa, the comments in pros and cons continued with no decision forthcoming.

Finally Fr. Spirali terminated the session: "My friends, you are all convinced that Philosophy and the Catholic atmosphere in a university is a necessity for our Catholic country. But you are worried about legal difficulties and other obstacles. We need a Catholic University in Cuba, and by the grace of God, and your help, we shall have one! Do you understand me? I am going to found and build a Catholic University! Do I have your support?"

A unanimous voiced approbation was forthcoming. "We are with you, Padre!" That was all Fr. Spirali needed. He would found and build a Catholic University, and this group would be his Advisory Board to guide and help him.

For all his young priests assigned to him by the Provincial, Fr. Spirali had his own plans. Toward the end of August, 1945, he called Fr. Kelly for a short session: "Boy, go down to the National University and get a doctor's degree. We will need some Cuban degrees for our new college. Frs. Sofranko, Berra and O'Neill will go too. You can get your degree in your spare time!" Fr. Kelly had managed the new Church of Santa Rita, started a very needed school for the many poor families living on the many unused spaces among the richer houses, and was devoted to the needs of the faithful who came to Santa Rita. Among the faithful were many young ladies who administered and taught at the school lessons for the very poor and managed to feed them at lunch time.

While overseeing the multiple activities of his ever growing parish, Fr. Spirali regularly visited the construction of his school, S. Tomas de Villanueva. The construction men were much the object of his concern: that they do a good days work and be efficient in their construction.

They were putting up a building, but he was building a university!

Even though he was proceeding against the advice of many of his good friends in his idea of a university, nevertheless they had confidence in his prowess and abilities, and cooperated grandly with his plans. Dr. Carlos Cruz, a noted pedagogue and administrator, along with Dr. Mercedes Garcia Tuduri of equal experience and notable cultural achievement, were prevailed upon by Fr. Spirali to begin searching for competent professors for his college.

Within a couple of months hundreds of applications were being processed and evaluated. Practically all the professionals were graduates of the National University of Havana, the only recognized university in Cuba, Since it had a monopoly of university education, it was quite natural that its personnel be partial towards maintaining that condition, because many government positions were available only to its graduates. It was obvious that the monopoly could be broken only after great efforts were expended to mount a first class university with outstanding professors. That was the task of the personnel committee under Drs. Cruz and Garcia Tuduri.

Since Fr. Spirali had indicated that they would inaugurate the University with schools of Law, Liberal Arts, Pedagogy and Commercial Sciences, they very aptly recommended the Vice President of Cuba, Dr. Raul de Cardenas, a solid Catholic lawyer, as Dean of the Law School. Mercedes herself would rule the School of Pedagogy. Dr. Jose Maria Chacon y Calvo, outstanding literary critic and Director of national language academies, would direct the School of Liberal Arts (Filosofia y Letras). Dr. Eduardo Moreno, head of Dunn and Bradstreet and successful C.P.A., would be asked to head up the School of Commercial Sciences. With that formidable array of talent the evaluating of a competent group of professors for each school went forward under the watchful eye of the university founder and builder.

As the bills for construction of the college building piled up on his desk, Fr. Spirali was hard put to satisfy them. He continued to beg for financial support, as only he knew how.

The Archbishop of Havana was certainly pleased when Fr. Spirali had asked for permission for a "college". But Catholics in general were more so. Those who usually sent their children to foreign universities could now send them to the Catholic University of Havana. So they contributed to the cause, as the building went forward and was completed in the spring of 1946.

Fr. Spirali was soon lost in the multiple details of curriculum, registration requirements, plans of study, professors, library, administration, office help and myriads of suggestions from well-meaning people. Confused and muddled, he threw up his hands: "These details and formalities are driving me mad!! I don't know anything about organizing a university; I only know how to build one! I need someone to tie all this together."

Fr. Spirali wisely decided to make a quick trip to see the Provincial. He found the Provincial suffering from hemorrhage in the Bryn Mawr Hospital, near Villanova. It was a very warm night in May. The room was close. Fr. Spirali was perspiring freely, and intent on his mission, came rushing straight to the point: "Fr. Provincial, I need a Rector, urgently". Fr. Sullivan, the Provincial, and his secretary, Fr. Robert Russell, who was visiting him, raised their eyebrows.

The surprised Fr. Sullivan: "What for, Fr. Spirali?"

"Why... for our University in Havana," expostulated the sweaty friar; "Cuba needs a Catholic University badly, and I promised to give the people what they need....and they support the plan."

"But, Fr. Spirali, our plans for Santo Tomas de Villanueva was only a first class high school. A university is a tremendous undertaking, and we cannot see our way clear for that. It is out of the question".

"But Fr. Provincial", fairly shouted Fr. Spirali, "I have promised them a university, and they have contributed great amounts of money, professors are being chosen, everything is underway, and I need a Rector to head it! We cannot back out of my promise".

Fr. Sullivan was pensive for a moment. "Fr. Spirali, this is something of your own doing, without our approbation. I will send some Fathers to help, since you have committed us to a university, but the Province cannot help you financially," he determined.

"Don't worry about the finances, Father," a relieved Lorenzo sighed; "I won't let the Order down. I thank you. The Cubans will be ever grateful for your approval. Excuse me. I must go and see an important person right away. Hope you are better soon."

Within a few days, a concerned Fr. Sullivan dispatched to Havana a team of education experts: Dr. David Rubio, OSA, Librarian of Hispanic Foundation, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Dr. Edward V. Stanford, OSA, ex-president of Villanova University, and ex-president of Association of American Colleges and Universities, and also Dr. Vincent McQuade, OSA, economic expert, to measure the possibilities of an Augustinian University in Havana. He likewise planned a new community of Augustinians for a University: Fr. James Hurley, Fr. Henry Scanlan, Fr. Edward McCarthy and Fr. Victor Ortino.

The team sent by the Provincial to Havana found excellent atmosphere for a Catholic University, and so informed the Provincial, who breathed a sigh of relief. Fr. Spirali had done well his work of appraising the Cuban families; they wanted a Catholic University; they would support it.

The Provincial asked Fr. Hurley, who would be the Rector, to drop his present position and proceed to Havana to help organize and direct the University. Fr. Hurley was an extremely adept choice: he had spent some time in the Colegio San Agustin in Old Havana, had taught in and directed Catholic High Schools in California, directed seminarians, and was presently Superior and Pastor of the Parish of St. Nicholas of Tolentine, Bronx, New York. He was a practical and keen administrator, just what Cuba needed in the Catholic University's infancy. Fr. McCarthy was an academic expert, with years of experience at Villanova. His know-how supplemented the leadership of Fr. Hurley.

Fr. Hurley wrote to the Provincial explaining: "ten days have gone since my coming to Havana, and here is a summary and impression and facts. Through Fr. Spirali I have been to see the Cardinal, the Minister of Education, the President of the University of Havana, the Vice President of Cuba, at whose home we had dinner the other night, and who has put in his name for a position on our faculty, to various lawyers and a group of patrons, donors of funds for the new Universidad de Santo Tomas de Villanueva. Everywhere the response had been favorable and the attitude the same: we need a Catholic University in Cuba."

Although Fr. Hurley took over the immediate direction of the nascent University, Fr. Spirali as founder and builder was in much evidence in all the deliberations, as Treasurer of the Board of Trustees, and general inspiration of the institution. He spent the summer in a myriad of details of furnishing and equipping the building with some landscaping.

In spite of his practical attitude about obstacles, Fr. Spirali was worried. As he sat down to dinner with Fr. Hufnagel and Fr. Sofranko, he suddenly confessed: "Fathers, I am a bit worried about the University. We have worked diligently all summer and gotten everything ready, and still there is hardly anyone enrolled in the University. We have all those professors to take care of, and the expenses are terrible". However, facing up manfully to his promise of supporting the University economically, his attitude was: "It will work out somehow. God will help us. It is His work." He remembered that the beginning of the great Catholic University at Washington, D.C. was equally inauspicious.

But the small number of students, the complete lack of legislation for private universities, the continued expenses of maintaining the university, along with the daily demands of his parish, the maintaining of his priests and other problems were astounding....but his attitude was "with God's help, everything will come out all right."

Fr. Hurley was not quite sure as he directed the nascent University through it's first couple of years. Somehow legislation had to be gotten through the Congress of the government permitting the charter for private universities. He determined together with Fr. Spirali to spend his time dominantly on that aspect of his University, particularly since the coming year was election time, and hopefully the new Congress would be more amenable towards private universities

As time went along, he had much in mind the preparation of his priests at the national University. One day he cornered Fr. Kelly: "Boy, when are you getting your degree? It is over two years now that you have been attending that University".

"I'm just finishing up my thesis now, Father," replied Fr. Kelly, "and it should please you a bit. It is about Religious Architecture in Havana in this century, and I am including all the churches you have built."

"I am going to do more soon for that university, boy. It will be a big monastery for our priests".

"There does not seem much sense in putting up all those buildings for only a handful of students..." began Fr. Kelly.

"You have no idea of what you are talking about," broke in Fr. Spirali quickly, "the University may be slow in its beginnings, but that is normal; there may be a few students, but that is because there is no legislation. One thing you may be sure of: it will be a huge success shortly, and I will attend to that. When the time is ripe. I will see that the powers are moved to proper legislation. Right now, boy, I am tired and need a long rest. The Barlettas are taking me to Montecattini...and I have not seen my family for ten years. While I am gone, boy, you do the preaching and collections on Sundays." Fr. Kelly soon found out the heavy work of his Pastor.

Refreshed and renewed by the medicinal waters of Montecattini, Fr. Lorenzo returned to Havana to plunge immediately into building a monastery for his priests at the University. In consultation with Fr. Hurley, Mike Rosich designed a three-storied building for living quarters which would accommodate about 26 persons, together with some office space, dining room, and a kitchen on the ground floor. Two broad wings spread off a circular element as foyer, and featured a long cloister of romanian arches to the University Chapel. The usual construction of reinforced concrete brick and stucco were used. The traditional romanian decoration of portico and entrance portrayed the characteristic style of Mira and Rosich. The priests who had lived for years in the upper classrooms were delighted with their new quarters.

Although the government of President Grau San Martin had not considered any legislation for the University, towards the end of its administration, a grant of \$40,000 was voted for the Library fund of the Catholic University. Fr. Augustine Lamond, the librarian, had nursed along his library and with characteristic persistence had moved the proper powers to obtain the grant. So, hardly had the Monastery been underway when he exacted a promise from Fr. Lorenzo to think in terms of the library as his next building.

Parallel to Fr. Spirali's many campaigns, there had been developing a strong sentiment, both political and provincial, to break the monopoly of

state University education concentrated in the University of Havana. Adequate legislation was quickly introduced to create State Universities in the provinces of Santa Clara and Oriente. Adequate legislation was quickly introduced to create State Universities in the provinces of Santa Clara and Oriente, and provide public funds for their maintenance. Through some friendly legislators Fr. Spirali attempted to attach to this much-favored legislation a rider which would permit establishments of private universities at no expenses to the government. This attempt was unsuccessful.

So the Catholic University began its fourth year with no legislation, and about 86 students who had the luxury of the services of 32 professors!! It was a great burden on the fund-raising ability of Fr. Spirali, as it was a tribute to his faith in his university. Everyone realized daily that the University could not live indefinitely without legislation. The genius of Fr. Spirali and his influence among interested families kept alive hope for a Catholic University in Cuba..

One of their best means was to have the entire faculty of the University of Villanueva make a visit to the new President, Dr. Carlos Prio Socarras, to petition adequate legislation. As Fr. Spirali approached to greet the President, Dr. Prio playfully clamped his hand over his pockets with a deep grin. "Nothing for you today, Padre." Fr. Spirali quickly answered: "On the contrary, I come to give you something."

"How is that?" , politely inquired the President, as some aides and cabinet members leaned closer.

"I want to give Cuba another eye to see with," graphically explained the priest, "for, Mr. President, culturally Cuba has been seeing with only one eye, the eye of State University education, for all these years. Cuba needs another eye, that of private university education, so that she can see things in proper perspective."

"Very well put, Padre" smiled Dr. Prio, "and our legislature will soon be apprised of your offer. I hope they will promptly have legislation on the floor of Congress to that effect. Now, tell me the object of this visit of your whole Faculty".

Dr. Jose M. Perez Cabrera was spokesman. A long-time public cultural figure, he was completely at ease: "Mr. President, our university is entering

its fourth year, and we shall have our first gradation exercises next spring. In the name of our Rector, Fr. Hurley, and of our Faculty, we invite you to our first graduation and wish to confer on you, our President, the very first academic degree."

"I shall be honored, Dr. Perez Cabrera," replied the President with a solemn bow, "and I shall come in person to accept the distinction."

As the group left the President's Palace, Fr. Spirali exclaimed: "The law is a sure thing now. Fr. Hurley. If he accepts our degree, he accepts us, and will want that degree and us recognized in law!"

Long and careful preparation went into the first graduation exercises at Catholic University. Both Fr. Spirali and Fr. Hurley were of one mind in making an impressive showing. It was agreed that along with graduating students, the President of the Republic, Dr. Prio Socarras, would receive the first honorary degree. A second would be awarded to the American Ambassador, Mr. Robert Butler for his stalwart approach in cementing Cuban-American relations, and the third would be for the Founder himself, Fr. Lorenzo Spirali. It would have been difficult to amass a stronger combination for a prestigious and resounding effect on the people of Cuba in the year 1950. Wherever the President and the American Ambassador met, the press was much in evidence. The Catholic University received a merited and definite advance through this academic ceremony.

With the President as the principal guest, it was natural that the eloquent speakers, including Dr. Jorge de Cubas, the Secretary General of the Catholic University, should refer to legislation for private universities.

The assurance of the President, as he terminated the ceremony, for prompt attention to such legislation was greeted enthusiastically. Much satisfied with the evident support of the President, as he returned home late that evening, Fr. Spirali felt certain that the long elusive law would soon be forthcoming. However, the spring session of Congress, rapidly coming to a close, did not get to any legislation about universities.

June, 1950, was also the scene of the Augustinian triennial meeting of the Province at Villanova, Pennsylvania. Fr. Joseph Dougherty was elected Provincial. He was immediately besieged by Fr. Spirali with plans and projects about his University in Cuba. As a result, Fr. Kelly was assigned to

the University as the Superior and Vice-President, along with Fr. James Seymour, who would be Dean of the School of Economics. Fr. Hurley continued as President, Fr. John Gavigan as Regent of Studies, Fr. A. Lamond as Librarian, and Fr. Arthur O'Neil as Business Manager. With that staff, Fr. Spirali felt satisfied that the University was now ready for the law, which should be forthcoming.

On arrival in Havana, Fr. Kelly was buttonholed immediately by Fr. Spirali: "Boy, start a campaign for more students; we have lots of expenses at the University and need more income. We have many professors, but so few students. We must fill up our classrooms."

"Yes, Father," replied Fr. Kelly, "I have been thinking about the problem, and have decided to ask each professor, all of them, to bring back two students apiece this year. I hope it works."

It did. Together with the favorable atmosphere for some kind of legislation, the professors and the general campaign managed to matriculate, by October 1, some 129 students and brought the total to a respectable 173. Fr. Spirali felt relieved, and redoubled his visits to the Cuban Congressional Houses.

There had been much opposition to the introduction of such legislation, particularly from the Communist bloc. But even these were not free from fervent persuasive conversation of Fr. Spirali: "Look, gentlemen, in San Lorenzo we are helping the poor and needy, the primary concern of your propaganda. Can't you vote in favor of my law?"

The big-framed, black-faced Communist smiled: "Padre, we know about your good work, and truly appreciate it. But you know that you stand for the very contrary philosophy opposed to ours; so following the Party line, I have to vote against you",

At the initiative of Dr. Guillermo Tapia, a congressman from Pinar del Rio, general legislation developing Article 54 of the Constitution, about private universities, was at long last introduced into the House of Representatives. The days dragged on through November and December, and daily inquiries revealed that the bill was still in Committee. Finally, on the very last day of session, when hope was practically lost, a phone call came to Sta. Rita for Fr. Spirali: "This is the legislative secretary for Senator

Tony Varona, Padre. He asked me to invite you to come this evening about 10:00 o'clock to hear the debate and discussion on your university bill". Frs. Spirali and Kelly would be there expectantly!

After a short recess, the president of the Senate announced: "Gentlemen, I have altered the order of business to propose now for your consideration the legislation for private universities." There was immediately an uproar. Many Senators had their own favorite bill which they wanted considered now. But Tony Varona kept beating the gavel insistently on the rostrum for quiet. Finally, after several outbreaks, quiet was restored. As the reader began, Varona looked up straight at Fr. Spirali, smiled and saluted!! The reading of the bill was soon terminated. Immediately a Senator friend got the floor and in a marvelous encomium of Fr. Spirali's work in Cuba, asked for a unanimous vote in favor. Senator Suarez Rivas, who had two boys soon to enter the University, spoke in like vein. After one or two minor objections, the bill was put to vote and passed unanimously. Fr. Spirali was elated. He identified the law under which private universities might apply for a charter as a law recognizing his University. He did not realize that the law, signed by the President on Dec. 20, had to be implemented by the Minister of Education, and then application for the Charter sought. That would take more than two years yet; but for Fr. Lorenzo and for most people, the general law was identified with official recognition of the Catholic University.

One of the requirements of the new legislation exacted that the President have a degree from a Cuban University. In the prolonged absence of Fr. Hurley from the University, the Vice-President, Fr. Kelly, had been in charge. Once the new legislation was forthcoming and Fr. Hurley was legally no longer able to continue, Fr. Spirali proposed to the Board of Trustees that Fr. Kelly be named the president (Rector) of the University, since he fulfilled the legal and academic requirements.

Dr. Agustin Batista had no doubts about the future of the University. He must have seen it in glowing terms, for he and his wife Maria Theresa Falla, donated some 33,500 square meters adjacent to the University to be used for athletic fields and parking lots for the institution. Likewise, the new movement towards sciences and technology immediately had the support of the Tarafa family for building a science-technology building in memory of their father, Coronel Tarafa. It would be a very complex structure incorporating numerous special services, besides gas and electricity, of

compressed air, steam, vacuum, distilled water, etc. Fr. Spirali became lost in the complicated plans of research laboratories, testing materials, quality control, unit operations and others. He threw up his hands finally: "Mike Rosich, you know all about this stuff. Put it up as economically as you can".

"All right, Padre", grinned Miguel Rosich, "we will do our best." Although Fr. Spirali was concerned about the economy of the building, he was not too much disturbed when Fr. Sofanko and Fr. Kelly decided that an additional section had to be added to the plan to house some distillation columns and a few specialized sugar equipment machines.

While the construction was underway, the country was suddenly awakened on the early morning of March 10, 1952, by a military coup. Ex-President Fulgencio Batista was reported to have accepted a pressing invitation from the military to join them "to keep the country from falling into the hands of gangsters." A young lawyer, member of the Ortodoxo Political Party, frustrated in his political ambitions by the coup, one Fidel Castro Ruz, filed a formal charge in the Tribunal of Urgency, asking 100 years of prison for Batista, since he had violated six articles of the Defense Code of Cuba. No one paid much attention. The country knew Batista as a "strong man", and that meant law and order.

After returning to Cuba from the chapter at Villanova, June of 1953, highly recommended by the Provincial for his apostolic works in Cuba, Fr. Spirali was shocked, as were most Cubans, by a senseless attack on the huge military barracks at Moncada, Oriente, by some 100 men. It was July 26. Fidel Castro Ruz, leader of the attack, somehow escaped alive, with about ten others; all the rest lost their lives. At the petition of the Archbishop of Santiago, Archbishop Perez Serrantes, who acted as intermediary, Castro and the few escapees surrendered and were sent to prison.

As preparations went forward for the new academic year, Fr. Spirali was content at the 391 new students who swelled the number at his Catholic University to 761, including some thirty-three for the new School of Architecture.

On Sept. 10, 1953, the Catholic University functioned, officially and legally, under the laws of Cuba. On that day, the application for the Charter was granted by Ministerial Decree No. 1672, after Dr. Jorge de Cubas had presented the formal documents and exhibits. For Fr. Spirali and most

people, it was a simple formality, for the Catholic University had long since been recognized by them! Such was the attitude of Dr. Agustin Batista, who had donated 33,500 square meters of land contiguous to the University, with the suggestion that it be used for athletic activities.

The renown and fame did not at all affect Lorenzo Spirale. He was intent on his next project: a building for the School of Architecture. A donor? Already in mind was the philanthropic Gomez Mena family. With the help of Josefina Tarafa, and the Fanjuls, Padre Spirali approached Maria Luisa Gomez Mena, widow of Cagiga, and Countess of Revilla Camargo. The scene was Paris, at the hotel where Maria Luisa was staying. The lunch was excellent, but of no concern to Fr. Spirali, intent on his project; for, at the proper moment, he introduced the matter: "Maria Luisa, the Tarafa family has endowed a School of Engineering at the Catholic University. Wouldn't it be nice to endow the building for architects in the name of your family"?

Maria Luisa was agreeable, and Fr. Spirali was pleased at the outcome. It was afterwards reported that Maria Luisa commented: "That was the most expensive luncheon I have ever invited any one for." The Condesa promised \$200,000 to erect a building for the School of Architecture.

The activities of Fr. Spirali were not notably diminished, neither because of his age, nor the political condition of Cuba. Fulgencio Batista had not quite gotten the acceptance of the military coup of 1952, particularly among the young people, university students especially. Suspension of constitutional guarantees was called for as needed for the control of the country. Nevertheless, the government seemed stable enough to call for free elections in the fall of 1954.

In the pre-election campaign all political prisoners, including Fidel Castro and companions, were given amnesty. Castro and his closest conspirators soon turned up in Mexico, where they would meet with Communist conspirators.

As usual little attention was paid to Castro, including Fr. Spirali who was moving ahead in his University's business. First to Dr. Agustin Batista, as usual. The office of the Trust Company was quiet, but as usual Dr. Batista saw him immediately. Rarely did the priest have to wait. To see his best friend.

"Hello, Padre", greeted Agustin, "I can see by your eyes that you have something in mind".

"Yes, as usual", grinned Fr. Spirali, "and I have come to see you about it. Fr. Kelly tells me that we should secure more land for the University expansion. There is a good piece just west of, and contiguous to, our property – some 38,500 square meters".

"Do they need more ground for expansion?", asked Dr. Agustin.

"It seems so, and I will get a group of friends to put up half of the cost", said Fr. Spirali. "Do you think you could manage the other half?"

"How much would it be, Padre?", asked Agustin.

"The total is \$300,000 and your share would be \$150,000," explained the priest.

"Let's see," calculated Dr. Batista, "I think so, but I would like to spread it out over five years, at \$30,000 per year. Would that be satisfactory?"

"Of course, Agustin, you are always so helpful. Now, I have to get some help for the engineering studies", said Fr. Spirali.

Since the University was doing fine work in technology, especially in the sugar area, Fr. Spirali was encouraged to talk to the Association of Sugar Mill Owners about a fund for research in that industry. The work of the Dean, Manuel Suarez Carreno and his collaborators Fr. Sofranko, Manuel Zayas, Julio Pita, Alfred Lee Sklar, among others, was becoming well appreciated by the mill administrators. When Fr. Spirali approached Dr. Jorge Barroso, Executive Secretary of the Association, there was little convincing to be done. Jorge was all in favor of it: "Padre, all we have to do is put it up to the members. It may take a little doing; but I am sure that some kind of fund will be established".

It was. The original grant was \$300,000, for research and development in sugar technology. Everyone had faith in Fr. Spirali and his works.

But as usual, there were other pressing things. Fr. Kelly had told him that the science and technology programs were going so well that they

needed more room for research, for drafting rooms, laboratories, for equipment in mechanical engineering.....

“Boy, I guess we are never through at the University,” he exclaimed, “It is always growing, growing...”

“Yes, Father”, replied Fr. Kelly, “that is the nature of a university. If it does not grow, it stagnates. We have been in existence only ten years, and our progress has been phenomenal. We want to mark the ten years with a celebration this fall”.

“Of course, boy,” agreed Fr. Lorenzo, “we can invite the Authorities of Cuba, and we should invite Cardinal Spellman.”

“Right now, Father, we need more building space for mostly mechanical engineering and more laboratories”.

“All right, boy”, said Lorenzo, “don’t worry. We’ll get it up for you. I’ll go to Mike Rosich...”

“Let’s give Mike a rest”, broke in Fr. Kelly. “He has done so much for us already. Two of our staff have collaborated on plans for a new building. Manuel Gutierrez is one of our finest architecture professors; Mario Suarez, Miguel’s boy, has done all of the engineering calculations. They are going to use pre-fabricated material entirely; it will be a striking building. The various parts of the building will be cast about fifteen miles away, then brought here by truck and assembled.”

“All right, boy, as long as Mike approves”, agreed Fr. Spirali.

Soon the Tenth Anniversary of the founding of the University was celebrated solemnly in the fall of 1956. Fr. Lorenzo was a central figure in the re-dedication of the buildings, in the many commemorative acts; and particularly at the solemn ceremony in the TEATRO AUDITORIUM of Vedado. There in the setting of academic panoply, ecclesiastical solemnity, and University colors, the Founder humbly confessed at the podium:

“Friends, never in my most wildest imaginings, while sweeping streets in Philadelphia, would I have thought that one day I might address an academic gathering such as this, presided over by two princes of the Church,

Cardinal Arteaga and Cardinal Spellman; as well as the Papal Nuntio, Bishop Luigi Centoz, my Provincial, Very Rev. James M. Donnellon; and more, the minister of Education, Dr. Zoila Mulet, and so many important people. I don't know what to say to express the joy in my heart All I can say is, that this is God's work, and we should thank Him".

Shortly after the celebration, Havana was electrified by the news report that Fidel Castro with about a hundred men had invaded the southeast of Cuba near Manzanillo, and that the invasion had been annihilated. The government officially claimed that the whole invasion force had been eliminated. Not until Herbert Mathews of the New York Times surreptitiously met Castro a few month later in the Sierra Maestra Mountains was there any certain news about the invaders. Rumor became fact: Castro, his brother Raul and some eleven followers had escaped into the mountain fastness of Oriente Province.

The youth of the country were enchanted with Castro and his quasi-messianic announcements over the radio: he would redeem Cuba from the clutches of Dictator Batista, insure honest elections, and restore the Constitution of 1940. They believed him and, directed by rebel activists, unleashed a reign of terror throughout the country.

Like most other people, Fr. Spirali felt that the government, sooner or later, would bring Castro to time, and besides he had further plans regarding the formal ecclesiastical status of his Catholic University.

"You know, boy," he explained to Fr. Kelly, "everyone calls our University the Catholic University, simply because we Augustinian priests direct it. We should apply to the Holy See for formal recognition as a Catholic University",

"That means gathering a lot of documents, again," protested mildly Fr. Kelly, "and I am tired of gathering....."

"Don't you realize the protection which a Pontifical Institution enjoys, boy", cut in Fr. Spirali, "people think twice before taking on the Holy See."

"Of course, Father, you are right," agreed Fr. Kelly; "I shall get the documents together for you."

"You and I will present them in Rome to the Congregation of Seminaries and Universities," continued Fr. Spirali, "I feel sure that we will have the support of Cardinal Pizzardo, whom I have known for a long time."

Just as he had predicted, the petition was very favorably received, and with a few minor adjustments the University was approved, not as a pontifical institution, for it had not yet its seminary departments, but formally as the Catholic University of Havana. The Cardinal of Havana was named Chancellor. Fr. Kelly continued as President (Rector). Fr. Spirali felt satisfied with the Decree of the Congregation (535-57-10 ADULESCENTIUM ANIMAS FINGENDIS) signed by Cardinal Pizzardo. The decree was delivered May 4, 1957, by the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Luigi Centos, to Cardinal Arteaga in the presence of international representatives of the academic and ecclesiastical world at the special University Convocation.

The termination of the new Tallares building and the acquiring of the land for a seminary building were the highlights of 1958, the only bright events in a year full of terrorism and barbarous atrocities on the part of the revolutionaries, and equally repressive measures by the regime. Everyone carried on in the full expectation that the increased military forces of the government would soon put an end to the Castro Revolution.

Very few seemed to recognize the long arm of international Communism behind the Castro people, the student rebellions, increasingly frequent terror bombings, the direct attacks on the police force, and the destruction of public buildings. The government of Batista was energetic in its reprisals, trying to control the revolutionary elements, and gradually fell into great disfavor. So-called civic resistance associations were formed of professionals, white-collar workers, and upper class people to hamstringing the government. These would greatly influence its downfall.

In spite of the almost warlike conditions in the country, the economic situation was the best it had ever been in Cuba.

One evening at Santa Rita Church, Fr. Spirali was listening to the news reports on the T V, with his long, long time friend and wonderful companion, Fr. Hufnagel. "Pete, I don't understand how that young fellow Castro has been able to turn this prosperous country topsy-turvy".

"He has a lot of help from the international subversive organizations" replied a pensive Fr. Hufnagel; "did you see the Intelligence Digest report for last month? It avers that two Soviet Submarines have brought provisions for Castro, and... get this... fifty million American dollars".

"That sounds incredible, Pete," objected Fr. Spirali, "where would they get that kind of money?"

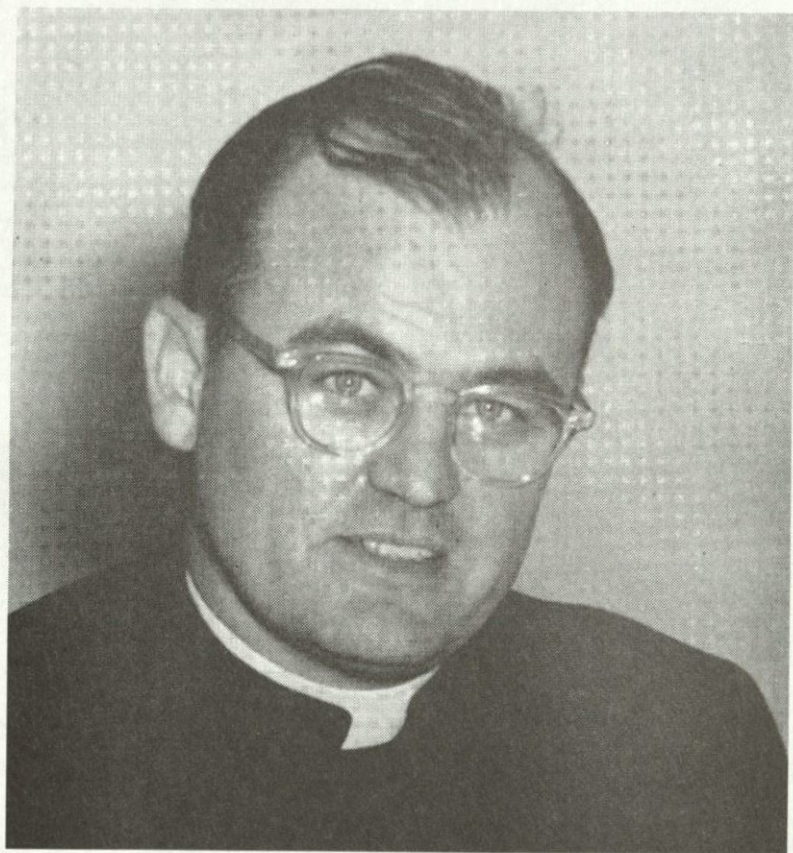
"International Communism, of course," snorted Pete.

"Maybe you are right, Pete," observed Spirali, "they could not buy their victories and their men with only the fines they are imposing on the sugar mills and the poor peasants. But what is most favoring Castro is the policy of the U. S. State Department. It embargoed shipment of some armored cars and equipment for Batista's soldiers, although paid in advance".

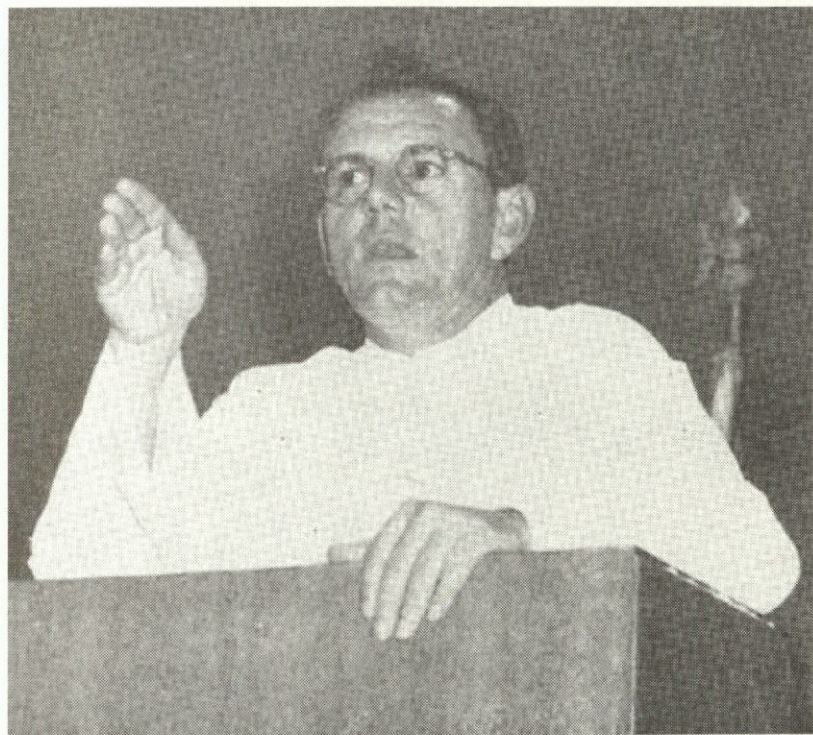
"Mark my words," said Fr. Hufnagel, with pointing finger, "that fellow Castro means tragedy for Cuba... and that means us too".



Archbishop Pérez Serante
from Santiago



Fr. Ed McCarthy OSA
Regent



Fr. Kelly, S
President



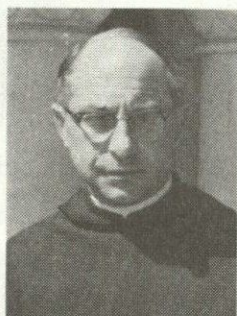
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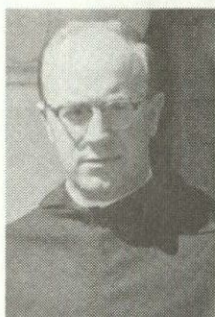
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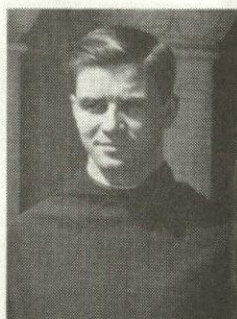
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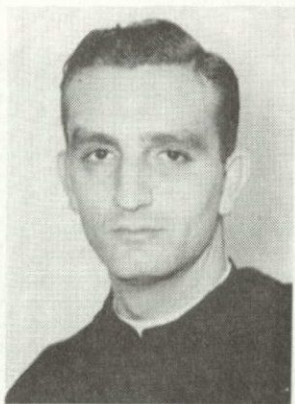
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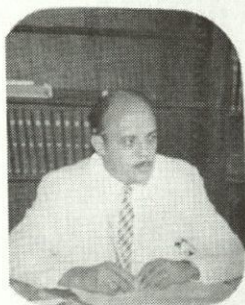
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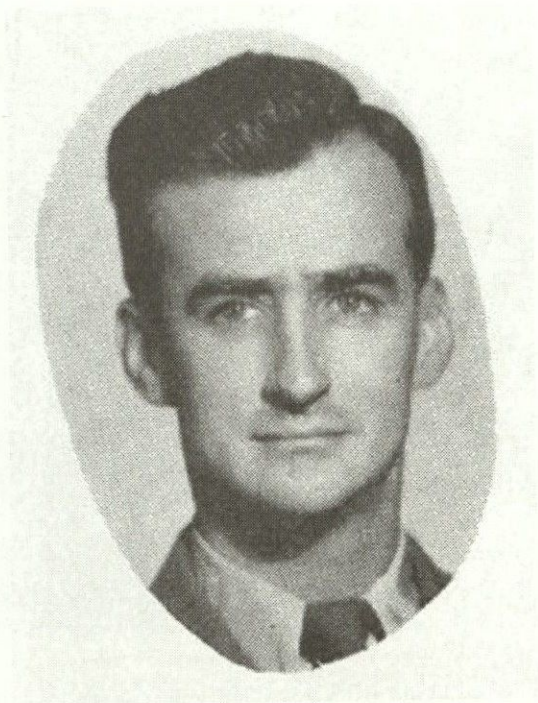
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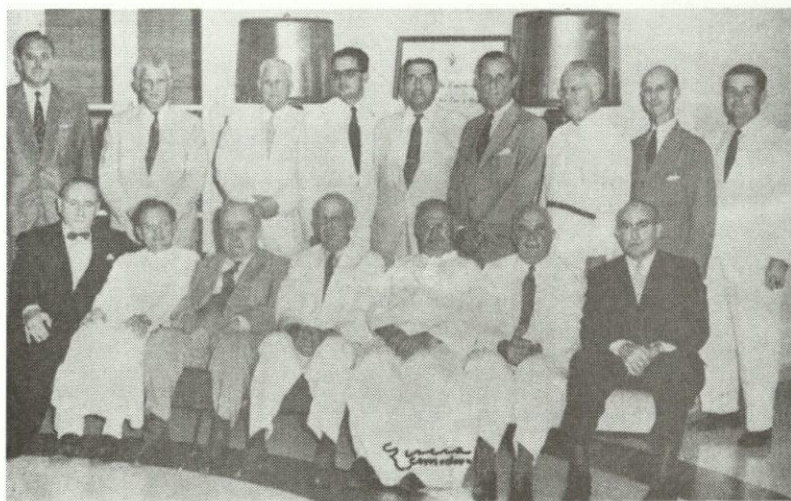
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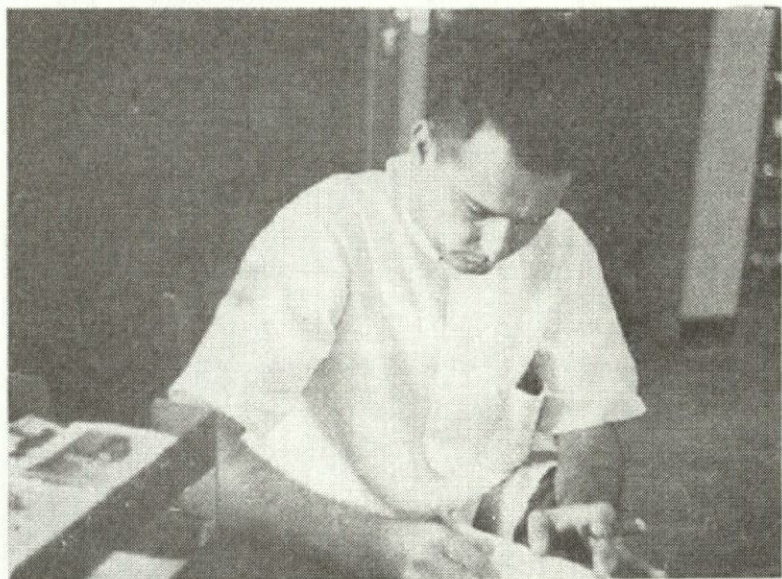


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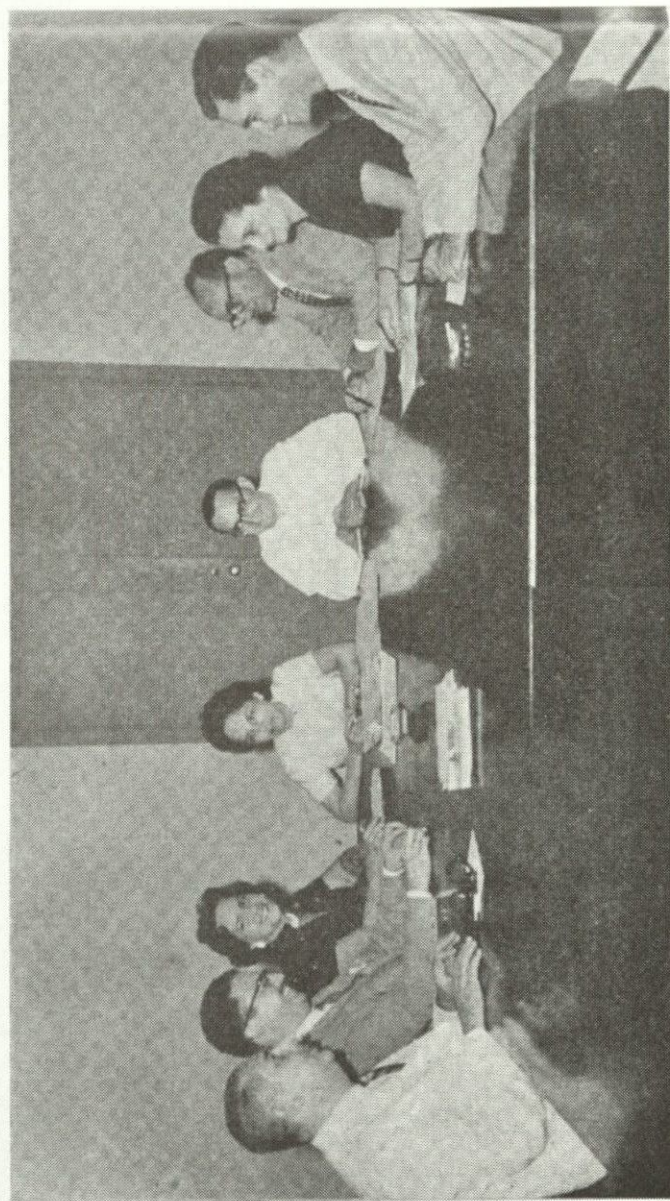
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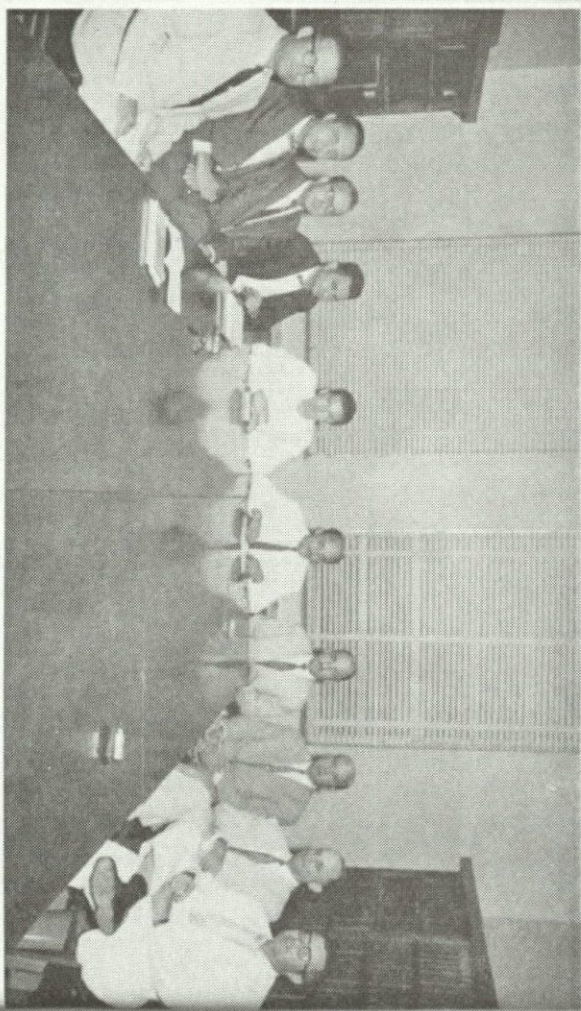
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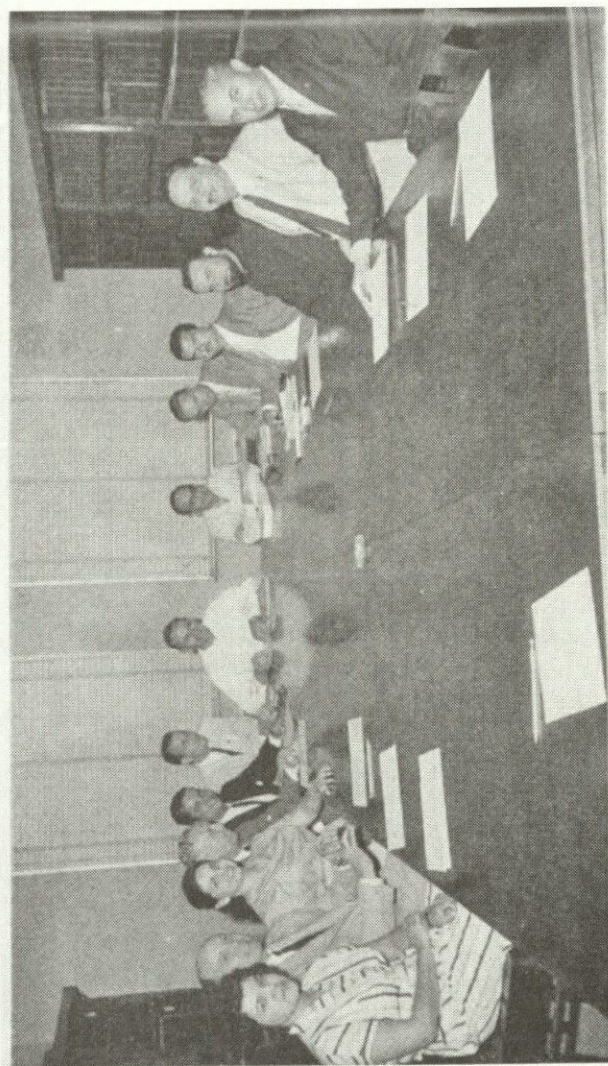


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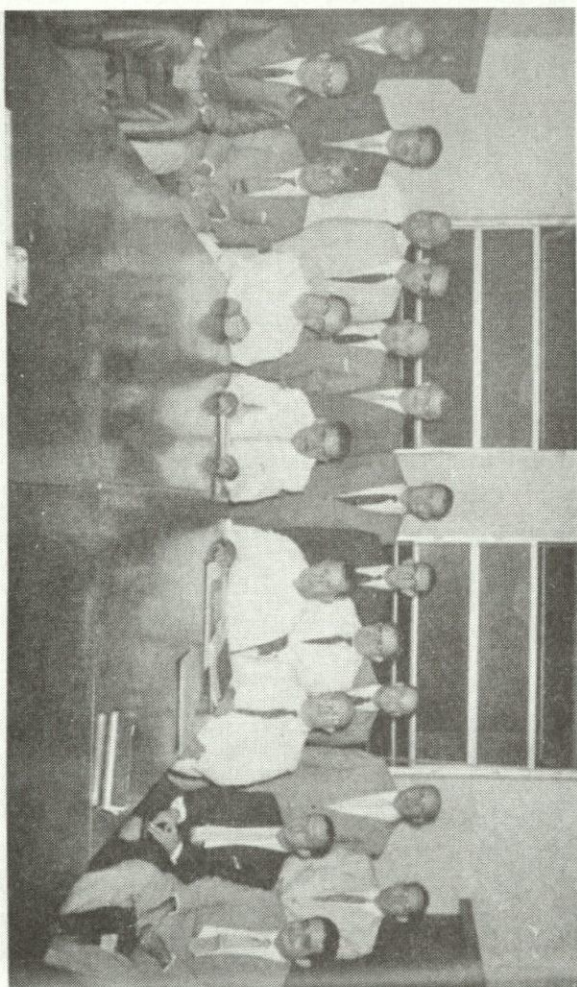
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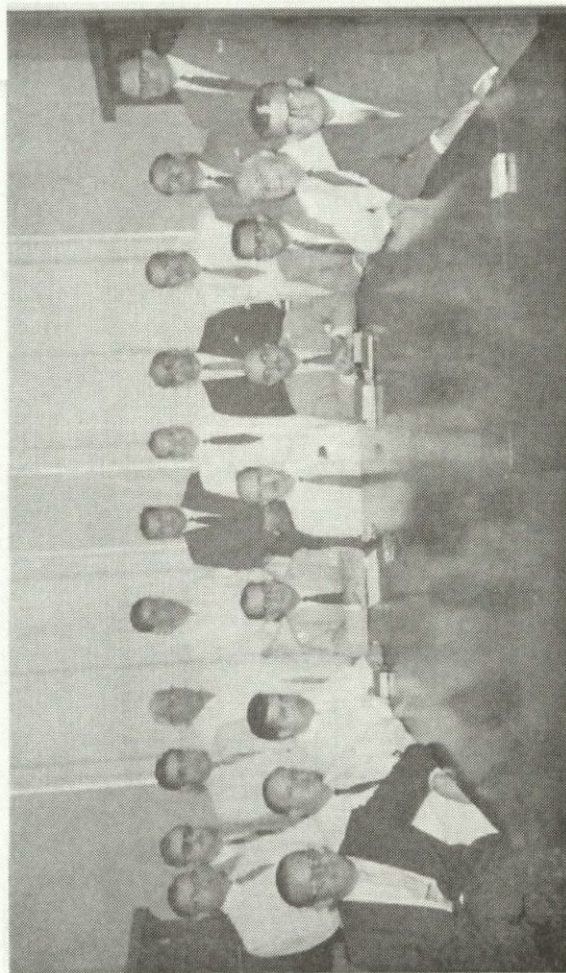
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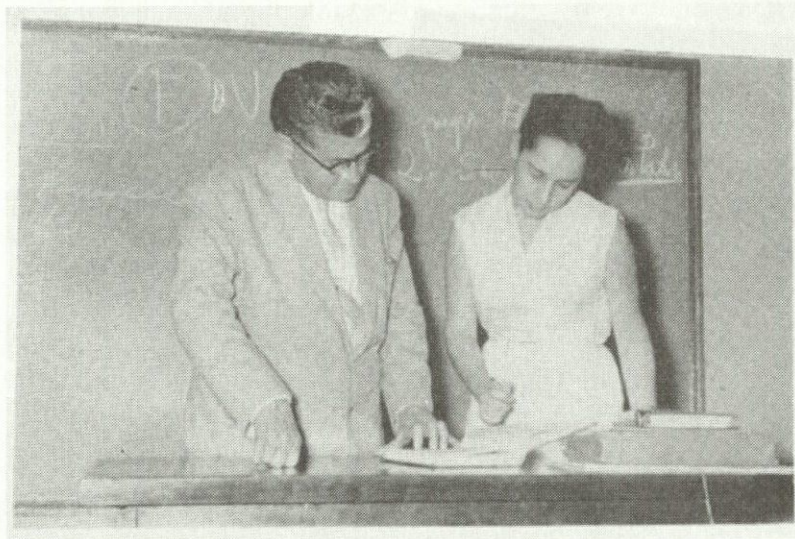


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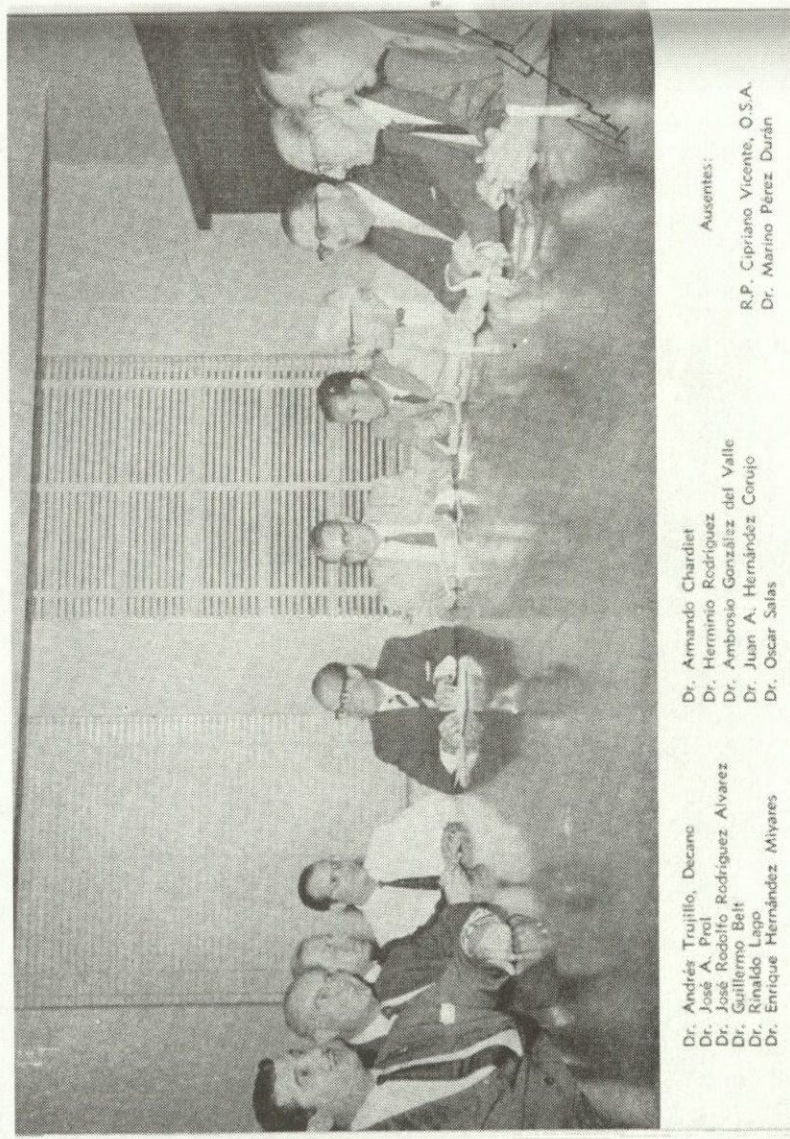
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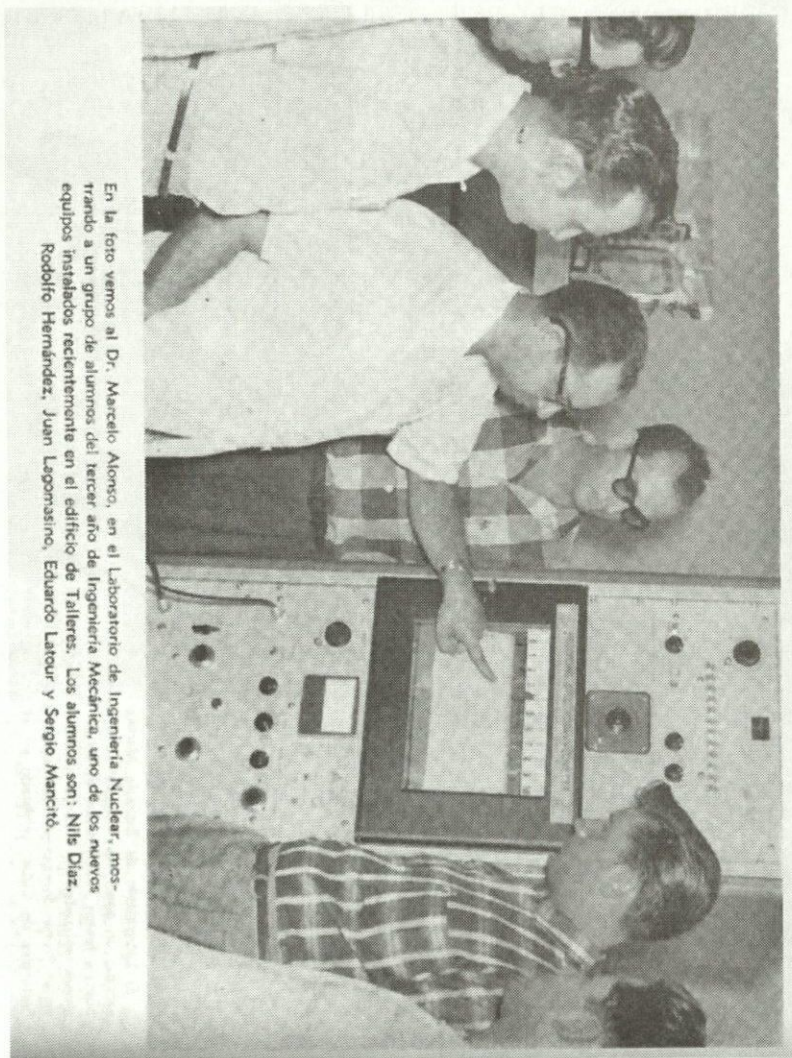


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En la foto vemos al Dr. Marcelo Alonso, en el Laboratorio de Ingeniería Nuclear, mostrando a un grupo de alumnos del tercer año de Ingeniería Mecánica, uno de los nuevos equipos instalados recientemente en el edificio de Talleres. Los alumnos son: Nils Díaz, Rodolfo Hernández, Juan Legomansino, Eduardo Latour y Sergio Mancito.

Chapter Two

RESUME OF FIRST TEN YEARS OF VILLANUEVA, STUDY BY FR. McCARTHY, DR. PEREZ CABRERA AND DR. MAGARITA CONDOM, ARRANGED BY FAITHFUL ALUMNA MARTA LLOVET.

The first purpose of Villanueva was to provide a deep Catholic and professional training to its students, in agreement with the Catholic philosophy of life.

Villanueva maintained this philosophy of educating primarily for the eternal life and secondarily for the earthy life; hence the orientation of all its plans of study within the ideals of the Catholic Faith.

The preparation for the practices of the Catholic life was not limiting itself to the official courses of Religion, but it was spreading it to all the courses and careers of the University teaching. Villanueva was teaching that the Faith, rather than emotion, is the guide for the practice and development of the spiritual life. It is a duty of any catholic university to develop this attitude of understanding and practicing the faith among the students.... the preparation of the intelligence as much as the will.

As regards his knowledge, each student must have a precise and deep knowledge of sacramental theology, so that his Faith is based on scientific knowledge, and not upon the religion courses learned by memory during his school days. Above all, the students should be prepared to refute objections, and define modern objections; he must be convinced that the catholic Faith has nothing to fear from adversaries, and likewise that the educated Catholic should have a precise and correct knowledge of the teachings of the Faith, which permits him to point out the mistakes, and thus be able to establish strongly and logically the principles of his Faith.

Regarding the will, his preparation must be based on inspiration rather than emotion. Every student was warned that his future life depended on spiritual fortitude, which comes solely from the frequent and fervent reception of the Sacraments. In one word, the Church wants all its children who already have mental maturity to base their lives on a firm Faith, the intellectual knowledge of the divine truths, aside from their emotion.

To obtain a practical result within these ideals, Villanueva gave the

highest importance to the practical character of its teaching. Not only did it choose the teaching personnel among the most cultured professionals, notable for their high moral qualities; rather it chose them for their value as directors and orientators in the formation of the students under their care. As a general norm there were relatively small groups in the classes, within the ideal order of one professor for ten students. As much in the classical studies as in those of science and technology the professor guided himself on the basis of "the formation of students precedes their information." Likewise the needs and aims of each school. Most classes celebrated seminars, debates, propositions, etc. to demonstrate the practical character of their classes. In science and technology the laboratories and workshops were used so that the engineer and the scientist could carry out the practices of their studies.

In the civilian order, the University of Villanueva was apolitical: it recognized the interest of every civilian in the country's problems, the University followed the norm of every citizen taking part actively in the destiny of his country only when the student had sufficient maturity to uphold the common good of the nation. As its usual norm dictated, Villanueva taught that every citizen should take part in the destiny of his country, only when he had sufficient maturity so that his action would promote a positive help in the country. Villanueva followed the norm that every student should observe with interest the civic problems, keeping himself informed properly so that after terminating his studies he could take part actively in their solution, but this only after terminating his university studies.

In the formation process of the student, from the point of view of psychology, the University tried to harmonize the brilliance and natural aptitude of the Cubans with the tenacity and continued effort which had given notable success in other countries.

The ideal yearned for in Villanueva was that its system of education be the auto-education of the student in which the mature student considered his professor not as a walking encyclopedia, but rather his counselor and director in the studies which he himself followed.

When the student arrived at a level of auto-education, the University considered itself to have obtained success in great part to have succeeded in its task to educate and instruct, form and inform the student.

The spirit of charity which comes in the works of St. Augustine found its echo in St. Thomas of Villanueva, the patron Saint of the University. St. Thomas was a professor of Philosophy and Theology, but above all he was a spiritual father of the young men on whom he had a special care in their early formative years, establishing the now famous university residences.

From the very fine works of St. Augustine was taken the theme of Villanueva: SCIENTIA SINE VIRTUTE VANITAS, a theme which needs no explanation for those who approach truth in a spirit of humility. Humility does not mean submission or slavery; but is a strong virtue, a virtue which recognizes firstly the simplicity and purity of truth. The humble person intellectually is the person who with clearer vision recognizes and accepts truth.

The motto of Villanueva forms the spirit of Villanueva, and is full of deep signification for the truly Christian student.

FOUNDATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY

The University of Villanueva owes its existence to the zeal, faith and dynamism of tireless Fr. Lorenzo Spirali. Fortified with the generous help of a group of Cuban families, who appreciated Catholic teaching, and without waiting for the approval of the 'necessary legal means' – so much was its faith in the nobility of the cause that it embraced and the deep understanding of the people and the government of Cuba—he decided to found the first private university in the history of the Republic. And so, after getting the permission of his superiors, there was founded in Havana the Society of Brothers of Hermits of St. Augustine, S. A., by the Augustinian Fathers of the north American Province of St. Thomas of Villanova, Penna., U.S.A., which would found the Catholic University of St. Thomas of Villanova in Havana.

Villanueva was founded legally the 15 of August, 1946, but from the spring of that year the ceremony of its establishment was begun. On Sunday 26 May, the Cardinal Archbishop Arteaga blessed the first building of the University, the class building, where the first stone had been blessed by Cardenal Dougherty of Philadelphia.

In June, July and August many different announcements were made

about matriculation, while the University authorities—Fr. James M. Hurley, Rector, and the Secretary and Regent of Studies, Fr. Edward McCarthy—guided by Dr. Carlos M. Cruz and Fr. David Rubio, put themselves in the arduous task of the selection of Deans and Professors.

Doctors Jose Maria Chacon y Calvo, Mercedes Garcia Tuduri, Raul de Cardemas (vice-president of the Republic at that time) and Eduardo Moreno, were chosen as Deans of the Faculties of Filosofia y Letras, Educacion, Derecho and Ciencias Comerciales. Fr. Ed McCarthy was named Dean of the Department of Bachelor of Arts, which mostly would be taught in English.

The professors chosen in the beginning were: Antonio Alvarez Pedrosó, Juan Fonseca, Jose Ignacio Lasaga and Jose Manuel Cabrera, for Filosofia y Letras; Rosaura Garcia Tuduri, Teresa Gavalda and Joaquin G Lebreó, for Educacion; Juan A. Hernandez Corujo, Raul Maestri, Jose Miguel Morales Gomez, Marino Perez Duran, Jose Rodolfo Rodriguez Alvarez and Andres Trujillo, for the Law School; Eloy Manzano, Bartolome Monserrat and Luciano E. Goicoechea, for Business Studies; Marcel Chauchat, for Bacheloer of Arts. Dr. Herminio Rodriguez shortly would replace Dr. Raul de Cardenas as Professor of Historia Constitucional de Cuba.

The opening of the University for the public was set for Friday, Oct. 4, at 10 oclock a.m. in the wide space of the Chapel, and was presided over by the Cardinal Archbishop of Havana.

OFFICIAL ESTABLISHMENT

Four major attempts were necessary for the creation of private Universities approved by the Congress of the Republic of Cuba. The first was made by Dr. Emeterio Santovenia, a senator from the Province of Pinar del Rio, and President of the Academy of History of Cuba, in Nov., 1941. The second attempt was made by Dr. Ernesto R. de Aragon; the third by Dr. Manuel Dorta Duque, Professor at the Univeristy of Havana, and the fourth by Dr. Angel Fernandez Varela, who finally managed the approval of the House of Representatives, Nov. 13, 1950.

A few weeks later the Senate of the Republic approved the legislation and Dr. Carlos Prio Socarras, President of Cuba, gave his approbation. Law No. 15, on December 20, 1950, LAW OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES AND

CENTERS OF HIGHER STUDIES, was now a beautiful and indisputable reality.

The official law became public through the Presidential Decree No. 1573, on April 23, 1952, signed by the President of the Republic, General Fulgencio Batista. A year later, the authorization of the Carta de Constitucion of the University of St. Thomas of Villanueva. The authorization of Villanueva as a private university was given, Oct. 1, 1953, and registered in the ministry of Education, page 1, number inscription 1, in the Educational Legislation.

There were several technical commitments, describing the rules, programs and other observations through which the Tribunals of the State would proceed in governing the examinations of the University students and their necessary requirements.

UNIVERSITY ORGANIZATIONS AND AUTHORITY

The top organization for everything related to the administration, government and direction of the University was the Board of Trustees. The group was composed of seven members, five of whom would be members of the Order of St. Augustine and the remaining two would be Cuban lay people..

The first Rector (President) who would direct the University, the new house of studies, was the very Rev. Fr. James M. Hurley, O.S.A. Thanks to his long experience in directing schools, his exceptional ability to see and resolve problems, the first four years of the University were carried out successfully, until the approval of Law No. 15, Dec. 1950.

In that year, 1950, Fr. John J. Kelly was chosen as Rector of the University, and he like his antecessor and master, Fr. Hurley, had begun his career in the Augustinian Order in the Island of Cuba, along with Fr. Spirali.

The first Vice-Rector designated by the Board of Trustees was the Rev. James M. Seymour (1952-1953). In 1953 the Board named as Vice-Rector, and regent of Studies. Rev. Edward J. McCarthy., a man of long experience in Universities. Named as Disciplinarian and Director of Student Activities was the excellent Fr Gerrit Hamerlinck, OSA, fine Hollander scientist.

After Fr. Joseph J. Murray, OSA (1948-50), a very notable lawyer Dr. Jorge de Cubas, after 1950 became the legal representative of the University until its end.

In 1952, Dr. Martha de la Portilla, a first graduate of the School of Filosofia y Letras, was designated as the Registrar of the University, and she lasted brilliantly until the very last day of the University.

As a great asset to the board of Trustees and the President, there were created various organisms, including the Advisory Board, composed of three to seventeen persons of deeply recognized professionalism for a period of four years; the Academic Senate to guide the teaching and cultural movements of the various Faculties; the General meeting of all faculties of the University, including all titular and auxiliary professors..

UNIVERSITY -- LAND AND BUILDINGS

The original land of the University, some 40,000 square meters, was given over to Fr. Spirali by the families of Dr. Alberto G. Mendoza, Dr. Carlos M. Cruz, Dr. Carlos Miguel de Cespedes and Dr. Juan Manuel Cortina. That same year, Fr. Spirali began the building of the Chapel of the future University.

The following year new donations permitted Fr. Spirali to finish the construction of the first building for classes, where all the university movements were begun. In 1948 the Monastery was built, wherein the President, some academic offices and even a cafeteria were contained. Two years later the Library was under construction, and fortunately was helped by the President Dr. Ramon Grau San Martin, with a gift of \$40,000.

In 1950, Dr. Agustin Batista donated 22,500 square meters of land adjacent to the original foundation to be used for sports activities.

The program of technology, begun in 1951, was strengthened by various large donations: the Tarafa Family supported the construction under the name of the Tarafa Building which would mean about \$300,000 invested; and the National Association of Sugar Industries the sum of \$300,000 contributed. That same year Dr. Agustin Batista and Fr. Spirali obtained for

the University a space of some 40,000 meters for its extension. It was remembered that in 1951 the Library was finished. Finally, the building for Mechanical Engineering, donated by Mrs. Maria Luisa Gomez Mena, Countess of Revilla Camargo.

UNIVERSITY LIFE AND INSTITUTIONS

The Library of the University had its origin in one of the classrooms. There were located a few book shelves with books which various professors lent or donated for use of the students as well as books sent from the United States.

The fundamental principles of American Bibliotecology were implanted immediately in cataloging, the rules of the American Library Association were followed, and the classification used by the American Congress of the United States was adopted, for the first time in our country, followed by a good number of North American Universities.

Rev. Fr. Lamond, OSA organized the Library, assisted from 1950 by Miss Marta Garcia, a graduate of the Villnueva University of Havana. Dr Carmen Rovira substituted Fr.Lamond in 1956.

The number of catalogued volumes of the Library, without counting reviews and pamphlets, increased from 3,253 volumes during 1952-53 to 19,177 in Sept. 1956.

During the course of 1953-54 the Department of Reviews and Interchange was created, putting Jeannette Fernandez de Criado in charge. From 1956 there was received in the Library a total of 361 reviews, many of them through interchange.

Important donations were received in the following years, from professors, and public and private enterprises. A very important service was the lending of books. With the exception of consultative volumns, and valuable rare books, books were lent out to take home. In 1956-57 11,006 were lent out. In that course, the lending of books was about 10.72 per student.

PUBLICATIONS

At the end of the first academic course, the first Memoria was published called "The Villanovan", dedicated to Fr. Spirali, whose bilingual pages tried to recall "the memorable happy days which we have spent together in studies, and prayer, and sports". The name was changed to "Catholic University", "Spirales" and finally to "Villanueva".

In 1949 appeared the students paper, "Villanova", official publication of the University, and later called "Quibu" (a small river next to the University) from 1950 onwards.

In 1954 the new Department of Public Relations began the "Boletin de la Universidad Santo Tomas de Villanueva" a weekly publication to inform everyone about items interesting to the students.

"Noverim", scientific and cultural organ of the University, began likewise in 1954 to publish monographs and other studies under the Department of Cultural Relations.

Other publications were the "Bulletin" or "Catalogue", the "Students Manual". "Purposes of a Catholic University" and other pamphlets, even separate sheets, in Spanish and English.

RELIGIOUS TRAINING

From the very first moment when the University began to function with title of Santo Tomas de Villanueva, the Augustinian Fathers put special attention on the Catholic teaching in the mind of the students. Not only in the special selection of professors of Catholic culture and spiritual life, but also in a consistent teaching of religion to all students throughout four academic years.

Except for the non-Catholic students, who had to undergo four years of philosophy, every student had to undergo four years of courses in the Catholic faith if they wanted their degree. From the very foundation of the University that was the primary and indispensable condition sine qua non for all Catholic students.

COUNSELLORS

The establishment of a System of Counselors was an initiative of Fr. Kelly, the Rector, begun in 1953. The Counselor was the compliment of the mission provided by their parents at home, and all of them kept the same finality of obtaining, for those students, the best possible training for studies and the best possibilities of success in life.

SUMMER SCHOOL

From the very beginning of classes in the summer of 1947, classes for the betterment of student culture were offered, especially in Technology and Education. The number of students during the first summer school were 22, and increased regularly to 107 in the summer of 1956.

FACULTIES AND DEPARTMENTS

One of the first four faculties of Villanueva on opening in 1946 was the school of Filosofia y Letras. Its group of professors in the beginning were: Doctor Jose Maria Chacon y Calvo (dean), Dr. Antonio Alvarez Pedroso, Dr. Juan Fonseca, Dr. Mercedes Garcia Tuduri, Dr. Jose Ignacio Lasaga and Dr. Jose Manuel Perez Cabrera, who took upon themselves the explanation of the matter corresponding to the first year of studies. The first students were Isabel Oopez Silvero, Maria Antonia Martin, Georgina San Pedro and Beatriz Varela-Sequeira.

The lack of any law about private universities obliged the faculty to follow completely the plan of studies of the Universidad de la Habana, and there, year after year, all the students convalidated their study of the material of their career, always with high marks.

The legislation on private universities allowed the Faculty to restructure its plan of studies more in accord with the purposes of any catholic university.

The new plan offered a program of four years. In which the first three were common studies, and the last specialized studies. The idea was first, to give the student an ample training in Philosophy, History and Literature; and

secondly preparation for an academic career as a professor in a university, or a secondary school.

Dr. Jose Ramon Lopez, P.F.M., was the first of the graduates of the faculty, who asked for and approved splendidly the tests of the State Exam.

The number of students who matriculated Filosofia y Letras improved from four to sixty three in 1955, as follows:

	Secondary schools of Cuba.....	46	
	Foreign schools.....	17	
Men.....	23	Cubans.....	43
Women.....	40	Foreigners.....	20
	63		63

EDUCATION

The faculty of Education was another of the first four schools at Villanueva. Its incipient professors were those who undertook the first year of classes in 1946, and included Dr. Mercedes Garcia Tuduri (Dean), Dr. Rosaura Garcia Tuduri, Dr. Teresa Gavalda Milanés, and Dr. Jose I. Lasaga, Dr. Joaquin Lebrede, and Fr. Edward J. McCarthy, OSA .

In the beginning there were only three students: Adelaida Cano Florit, Martha de la Portilla and Margarita Ruiz Diaz. For four years, the development of the School of Education was most difficult, since the students, in their majority from Religious Institutes, could not attend daily classes, and were occupied in teaching classes daily in their own schools. The course of 1950-51 was suspended, and the Faculty was reorganized.

The Dean of the Faculty produced a project in which the class hours were held on Saturdays, and continued during the summer for a period of eight weeks. In this way, on Saturdays and Summer School, the students were able to take six or seven courses in each academic year. In this way many professors and religious were able to complete their studies for a degree.

This was a good arrangement for many professor and Religious, who

otherwise would not have been able to assist at classes necessary in their planned degree. This plan was completed in the course of the 1953-54 studies. This arrangement was used by other Faculties which noted the increase of student population; in 1951-52 there were only 27 students registered, and now 90 in the 1955-56 course.

PREUNIVERSITY COURSES

In conformity with the rules of official universities, the students who did not have the degree of bachiller or normal, and other degrees from the Normal Kindergarten, Professional Schools of Painting or Sculpture, the Institute of Physical Education of the University of Havana, the Summer School of English and Music Schools, etc, were obliged to do an entrance exam in which the student demonstrated that he had the equivalence of a bachiller or a normal master. In spite of the difficulty of a high rated exam, some students were unable to reach the level required and demonstrated several shortcomings in their answers. Wherefore the Dean of the Faculty of Education decided to organize pre-university courses for those who wished to enter the department. The Dean of Business decided to use the same method to prepare the students for his courses. In the summer of 1953 the first course was arranged with six groups of preparation and 240 hours of classes.

HIERARCHY OF PROFESSORS ESTABLISHED

The great increase of students at the University of Santo Tomas de Villanueva in its later years imposed on the authorities the need to establish a more realistic hierarchy among the professors. In July of 1955, an arrangement of professors was established.

Titled

Dr. M. Garcia Tuduri
Dr. Renee Cabrera
Dr. C. Fitz-Gibbon

Other titled

Dr. Elena York
Dr. Garcia Robiou
Dr. O. Fernandez de la Vega

Auxiliaries

Dr. M. T. Delegado
Dr. E. Garcia Tuduri

Specials (Decoration Arts)

Prof. Consuelo Vasquez
Prof. Hercilia Gonzalez Abreu

Dr. Rafael Solernou
Dr. C. Lucas Azcona

VISITING PROFESSORS

During the course of 1955-56, the Education Faculty was honored with the visit of North American Professors: Dr. Alen Manchester, from the University of Duke; and Dr. Charles M. Long, from the University of Pennsylvania, who offered the students and professors various Conferences over the problems of education, under the auspices of the Cultural Department of the Embassy of the United States of America.

COMERCIAL SCIENCES (BUSINESS SCHOOL)

Other Founders of the University were the first seven students who matriculated in the Business School: among them Manuel Mendez Rosas and Maria Lucia Cavajal.

The Faculty began with four professors: Dr. Eduardo Moreno, Dr. Bartolome Monserrat, Dr. Lucino de Goicoechea and Dr. Eloy Manzano. Dr. Moreno was named Dean, and was never replaced.

In the Business School likewise were Dr. Jose Rodolfo Rodriguez Alvarez and Dr. Raul Maestre from the Law School; as is very notable for the first seven students in the school there were six professors, almost one professor per student. A proportion of one professor for every 20 students characterized the history of the University.

During the 1948-49 course the faculty founded a new school, Bachelor of Science in Economics. In which all the courses were taught in English. The two schools functioned during various years under Dr. Moreno, until the extraordinary increase in the number of students demanded a separation.

In the 1951-52 course the faculty inaugurated its night school classes with notable success from the very beginning, since it offered the possibility of studying after working hours, and the number of students doubled those of the day school.

The increase of students from year to year was constant, a remarkable increase from 7 students the first year to 401 in the course of 1955-56. Up to 1955-56 seventy students had graduated and performed admirably in the State Exam.

In 1946 the school had begun with an identical plan of studies as the School of Commercial Sciences in the University of Havana, but new courses were introduced: History of Cuba, Fiscal Law, Spanish Composition, Oratory Conversation, three courses of English, History of Philosophy, Universal Literature, General and Professional Ethics, etc.

The academic program of the professors was not limited to classwork in the University, but extended outward to distinct centers both cultural and professional. Likewise the Faculty received visits of distinguished professionals who offered valuable conferences to our students.

LAW SCHOOL

The faculty of the Law School began teaching from the very founding of the University.

In the beginning only professors for the First Year; the first Dean was Dr. Raul de Cardenas and the professors Dr. Juan Antonio Hernandez Corujo, Dr. Jose Miguel Morales Gomez. Dr. Raul Maestri, Dr. Marino Perez Duran. Dr. Jose Rodolfo Rodriguez Alvarez, Dr. Andres Trujillo and Fr. Ortino, OSA.

The plan of studies, identical to the School of Law in the University of Havana, was held for the first five years, during which time a new plan began to function from the very first year.

In studying Law, our Faculty was able to offer only a few advantages. It must be remembered that the students who studied Law during the first years, from 1945 to 1950, and had to follow always the courses of the University of Havana and do their exams there, were heroic pioneers from the very beginning of Villanueva.

The first students in the School of Law were Jose Enrique Puente, Julio Portela and Guillermo Rodriguez Salazar. In February 1955 the Tribunals of

State were entered by Leonardo Gutierrez and Regina Quintana, our first lawyers from our Private University.

At the beginning of the 1953-54 course a new plan of studies was approved by the faculty to obtain the degree of Licentiate in Diplomatic and Consular Law.

SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY

In 1950 Fr. Kelly picked a group of professors who seemed the best indicated for the orientation and planification of the Faculty of Sciences and Technology. This basic group included Fr. William Sofranko, OSA, as Director, along with Dr. Julio Pita, Dr. Fernando Zayas and Eng. Alvaro Carreras, and guided by Dr. Alfred Lee Sklar and Dr. Enrique Luaces, decided that Cuban necessities required a group of technological professions, which would gradually be promoted. It was agreed to begin the implementation of the plan with the study of Chemical Engineering, Farmacy, (oriented towards Biochemistry) and Mechanical Engineering as well as Agronomic Engineering (oriented towards the techniques of cultivation and control of plagues).

A plan of studies was made up for the study of Chemical Engineering, and the equipment, laboratories and rooms of the Tarafa Building which were needed by the Faculty. The economic aspect was always left in the hands of Fr. Spirali. The building was begun in 1951 and terminated in 1952.

In 1951 the first studies of Chemical Engineering were begun. The professors included Fr. Sofranko, OSA, as Director, and Dr. Julio Pita, Dr. Virgilio Acosta and Dr. Marcel Alonso. Assisting at the meetings of the Faculty, as both founders and intellectual counselors were Dr. Fernando Zayas and Ing. Alvaro Carreras.

At the beginning of the 1954-55 course the School of Mechanical Engineering was opened with a group of some 25 students. As the academic year plodded along some modifications were made by the Dean, Ing. Manuel A. Suarez Carreno who followed very closely the recommendation of the Committee on Evaluation of Engineering Education of the American Society of Engineering Education.

In the academic aspect great progress was made during the following years, since the laboratories of Organic Chemistry, Chemistry, Physics and Microbiology were completely equipped. Likewise, the design of a Sugar Plant was created for the Laboratory of Unit Operations. This design was the work of the famous Engineer and Professor Alfred Weber, a world wide authority in sugar technology, with the cooperation of North American Companies, like Pide, Foundry and Shute and Nortin. The construction of the sugar laboratory was taken up by the McFarlane Foundry, whose great laboratories were installed in Sagua la Grande.

During the 1955-56 course, Dr. Hady Lopez was designated as Directdor of the Department of Pharmacy. Its professors included the presence of Dr. Luis Capo, Dr. Leon Cuervo, Dr. Felix Soloni, Dr. Jose Suarez Caabro and Dr. Esther Vidal.

During this time the construction of the Countess de Revilla de Camargo building was begun, where the School of Mechanical Engineering would be located...a building projected by the University professors, Architect Manuel Gutierrez, and Eng. Mario Suarez. During this time we had the first graduates of Chemical Engineering: Enrique Rife, Rodolfo Otegui, Armando Ordonez, Arturo Bolivar, Manuel Pouzado and Alvaro Garcia. Their theses were able to solve very important problems of Cuban Industry.

Thanks to the prestige garnered by the Faculty of Sciences and Technology among the different industrial centers of the country, all our graduates, even before terminating their studies, received offers of work from different industries and carried out many important advancements for various companies.

ARCHITECTURE

On Oct.. 1 of 1953, the first year of the School of Architecture began to function with some thirty three students. Fr. Charles Berry, OSA, was the designated Director and as a Technical Adviser Arq. Victor Morales, a Professor in the University of Havana.

The first professors of the school were: Arq. Felipe Gomez Albarran, Dr. Virgilio Acosta, and Arq. Juan I. Guerra. The School of Arhitecture

beyond the usual monthly meetings, offered professional meetings, where any problems of the School could be analyzed.

ECONOMICS AND THE INSTITUTE OF ECONOMIC INVESTIGATIONS

The School of Economics, organized and began services in the academic course of 1954-55, was the first in our country, Cuba, to fill a vacancy of university studies and applications of economic measures on a national scale, within the international panorama.

The contributions of outstanding economists of Cuba, like Julian Alienes, Director of the Department of Economic Investigations of the National Bank of Cuba, Ramiro Guerra, author of various studies of history and Cuban economic problems, and Felipe Pazos, first President of the National Bank promoted them to form the Faculty. A selected commission, formed by Professor Julian Alienes, and Drs. Jose Antonio Guerra, Gregorio del Real, Julio Le Riverand and Claudio Escarpenter, designed the mission of the future School, aided by Dr. Moreno.

The School of Economy offered two cycles of Studies. One of three years, which led to the Licenciature in Economic Sciences, and another of two years additional, for the title of Dr. in Economic Sciences.

Members of the School of Economics included Rev. Dr. Edward J. Burns, OSA, Dean, and Professors Jose Luis Abalo, Mariano Echevarria, Walter Frielingsdorf, Fr. Gino Gialdini, OSA, Rufo Lopez Fresquet and Conrado Luhrsen.

PSYCHOLOGY

The School of Psychology in Villanueva was begun in 1950. Classes were held every day from 5 to 8 pm., at the down town Parochial School of Santo Cristo, granted by the Pastor, Fr. John J. McKniff, OSA. In the beginning five courses were offered: Mental Level, Personality, Physiological Psychology, Statistics and English Psychology. The first Professors of the School included Drs. Gustavo Torroella, Jose I. Lasaga, Ruben de Velasco, Virgilio Acosta and Rev. Dr. John Gavigan, OSA.

By 1953 the school of Psychology was managing the Psychology Clinic and scholarly study of the School and Dispensary of San Lorenzo, devoted to the poor of the Parish of Fr. Spirali. From 1954 the Department of Psychology had in charge everything referring to the psychological tests of the Orientation Program prepared for the new students.

ART AND DECORATION

At the beginning of the academic course of 1949-50 the Department of Art and Decoration of Villanueva, attached to the Faculty of Education, opened its doors to a group of young Cubans interested in that range of art decoration. From the very beginning, in charge of that department were Professors Hercilia Gonzalez Abreu and highly prepared Consuelo Vazquez Diaz.

From its very beginning, this department had the custom of public exhibitions of the work done by the students. In its later years, the very students themselves exhibited the designs and modifications of style arranged by themselves. Through various courses, the most distinguished models of EL ENCANTO, a stylish departmental store, were the results and projects of the students, exhibiting their ability fashioned and perfected in Villanueva. In the famous EL ARTE likewise another popular store, many of the students works were exhibited.

In January of 1953, in conjunction with the Cultural Department of the Embassy of the United States, Villanueva offered an exposition titled TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF TEXTILES, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, from the famous Scalmandres Museum of New York. Cuba was the first country which had the privilege of demonstrating the fashions of that institution.

A good crown of some seven hundred people attended this exposition and the various conferences. The descriptive catalogue of the exposition was composed by Professor Consuelo Vazquez. This department offered its cooperation in the adorning and decorating of its own University: design of furniture, preparation of curtains, and adapting old furniture to fit the era. During the course, the students made several visits to the shops of High Designing of El Encato, (famous department store of Havana), and the Experimental Agronomical School of las Vegas, to especially learn the textiles and fibers which could be profitable for Cuba. The Ariguanabo

Textile Factory was likewise visited to better appreciate the production and finishing of the products.

BACHELOR OF ARTS

When the University began its first year of classes in 1946, the Faculty of Bachelor of Arts was attended by the majority of the students. This was the most characteristic faculty of Villanueva, because it was composed of the Augustinian Fathers as professors. Practically all were from the United States and were graduates of the best Universities of the United States and Europe, with degrees of Master of Arts and Doctors of Philosophy..

Those were the day when every one referred to the University as "Villanova", and an enthusiastic group of students of the school gave rise to, many activities which contributed greatly to strengthen the spirit of solidarity and love for the university among all its people. Almost all these student formed part of the body of writers of the first Memoria of Villanueva, organized sports programs, like the famous games of Basketball in which the students of Merici were the first rivals, Christmas parties, end of classes, and the unforgettable trips to various places of great interest, in which the professors, the Augustinian Fathers, accompanied the students with enthusiasm.

It was Fr. James Hurley, first President of Villanueva who organized the faculty of Bachelor of Arts, which began with studies in: English Composition, Principles of Economics, Financial Mathematics, Principles of Accounting, Logic, Social Problems and Religion.

The first Dean was Fr. Ed. McCarthy, OSA, who reorganized the plan of studies, including new classes. During the time when he directed the classes, he likewise engaged as a valorous and cordial comrade in all the sports activities of the students.

The founders of the School of Arts were: Carmelina Macia, David Flynn, Helena Rodriguez Bobes, Silvia Lopez Ona, Silvia Hidalgo Gato, Georgina Betancourt and Aniceto Malaret.

Four years later the title of Bachelor of Arts was given to the first graduates: Carmelina Macia, Elena Fonseca, David Flynn, Priscilla

Fontecilla, Marta Garcia, Georgina Betancourt and Gladys Ferrer.

To enter the school of Arts, it was necessary to have completed four years of High School, with four years of English Language and Literature, two years of Latin, two years of some modern language, two years of Mathematics and a year of Chemistry, along with all the courses of a four year High School. Likewise those with the title of Bachiller en Letras obtained in some Institute of Secondary Education.

After the 1955-56 course the Faculty of Bachelor of Arts changed the title to Licentiate in Letters.

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

This faculty was established in the course of 1947-48, headed up by Dr. Eduardo Moreno, dean of Ciencias Comerciales (Business Studies) Fr. James Seymour, OSA, acted as Dean from 1950 to 1952, when he was made the first Vice President of the University. The students said of him, that in spite of being the Disciplinarian, he made them feel like his friends, that he was their friend and companion. He was one of the most loved Fathers in Villanueva.

To enter this school an indispensable requisite was the termination of four years of High School, and likewise some courses in Sciences. Likewise those who had a degree from the Institutes of Secondary Education were accepted. The degree offered by the Bachelor of Sciences course was later changed to Licentiate in Sciences, and the student was offered a general understanding of various fields of science and general culture.

The first graduates of this school were: Silvia Caamano Blanco, Manuel Rodriguez Silveira, Frank Esposito, Mario Martinez Perez and Maria del Carmen Puente Otero.

The group of professors of Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Art were the same, and counted with the following professors Fathers McCarthy, Scanlan, Berra. Curran, Ortino, Kelly, Healy, Gavigan, Lamond, Murray, DiOrio, O'Neill, Seymour, Burns and Hamerlinck, and professors Marcel Chauchat, Carlos Garcia Robiou, Alvin Holman, John Johnson, Frank R Esposito, John J. Bradley, Silvio Clark, Mariano Echevarria and Antonio Jorge.

INVESTIGATIONS AND BUREAU DE PATRONES DE CALIDAD

The idea of organizing a group of specialists to confirm the quality of various productions on the market was begun in 1954. The Law Firm of Lazo and Cubas took on the legal aspect of the new organization and Francisco Prieto lent the University his knowledge of the installation and organization of the Bureau.

The inaugural ceremony was held on Thursday, 27th of January of 1955, with the presence of very distinguished personalities: Mr. Arthur Gardiner, Ambassador of the United States; Francisco Orue, Mayor of Marianao; Ing. Rodolfo Arango, Director of Agriculture; Rafael Palacios, for the Association of Cuban Industries; Jose Ignacio Rivero, Director of the daily newspaper, *Diario de la Marina*; Commander Krisser of the American Embassy, and the authorities and professors of the University.

The Bureau of Qualities was not an organization of money making possibilities, but much rather a good help to serve national economy. The Bureau had specially designed laboratories and equipment of the most modern types as a basis of examining and establishing the basic requisites of articles and productions. The technical direction of the Bureau was based on the scientific experience of the professors in the Faculty of Chemical Engineering, Dr. Julio Pita, Dr. Fernando Zayas, and the specialized knowledge of Fr. Berry and Fr. Hamerlinck.

Specifically the Bureau provided a series of useful services to industrialists and business men, by way of permanent information about the products which the company produced or sold and helped them to maintain a quality of a high level. The certificates which the Bureau authorized, representative of a responsible and formal judgement, augmented the confidence of the consumers. Additionally, the Bureau cooperated with the laboratories of various industries in maintaining a rhythm of scientific progress which inspired the constant bettering of their production.

Up to 1956, thirteen industries promoted their products with the Seal of Quality of the Bureau.

LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

The Language Institute was established in the academic year of 1955-56 and its important operation was to prepare the students for classes in English or to be a teacher of the English language. It authorized the title of Professor of English, and was under the direction of Mr. James J. O'Mailia.

The courses which were composed included: Phonetics, English Composition, Advanced English Composition, Basic Oral English, Advanced Oral English, English Literature, American Literature, History of the English Language, Teaching English as a Foreign Language, History of Modern Europe, and likewise, Basic English, Intermediate English, Commercial English, Natural Drawing, the Teaching of Primary and Secondary Schools, and General Psychology.

BOARD OF PLANIFICATION

With the establishment of the Faculty of Architecture came the idea of creating the Board of Planification of the Universidad de Villanueva, and each professor of the recently founded Faculty was an enthusiastic and persistent voice which indicated the urgent necessity of a planification board.

The University approved in 1956 the organization of a group which, as a consultative organization, was made up of:

President:	Engineer Miguel Rosich
Vice President:	Architect Felipe Gomez Albarran
Secretary:	Architect Manuel R. Gutierrez
Consultors:	Fr. Edward Burns, Fr. Charles Berry, Ing.

Mario G. Suarez and Architect Eduardo Montoulieu

Observer: Fr. John J. Kelly, OSA

In our hearts Villanueva still lives, and will live for ever. Villanueva vive!
October 5, 1996, Miami. Florida, celebrating 50 years from its founding

Marta Llovet Hughes

Much of this work was accomplished through the splendid help of Marta Carricaburu Gutierrez, long time supporter of all Augustinian efforts in Cuba and Miami, aided in many ways by her Library adjuncts, Rosario M. Cruz, Isabel M. Pascu and Pedro A. Figueredo, photographic expert. God bless them all!

FIDEL CASTRO AND THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY.

Fr. Kelly and Fidel Castro spent some years together at the University of Havana: Fr. Kelly in Filosofía y Letras, and Fidel Castro in Derecho from 1945 onwards. It was there in those years that Fr. Kelly learned what the FEU (Federación Estudiantil Universitaria) was: a large group of students who could control the entire University and all its operations for better or worse. As an example, Fr. Kelly was attending the new St. Rita Church in Miramar, with its many necessities and direction, which included daily Mass and confessions, along with the private school for all the poor children in its area. When it came to studying in the University, he had to choose the convenient 'por la libre' (meaning no obligation in attending the many studies and permitted the exams only at end of the many courses). Many times before exams Fr. Kelly would often spend half the night studying for the exam. On arriving at the University on the day of exams, he would often find the University closed by the FEU, for their own purposes.

This closure of the University happened several times during Fr. Kelly's studies, much to his dismay. As a result he decided that if ever he had anything to do with the new Catholic University, there would be NO FEU permitted. So, at the Catholic University, when he became Rector, (President) he resolved that there never would be a FEU permitted in the Catholic University. The students would be formally taught as students and no politics permitted. Every other type of student activity was admitted and often times very proper, such as athletics, drama, choir, music, debates and competitions. It was very evident that the FEU at Havana University was much in support of Fidel Castro's revolutionary activities and that University suffered, even total closure through the activities of the FEU. Knowing that many students at the Catholic University would be moved towards Castro's revolution, it was necessary to be vigilant and prepared for possible problems...and there were many.

Robert E. Quirk, in his « FIDEL CASTRO » has brilliantly described the moves of the FEU, as he writes: "The educational reform movement that swept Latin America in the 1920s and 1930s had given Cuban students a significant role in university government, and by securing autonomy for the university, freed the institution from outside governmental restraints. Students exploited the autonomy, however, by using the campus as a base for

political activities, secure in the knowledge that the police were forbidden by law from entering the university grounds. The students formed 'revolutionary groups', ostensibly dedicated to social reforms. Instead, they employed terrorist methods against their enemies on and off campus. By the time Fidel Castro had arrived to begin his law studies, violence and corruption were endemic in the capital". Again, "At the University of Havana, the two most powerful groups were the Socialist Revolutionary Movement (MSR) and the Insurreccional Revolutionary Union (UIR). Both harassed students and professors with their threats of violence; they fixed grades and monopolized the sale of text books. Arocha (subsequently a prominent novelist and poet) recalled in his first year he and his friends had been afraid to go alone into that 'cavern of gangsters'"

With this as a background there was no reason for the Catholic University to permit the founding of a FEU. There were many reasons for opposing it, especially when one realized the involvement of Castro in the Cayo Confites disaster against the president of Santo Domingo, and the infamous Bogotazo against the Pan American Congress, 1948, in Bogota, Colombia, from which Castro escaped through the intervention of the Cuban ambassador shipping him and companions out of Bogota through a special arranged airplane flight to Cuba.

Castro's ideas and promises lead into the infamous attack of the Moncada barracks of the Army in Oriente, 1953, by a group of Castro's bands of revolutionaries. They were soon repelled and almost annihilated by the Army. Fidel and a few others escaped and were ultimately saved by the Archbishop of Santiago, Msnr. Perez Serantes., and confined to prison to await trial. The sentence for Castro was the most unusual and great in Cuban courts and he and others were sent to the Isle of Pines to the new Model Prison.

There Castro spent his time reading, and reading, many books that had to do with changing governments and the best way to do it. He was most elated by the news of the new elections for government under Batista.

After the election of Batista as President, on May 15, 1955, Castro and the others were given amnesty and left the prison. The FEU sent representatives to greet him on his liberty. He soon was on his way to Mexico to be with his brother, Raul, and begin new planning of revolution against the Batista government.

In Mexico, Castro was aided by his many exiled friends and conspirators in preparing a new revolutionary attempt against Batista. After acquiring a small boat the GRANMA and putting in 81 revolutionaries, a new attempt was made to land in Oriente and begin the final attempt to oust Batista and personally control the whole country of Cuba, end of November, 1956. In spite of all the difficulties in Oriente, Castro managed to finally reach the environs of the highest mountain in Cuba, Turqino peak. There and nearby the incipient revolutionaries of Castro began their various terms of success or defeat. The Sierra Maestra was to be the center of more and more opposition to the government of Batista under their commitment called ... 26th of July.

Most of the people in Cuba became entranced with the revolution of Fidel Castro, and as time went along they also promoted and supported the aims of the revolutionaries, much moved by the daily radio speeches of the leader. Although Cuba at the time was in its most prominent financial stage of the era, more and more began to accept the daily speeches of Castro on the radio, promising a better nation and fulfillment of the old laws of justice and freedom. By far the majority of Cubans accepted the promises of Castro, made almost daily, and supported his movements against the Batista regime. When someone suggested that Castro was moving towards communist policies, even professors at the University were unmoved, saying that Uncle Sam (USA) would permit no communism in Cuba.. Ambassador Earl E.T. Smith in his book about Cuba "THE FOURTH FLOOR" has explained why Uncle Sam did nothing to save Cuba from the Castro Revolution, which ultimately ended in Socialist Communism. The Catholic University had to survive all these difficulties and keep its students more interested in their studies, rather than the promises of Castro.

In the official chapter of the Augustinians in 1965, at Villanova, Pennsylvania, Fr. Kelly promoted the election of Fr. James Hurley as the Provincial who would give more attention to the needs of the Catholic University of Havana. But to no avail. Fr. Kelly had to spend some of his time in Spain, looking for help for his University. The Spanish Provinces were interested and provided much help for Villanueva so that by 1958 there were ten Spanish fathers teaching; as well as two Hollanders, with the six North American Augustinians. All of them were troubled by the activities of the Castro revolutionary promises. One of the older Spaniards of much experience said; "Castro has almost convinced me of his doctrine for Cuba."

From the arrival of Castro to Cuba, from Mexico, and the many radio programs from the back hills of Oriente, there were many more difficulties in holding classes. There were personal attacks on the University, including three bombs one night: first in empty Room 8, second in the bushes between the classroom building and the Chapel, and a third bomb found by Juan, the janitor, in the mens bathroom. of the second floor. Fr. Kelly watched the janitor, and his broom, moving a bomb from the back of a toilet into a pail of water to quench it.

Fr. Kelly found the second floor filled with students on one side and a trio of police on the other, one with his hand on his gun, and promptly told the police to withdraw, and that he would take care of the problem. The police withdrew and Fr. Kelly managed to get the students and professors back to their classrooms.

Early in 1958 , unbeknownst to Fr. Kelly, finally there was movement amongst some students to promote the Castro revolution. Rafael Rivas-Vasquez wrote the story of some students at Villanueva, Sept. 25,1997..... As follows:

“By 1958 the Cuban political situation had deteriorated, police repression had increased, and so had human rights violations.

“Most Cubans became concerned about the country’s future.. Most traditional parties would join all the revolutionary movements in signing the anti-Batista “Pacto de Caracas” in Venezuela on July 20, 1958. The United States Government curtailed all military aid and assistance to the Batista regime---Batista went to the British for help. The democratic governments of Costa Rica and Venezuela were in the process of supporting the rebels and providing some weapons.

“The original guerrilla struggle which had been limited to the Sierra Maestra mountain range in the southern coast of Oriente province since the Castro “26 July Movement” landing in 1957 had spread to other regions.

“The entrepreneurial class had its misgivings regarding Castro, but it was concerned with the political and economic situation. Until 1957, in spite of the deteriorating political conditions, Cubans had remained the Latin American leaders in socio-economic indicators and development (gross

national product, per capita income, health, education, car, radio, TV set, refrigerators per capita, and many others) but in 1959 the trend was reversed. The professional class was divided; the younger members drifting towards an active anti-Batista opposition. Organized labor was firmly controlled by CYC leader Eusebio Mujal and supported the regime. The peasants were being recruited by the revolution. Unrest became widespread among Armed Forces young officers.

"At Villanueva, university authorities maintained a firm non position. Politics was out of the educational realm, thus off limits on campus. Each student, as an individual was free to think and act as he saw fit as a citizen, but not as a member of the student body.

"However, during the 1957-1958 school year, the revolution entered Villanueva by the back door. As the political situation deteriorated, an increasing number of students decided to take an anti-Batista stand.

"Cuban students who attended Villanueva belonged (in their majority) to middle class, upper middle-class, and wealthy families. Scholarships had increased and a number of former University of Havana students had transferred to Villanueva. The goal was the same: enjoy academic stability, learn, study, and graduate; something that was becoming extremely difficult at the University of Havana (the oldest university in the hemisphere) due to a process that began in the late twenties regarding direct involvement of students in politics; Batista's presence in power only made things worse.

"Initially, the students joined anti-Batista groups outside school, but as time went by, their individual revolutionary activities made their way into the campus. They started recruiting other fellow students and revolutionary propaganda appeared inside the university.

"The students who had joined anti-Batista groups belonged to the following groups: The "26/Julio" movement (Castro's own); the DR "13/Marzo" (although it was closer to University of Havana students); and 3) "LAR"—to some extent, Villanueva's own group.

"A word about "LAR" is in order. "LAR" stood for "Legion de Accion Revolucionaria" (Legion of Revolutionary Action) and it was mainly formed by young professionals and students who individually belonged to ACU (a Catholic University Sodality of Our Lady run by the Jesuits). Although it

was the smallest group of the three mentioned movements in nationwide terms, it was the strongest and most active group on campus.

“The April 9, 1958 General Strike: Villanueva closed its doors. The orders came down from Castro and the date was set for April 9. Fidel Castro had landed in 1956; the DR had attacked the Presidential Palace on March 13, 1957; two or three small military uprisings had been aborted Radio broadcasts from Venezuela and through a powerful station set up in the Sierra Maestra were widely heard daily.

“The “26/Julio” movement considered that it had enough power for a show of force to challenge the Batista regime and called for a general strike, although rural guerrilla activity was still confined to the Sierra Maestra mountains in Southern Oriente.

“The public universities had already closed down, but the private universities were open: Villanueva, La Salle, and the Masonic university (the Jesuit’s Belen University was not opened yet.)

“The “26/Julio” became aware of its mass weakness and the PSP (Communist Party) made their alliance with Castro and sent leaders (Carlos Rafael Rodriguez) to the Sierra Maestra; the “FEN” became the “FENU” (united/student national front) and the “FON” became the “FONU” as the united/workers national front (united with PS/Communists).

“Villanueva Reopens: Back to school challenges “FEN/U.
With the failure of the general strike, the rationale for closing the university was not valid any longer, thus by May ’58, serious consideration was given to return to the classrooms and be able to end the 1957-1958. school year.

- “For the students, the problem was two-fold: on the one hand, FEN/U wanted to keep all private universities closed as the public ones remained that way; on the other hand, the university authorities took a grim view as they had become aware that, in spite of their stand, some students had become involved in revolutionary activities and were active in the anti-Batista struggle, even in campus.

- “But the bona fide attitude paid off, and the Villanueva authorities met with student representatives and it was agreed that school would open on or around June, classes would be on during the summer and the 1957-1958

school year would end around mid-September; all parties would have a two-week break, and on October 1st, the 1958-1959 school year would begin.

“Nothing happened and Villanueva had gained another battle. 1959 Castro coming into power ...was still six weeks away.”

Fr. Kelly says that the above was not known to him regarding the two month closing of Villanueva. He himself decided to close the University after a student questionnaire, made by some students, indicated that most were against coming to class during the expected Castro revolutionary move. The Villanueva University was closed by Fr. Kelly, from March 6 to May 21. It was his decision, with the advice of Dr. Agustin Batista, to reopen the University in June, and terminate in September, and be able shortly thereafter to begin the 1958-59 classes. His decisions were based on the possibility of further bombing in the University and other dangers. The students made no decisions; the Rector decided since he was responsible for the safe assistance of professors and students. It was a most difficult time for Villanueva, and Fr. Kelly did his utmost to guarantee the safety of all.

There was the case of Jesus Barriero. for example, when one day the Police Station of 23rd St. Vedado, called Fr. Kelly about one of the students (Jesus Barriero) who was being held, and what to do. Fr. Kelly drove down to the police station and found Jesus Barriero being held for tricks against the government. Fr. Kelly asked for the control of Jesus, and took him to the Embassy of Uruguay, to keep him safe, and hopefully to leave the country soon. That was not the case. Within two days Jesus was gone from the Embassy. He was not seen again until Fidel Castro came into power. Jesus blamed Fr. Kelly for being unattentive to his mother and therefore he was against his presence. Some of his classmates said later that he was a curious, inexplicable lad with his personal problems. (As the staff of the University later stated, Barreiro was among the militia, who imprisoned all the priests after the fiasco of the Bay of Pigs.)

The University had lost two months of classes as a result of a student petition in the spring, it was able to make up those classes in the summer, and open registration for the new year, October, with an increase in the student body. Almost 1,600 students registered in the various schools. That was the highest enrollment ever. They too considered that the government would nullify Castro's increasing pressure.

The U. S. States Department, about mid December 1958, instructed the Ambassador Earl E.T. Smith to deliver an official note to President Batista to the effect that the United States Government would support neither Batista nor the recently elected President. On the basis of the note, with the influence of the rebels ever widening in the anti-government assaults and resistance, Batista decided to abdicate quietly, January 1, 1959.

Unsuccessfully, he tried to leave the power of the presidency in the hand of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Fidel Castro called for a national strike, which paralyzed the country for a few days, enabling him to arrive in Havana, and by popular acclaim declare himself the new ruler of Cuba. Ninety percent of the Cubans were ecstatic at the success of Castro, presuming that he would live up to his golden-voiced promises.

Probably those least swayed by the promises of Castro were the foreigners, who could judge events more objectively than their Cuban friends. It was quite obvious to the Augustinian Fathers that Castro was inaugurating a Socialist government. Hence they used whatever means was in their power to convince their Cuban colleagues and friends, without avail. Castro was able to deceive his countrymen, who expected at most a change of government by political revolution; they were not at all in favor of a Socialist government. They believed the false promises of Castro, and did not realize what he would do to Cuba.

A chemical engineering student, Ing. Isidoro Garcia, has given his review of how Villanueva operated and the problems with the Castro government.

Notes about the Universidad Catolica de Santo Tomas de Villanueva en Mariano, La Havana, Cuba, by Isidoro M. Garcia, Engineer.

This writer arrived at Villanueva on September 1956 due to the generosity of the Rev. Father John J. Kelly, OSA, Rector of the University and friend of Rev. Juan Toma Langlois, p.m.e., French Canadian priest and pastor of my parish in Cuba, who asked Fr. Kelly to help me. Fr. Kelly provided me with the opportunity to study by offering a scholarship. I was to live in the University, help in church in the mornings and in the evenings. I was to answer the phone at the Rectory or help in the Library. The scholarship provided shelter, food and tuition for free. For this I will always be grateful. There were four of us living on campus with the same type of scholarship.

Villanueva had a diverse student body. Critics branded it as a university for the very rich people. This was not an accurate description. Yes, there were very rich people and I can say the ones I knew were very rich and very good people indeed. There were many relatively poor students with scholarships. In my class alone there were more than 5 students with scholarships.

At the time Havana University was closed and the engineering freshman class was abnormally big, over 130 students; this included the Chemical and Mechanical students. The second year class was to be reduced to approximately 30 students each, for Mechanical and Chemical, due to the working capacity of laboratories and personnel.

The competition was keen and strong. We were told that the top students will remain and many with good grades will not make the cut. In fact that happened and several students went to the U. S. to colleges like Georgia Tech and did very well indeed. We were pushed to the limit, and we learned.

We were very fortunate to have the caliber of professors we had: Ingeniero Suarez as Dean of Engineering and teaching us the "Orientation" course; Virgilio Acosta for Physics, Julio Pita for Chemistry, Marcelo Alonso and Tomas Rolando for Mathematics, Alfredo Zayas for engineering drawing, and many others.

The University had a very balanced mix of full and part time teachers that were tops in their profession and who taught at night or at 'irregular hours'.

In the Engineering School we had full time professors like Dr. Jose Ramon de la Vega, who turned down profitable positions in private industry, to be full time at Villanueva. There were several distinguished professionals like Ing. Mario Suarez, Ing. Gabriel Auriolles, Ing. Mario Marinas, Ing. Navia and many others.

We had classes at 6 or 7 pm, and gladly stayed late to absorb the theoretical and practical knowledge that these teachers shared with us. We were given plant tours of their places of work, that gave us a taste, a realistic view of the real world. This was invaluable. We truly looked forward to those classes and plant trips such as trips to the Esso refinery and to Ing. Auriolles soy bean plant in the bay.

We had very good laboratories. The physic and chemistry labs gave us the opportunity to put into practice some of what we learned in the classroom. The small Sugar Mill in the Tarafa Building was a classic example of the goals of Villanueva. To prepare excellent engineers to work in the Sugar industry, and also to help diversify the Cuban economy with additional different products manufactured in the country.

It should be noted that during the fourth year the Chemical Engineering students spent a month in different Sugar Mills in the country as part of the required curriculum.

In the fourth floor of the Tarafa building was located the "Buro de Patronos de Calidad de la Universidad de Villanueva". A number of professionals placed very high the name of Villanueva in the whole island. For a couple of years I lived in that third floor and could witness the professionalism of that operation.

I also lived in the Edificio Talleres ("the rombos building). This building was designed by Ing. Mario Suarez, pioneering the construction technique used. Stories and pictures of the building appeared in many worldwide magazines. I remember one German magazine photo and article that praised it greatly. Ing. Suarez also designed the Revilla Building, used mainly for Architecture and Law students. It was also a different pioneer technique used by Ing. Mario Suarez.

Once Villanueva was closed in 1961 most students came to the United States to finish their studies. Most of them did very well and they went ahead to achieve important positions in American society. And so did many of those who graduated in Cuba.

All was not just study, we also had time for our religious duties and entertainment.

We were blessed to have several Augustinian priests on campus, teaching and helping us spiritually. There were American, Spanish, Dutch and Cuban priests. There were daily Masses at 7, 7:30 and 8 am. Often there were five or six Masses being said at the same time using the lateral altars. The priests were available for confession and consultation at any time we needed it.

There was Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in the late afternoon to serve those who attended classes in the afternoon.

Architect Eugenio Batista and others had a very active liturgy committee who strictly following the Church guidelines did bring to us a new liturgy-related changes approved by the Church, such as saying Mass facing the public. We were one of the first doing that in Cuba. Also any new type of vestments were procured to be used in our liturgies.

More in the religious aspect. Villanueva contributed quite a bit to the religious well being of their students and graduates. Here in New Jersey we have more than eight marriages over 30 years long, where both spouses are Villanueva graduates\students whose careers were cut short by closing in 1961. Several over 30-year marriages where one of the spouses is from Villanueva reside in this tri-state area (NJ, NY, CT). Most of them are very active in their parishes, as Eucharist Ministers, CCD teachers and many other responsibilities.

The Juventud de Accion Catolica de Cuba was organized in four branches: JAC, parroquial, JEC high school students, JOC obreros and JUC university students. Villanueva had an active JUC chapter doing apostolic work.

Monsignor Eduardo Boza Masvidal organized a group of students called Vanguardia to go to poor neighborhoods to do apostolic work.

There were non-credit classes of Music Appreciation once a week on late afternoon/early evening; the teacher, whose name I have forgotten, was excellent. She awoke in this guajiro a taste for classical music. I still remember her bringing musical pieces with a particular solo instrument and explaining beautifully how to listen and how it worked. Many times she played said instrument herself.

Villanueva introduced this guajiro and many other Cubans to some very good American customs and holidays thus enriching our lives. The Halloween dance upstairs in the Library was very popular and well attended. Thanksgiving Day was a holiday, no classes. Those of us living there celebrated it with the priests.

Lets not forget sports. Villanueva had an active sports program. We

played baseball and softball. We had an intramural softball league, by schools, very competitive, lots of fun, ribbing and camaraderie. Yes, we had to keep an eye for "recruiting" outside of your school.

Ping-pong was a favorite; we played in between classes in the famous glorieta between Tarafa and Revilla buildings, Chess was popular too. If we felt like just resting, talking or seeing the girls go by, the Plaza Kelly centrally between the Library, the Rectory and the Cafeteria in the Hickey building was a favorite place to sit.

As to be expected Villanueva was not spared the political upheavals that took place in Cuba. During the years of Batista rule there were students actively involved, both in the Directorio Estudiantil and in the Resistencia Civica.

There was a student strike in April 1958 in response to a call to end the dictatorship and bring democracy to the island. A former high school professor of mine, active in the Catholic action movement, was killed as part of the unsuccessful attack to the presidential palace on April 9.

Due to the strike it was experienced much more difficulty in organizing resistance and action against the dictatorship. A delegation was sent to the Sierra Maestra mountains to talk to Castro where it was agreed that Villanueva was more useful to the revolution open than closed. For many other additional reasons the university reopened its doors again.

On January 1, 1959 Batista left the country.

Castro took over and started promulgating new laws, starting with number one. Law number eleven was directed against Villanueva, stating all we had studied since 1956 was void. Any credits earned since the Havana University closed will not be recognized.

Immediately we organized to revoke such an unjust law. We decided to see Castro and formed teams to camp on an Havana del Este overpass expecting Castro to come by, sooner or later, no matter how long it would take. I was in the first team to go and that same night we were able to talk to Castro in person.

Among other things he told us that if we showed him that we had more

popular support than the Havana University students, he would change the law. What kind of just revolution was this: that a number of people behind a law determined its existence, regardless of the merits of the law? Also he made other comments that were diametrically different from what he told the Cuban people on TV. That night, right then and there, my doubts and misgivings came to an end. I saw clearly; he lost me; I could no longer support what he was doing; he was a liar and so was his revolution.

We organized a rally at the Villanueva campus to show him our popular support. We visited most high schools in Havana, explained them our cause and invited them to come to the rally. They came in big numbers. For doing this the newspaper *Revolucion* branded us as traitors, creating trouble for the revolution, despite the fact that Castro himself had asked us to show our popular support.

Many students and graduates answered the call to defend our freedom and democracy. Some gave their lives; some were imprisoned.

Villanueva became an important source of strength to combat communism. We are proud to have responded with our limited resources to bring about democracy to Cuba again.

On Saturday, April 15, 1961, we, at Villanueva, awoke to the sound of bombs exploding and airplane bombers flying very low over our university; it was the attack to Columbia military base nearby and a precursor of the ill fated Bay of Pigs invasion. Villanueva students were killed during the invasion, also students who were already in custody were shot those first few days of the invasion.

On Monday, April 17, the University was taken over by Castro's militia; all priests and employees and student/workers were taken to the Plaza Kelly and made wait while they searched the premises. Afterwards we were taken to the Tarafa building auditorium where we stayed all the time until about the first few days in May, when we were released. During those days several Villanueva students were brought from their homes and were detained with us in the auditorium. Some were transferred to the G-2 headquarters.

Soon thereafter the Castro government started to use the classrooms as part of one of their schools. I moved into an apartment with 4 other friends from my home town. One of these 4 friends was a student who was

transferred to study at the Villaueva classrooms the summer of 1961. Another of those 4 was a militiaman guarding the Bay of Pigs prisoners at the unfinished Navy Hospital in Habana del Este. We had some interesting conversations in the evenings as you can imagine.

It must be noted that what started as a dream from Fr. Lorenzo Spirali, OSA, took shape due to his indefatigable work and God's favor. Many people contributed much to build Villanueva's reputation, most important of all was Fr. John J. Kelly, as Rector for many years. By 1961 Villanueva was well on its way to become more and more a very important factor in the cultural, intellectual, scientific and religious fields in Cuba.

It must be noted that in a relatively short time and due to its well deserved reputation the Vatican conferred the title of CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY, a title that is not given lightly. Many 'catholic' universities in the world aspire to that official title but have not received it yet.

We pray that in the not too distant future Cuba be free again and that if we are still alive, we could contribute to the rebirth of our 'querida (beloved) Villanueva'.

May Our Lord Jesus and the Most Holy Virgin Mary grant us this petition. Amen.

Chapter 4

DESTRUCTIVE LEY 11 (LAW 11) AGAINST THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF VILLANUEVA AND THE PERSON OF FR. KELLY

After the departure of Batista, Jan.1, 1959, began the difficulties of the Catholic University and Fr. Kelly. On Jan. 3, 1959, the militia arrived early morning at the Monastery with their weapons and demanded the presence of all the priests together in the circular entrance. All the priests who were there were immediately the objective of the militia. They demanded of Fr. Kelly the documents of the university and the records of the students. Fr. Kelly replied immediately: "Nothing doing. I give you nothing. Shoot if you want, but you get nothing from me." About that time the very old Prior of the monastery, Fr. Dennis Kavanaugh, was descending the stairs to the circular entrance. His question was, "Fr. Kelly, what do these people want".

The militia said they would take him and Fr. Kelly prisoners. His reply, "Tell them to wait while I brush my teeth" and he retreated up the stairs. Meanwhile Fr. Kelly convinced the militia to leave the old prior at home, and they took only him as a prisoner in their car to the center of their operations:the large office of the Rector of the Havana University!! They placed Fr. Kelly as prisoner in a large hall in the second floor....full of arms and ammunition During the hours of his captivity, several revolutionaries (all young men) came in to exchange their arms for something more suitable. None spoke to Fr. Kelly.

In the late afternoon the young militia came to tell Fr. Kelly he could go; that he was released. Fr. Kelly replied; "You brought me here. So now you have to take me home". They did, without further word, and left him at the monastery of the University. Fr. Kelly never realized why they brought him back, thinking that perhaps the American embassy had intervened.

He returned to his community in the Monastery. The Prior was V. R. Fr. Dennis Kavanaugh, an older Augustinian, with his subjects: Fr. Kelly, the Rector of the University, and Fr. Dominic J. Berra, vice Rector and dean of theology studies, Fr. Edward J. McCarthy, Regent of all studies (our most competent man) Fr. Henry L. Daly, treasurer, along with Fr. Edward J. Burns, Director of Public Relations and the Business Office. They were accompanied by Fr. Gerrit Hamerlinck, Director of Investigative Technologies, Fr. Eutimio Alonso, disciplinarian, along with Fr. Dario

Casado, Chaplain and Professor and other fine professors, Fr. Francisco Fernandez Prada, Fr. Erbio Caraballo, Fr. Juan Dominguez, Fr. Cipriano Vicente and Fr. Jan Amesz (who was studying engineering), Fr. Antimo de Pozo, (who died in 1958) Fr. Jan Busch, noted chemist, Fr. Jose Luis Santamarina, Fr. Juan Jose Dominguez and a Hollander OSA who helped in the business office. They all suffered the constant pressure from the operations of Fidel Castro.

That was only the beginning of problems for Villanueva. After a few days Castro and his government had set out new laws for the country. The worst possible was Ley Once (Law Eleven) which nullified all the credits and work of the Villanueva students for two and a half years (the time that the University of Havana was closed). The miserable law was for all private universities in Cuba. Some opposition had to be made immediately, especially since Fr. Kelly was the President of the group of private universities.

A trip to the Minister of Education of the new government, Armando Hart, was immediately proposed, and accomplished.. Fr. Kelly spoke in the name of all the private universities. "this law is unjust and must be retracted by the Government immediately". Minister Hart replied that all of the Rectors of private universities had to propose their objections to the law and the Minister would decide the solution. Fr. Kelly immediately replied that the law was unjust and had to be retracted. Unfortunately the Rectors of the private universities were willing to accept the decision of the Minister and try to change the law. Fr. Kelly was the only American in the group.. He alone was to see to the demolition of Law Eleven. All the professors of the Catholic University planned a large evening demonstration against Law Eleven...but he must not be the principal proponent. Thousands of people came to Villanueva to express their opposition to Law Eleven... but to no avail.

To the Castro government Fr. Kelly was an obstacle in his private university. To the Federation of University students at Havana University Fr Kelly was also an obstacle and made it evident in their demands. The large building next to the President's building and visible from the street which crossed below the very long 100-plus stairway, had a long and high message, plainly visible: EXIGIMOS DEPURACION P, KELLY. (We demand the expurgation of Fr. Kelly). Obviously the FEU had made the sign. They wanted to send him away.

In the middle of March, 1959, three men from the government of Castro came to visit Fr. Kelly in the evening. Their word was: "Fr. Kelly, as long as you are here, this University will never open". Realizing the position, Fr. Kelly thought that since he was American, the government did not want him there. For this reason Fr. Kelly visited Cuban Fr. Eduardo Boza Mazvidal in his Parish in old Havana, Caridad, and explained to him his thought about the anti-American policy of Fidel Castro and would he accept the position of Vice Rector of the Catholic University. After considerable thought, the very pensative Fr. Boza would accept the position, and would come to the Catholic University to learn what would be his obligations in any absence of Fr. Kelly. Many businesses and industries had already been forced to be turned over from Americans to Cuban revolutionary leaders. Since something similar might happen to his University, he approached Fr. Boza Masvidal, perfectly competent and somewhat appreciated for his social programs for poor people.

Some time in late March, 1959 Fr. Kelly received a pressing invitation from his niece, Miss Laura Mae Chase, living in a city near Philadelphia, to come to her wedding in early April. Fr. Kelly accepted the invitation from his favorite niece, and planned to go on April 8. He advised all his people that he would be away for a few days for the wedding, and asked Fr. Boza Masvidal to stand in for him at the University during his absence. A short note was sent to the newspapers about Fr. Kelly's absence for a short time, and leaving Fr. Boza Masvidal in charge during his absence.

After the wedding Fr. Kelly was ready to return to Cuba, and phoned his very important academic regent, Fr. Ed McCarthy, and surprisingly Fr. McCarthy told him not to come back, and that he could not do anything to protect the University, and that Fr. Boza Masvidal was acceptable to the Cuban Government and that Law Eleven would soon be eliminated.

The Superiors of the Villanova Province then sent Fr. Kelly to live in a small parish in Lawrence, Mass. After a couple of months, the Provincial decided that Fr. Kelly would be sent to St. Patrick's Parish in San Diego, after spending two months accompanying Mons. Marinas, nominated by the Cuban Bishops to visit many Dioceses in the United States and inform the Bishops of the trouble in Cuba and ask for their financial assistance.

Fr. Kelly accepted patiently the will of his Superiors as usual, and realized the Catholic University of Havana was no longer his occupation.

Fr. Boza Masvidal and most competent Fr. McCarthy would direct the future of the University. Now Bishop Boza Masvidal in a letter to Mons. Franklyn Casale, the President of the University of St. Thomas, Miami, Florida, Nov. 27, 2003, explains his presence and direction as President of the Catholic University of Havana.

Letters from Our Readers

In view of the present anti-clerical and anti-catholic atmosphere about priest, bishops, and cardinals, I thought you might find it interesting to print something about myriads of real, solid priest and their faithful, endless fulfillment of their vocation as other Christs.

Since I know myself better than any other priest, I shall give you a few notes about myself. I am an Augustinian friar bound to poverty, chastity and obedience. Since my novitiate of 1934-5, I learned what I was preparing for: the religious priesthood in the Order of St. Augustine, having been ordained a priest at the Catholic University of America in 1942, during World War II.

During my final year of preparation in theology, I asked my superior to send me to the arm forces to be chaplain. His reply came in due time and was that he would let me know. His official reply was quite short. "Go to Cuba as soon as you can arrange it"! So I began my priestly assignment with the prior-pastor of San Augustine Parish in Havana, with a tremendous Augustine priest, the rev. Lorenzo Spirali, O.S.A., on July 26, 1943. Father Spirali was already building six churches and thinking of a Catholic university for Cuba! He had me in mind to administer to the Catholic university, with the support of Manuel Cardinal Arteaga, Archbishop of Havana.

What does a priest-religious do? He is obedient, even to spending a few years acquiring a doctoral degree in philosophy and letters, and later administering a small university, not yet accepted by the Cuban government. In due time the official and legal requirements were laboriously acquired for a Catholic university in Cuba [Santo Tomas de Villaneuva]. It was a most interesting and difficult operation, resulting in a very prosperous and heavily supported university for Catholic Cubans, with a very astounding preparation for architects, engineers and biochemist, along with programs in business, arts, philosophy, law, psychology and education.

The rebel revolution of Fidel Castro was an affront to decency and culture, so Father Spirali went to Rome to see an old friend, Giuseppe Cardinal Pizzardo, for an official designation of our university as the Catholic university of Havana, with Cardinal Arteaga as provost. And so it was accomplished, but proved to be useless in front of a ranging anti-Catholic, communist Fidel Castro, who closed all Catholic school and our university. What did I do, after lasting about 100 days with Castro? Whatever my superiors decided.

Obedience sent me to help the Augustinians of Santiago, Chile, for

a few years, and later to help the new missionary prelate in Chulucanas in northern Peru. Located in the Sechur desert, it was like the Sahara, all sand amidst a few bushes. After the new prelate, Bishop John C. McNabb, O.S.A., '49 A&S was installed and helped to begin the long process of training the people to be missionaries to their own people, I was sent to California, to San Diego and later to Los Angeles as prior and pastor. After a few years, it was determined that I was too conservative to be a pastor. After finishing my term as prior in Hollywood, and writing about the history of the Order, it was decided I would do better helping the missions in Peru.

After years in Morropon and a bit of time in Suyu, near the border with Ecuador, where there was no medical attention, it was discovered that I had Cancer of the parotid gland. After a few surgeries, and weeks of radiation and cobalt, I was quite alive but had no equilibrium and no left ear normalcy to ride mules or horseback in the missions, or even a Jeep on the rough roads. So I retired to Casa San Lorenzo, St. Thomas University, Miami, and here I remain with poverty, chastity and obedience...and a few books I have written about the missions, awaiting the call of Christ. How long have I been doing that? Long enough to encourage all our priests and religious, in these anti-Catholic, anti-priest days, to be faithful, persevering and Christ-like men as I have tried to be. I completed 60 years of priesthood on May 28, 2002. I ask the Good Lord to keep His priests faithful and true forever.

The Rev. John J. Kelly, O.S.A., '39 A&S
Miami, FL

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Chapter 5

Translation of LA UNIVERSIDAD CATOLICA 'SANTO TOMAS DE VILLANUEVA' DESPUES DEL TRIUNFO DE LA REVOLUCION.

Nov. 17, 2003 , Bishop Boza Masvidal

“In the beginning of 1959, when the Revolutionary Government was already established, Fr. John J. Kelly, OSA, Rector of the Catholic University came to see me in the Caridad Parish and told me that given the hatred that Fidel Castro had for north Americans, they thought, in agreement with Cardinal Arteaga, Archbishop of Havana and Chancellor of the University that the Rector should be a Cuban. Since I had a university degree, Doctor of Philosophy and Letters, which was necessary for a Rector. \and on the other hand I was well thought of by the Revolution in those early days, soon to be changed, for I had supported them in the struggle against the dictatorship of Batista, I thought that I might be of some service as the Rector.

‘I had always dedicated myself to parish work, not academic problems, but thinking that it was a service that I could offer to save if possible the University, which was a very notable institution instituted a few years previously by Fr. Spirali; so, after thinking about it, before the Good Lord I accepted the petition perhaps with a bit of daring on my part, because I always thought that job was too big for me. However, since I had the necessary conditions for directing the University in March of 1959, together with Fr. Kelly putting me in knowledge of everything; in June Fr. Kelly retired and I became Rector of the University until the Government suppressed all private education in May of 1961.

“Then we had to fight a great deal to save the University, first of all from the infamous Law 11, in which the Government immediately annulled all credits and degrees given by our University in those years in which the University of Havana had been closed. Those were the only two times that I spoke with Fidel Castro.

“ There were likewise some very difficult times provoked by a small group of revolutionary students. In the beginning they thought that I was going to support them, but seeing that it was not so, they provoked many disturbances and threats. In general the majority of the students helped me.

In a general Assembly in the Auditorium I spoke directly to them and they saw themselves opposed by the majority, but they did not stop their opposition.

“During the 1959-1960 course we did many positive things. The classes were held normally and all the academic requirements, which had given a good name to the University, especially beyond our country, and we had a good group of very competent professors. Various new programs were underway. One of them was the School of the Social Doctrine of the Church, very necessary in those times of confusion. The School was directed by Fr. Salvador de Cistierna, Capuchin, especially prepared in that area.

“There was no systematic opposition to the Government, but we supported everything positive, as for example, one which was a true Agrarian Reform; but something was not done in that area. What the Government really did was to take possession of everything and leave the countrymen with land and with nothing, not even were they owners of what they produced.

“When Fidel Castro wanted to have a Countrymen Concentration, in July of 1959, which was to bring into the Capitol thousands of countrymen from all areas of the Island of Cuba, for some days in Havana, to hold various activities for them, and give them great accreditation, our University cooperated as did many more Institutions and Parishes, and we had many guests in the University; they were very good and simple people.

“But there were other occasions when we had to defend our liberty of expression. That is what happened with Mr. Anastas Mikoyan, a high functionary of the Soviet Union.. On that occasion I had to defend a group of university students, among whom were some from Villanueva and they had placed at the statue of Marti, in Central Park, a crown of flowers in the form of a Cuban flag to protest the function of Mikoyan who had also rendered something to Marti. The crown of flowers of the students at the foot of Marti was destroyed and tramped on by the communists; and the students were taken prisoners. I had the newspapers publish a communication (we still had free press), in which there was described how the students had placed an offering at the statue of Marti, using their right as citizens the freedom of expression, and that was not opposed to Mikoyan, but for the system which he represented. I had to go afterwards to the police station to see those students and seek their liberty; and I got it. This was not the only

occasion in which I had to speak publicly as Rector of the Universidad.

“The situation was more and more difficult for the University. Many students left for other countries, since the distancing of families had begun. Some professors likely were leaving and one had to find rapidly others to continue their courses. There was a group of revolutionary students and many problems, and so I proposed to submit them to a disciplinary counsel and put them out of the University; but no professor wanted to form part of that counsel for they all feared the reaction of the government and I felt obliged to expel them in my personal administrative decision. They attacked a great deal both me and the University; and this came out in the newspapers, but this way we were able to continue with a little more tranquility. Years later, already in exile, some of those boys wrote me asking for pardon and looking for help to continue their studies in exile, disillusioned about communism, just like so many more. Among the many letters I have, I must have those too.

“In May of that year when I was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Havana, the Augustinian Fathers sent me a Chevrolet automobile for my trips to the University, since up to that time I had been taking a bus from the Caridad Parish, and the students presented me with an Episcopal ring which I should wear.

“The academic year 1959-60 terminated with relative normalcy. At the termination we had the graduation exercises of all the faculties beginning with a Solemn Mass and an academic presentation in which the *Honoris Causa* Doctorate was presented to Mons. Enrique Perez Serantes, Archbishop of Santiago de Cuba. He was a great defender of our University especially in the matter of *Ley Once*, (Law 11.) and always a great friend. I have a copy of the *Memoria*, Villanueva, of that year,...and it as the very last for we were unable to complete the 60-61 course.

“When the 1960-61 course began, the situation was more and more difficult, lesser students, for many had left for other countries, and this lessened our economic income. The lessening of the number of professors was always a big problem. The differences between the government and the Church was more and more violent, especially after the Bishops published their *Collective Pastoral Letter* in August of 1960. It was a calm and reasonable letter but the government responded with strong attacks. Nevertheless we followed our decision of not closing the University, but to

maintain it in spite of everything contrary, as much as we could. The course 60-61 had begun with all the schools functioning.

"On April 17 of 1961 the famous invasion of the Bay of Pigs turned up a disaster. That morning we heard in the University's radio about the invasion. So that morning I went back to my Parish, the Caridad, and that very same day many thousands of people including myself were made prisoners, even the Archbishop of Havana, Mons. Evelio Diaz. All classes had to be suspended. I was in prison until April 27.

"On May 10, Labor Day, at night Fidel gave one of his famous discourses of many hours.. All Catholic schools and our University previously had been attacked. In this discourse Fidel said finally that from that very moment all private education was suppressed. In a few moments, the militians were already invading all the Catholic schools and our University. The Augustinian Fathers who lived in the Monastery within the University were like strangers in their own home under the suppression of the militians. There they were held for some fifteen days until they were able to leave for the United States. What they had to do during those days and the sufferings they underwent could better be described by those who were imprisoned there.

"That is how the University together with all private schools were rendered unworkable as teaching institutions causing a terrible damage to Cuban culture. Our chapel was converted into a storeroom and in all the other places military offices took over.

"The titles and academic notes of the Univ. of Villanueva were accepted by all the universities of other countries. Even without having in possession our archives, I signed afterwards in exile many declarations or private certificates for students who needed them to continue their studies in other institutions outside of Cuba.

"We hope that some day, perhaps not too far away, the Catholic University of St. Thomas of Villanueva may reopen in a free Cuba.

"This is about all that I can tell you about the University in the period of the Cuban revolution, which you had asked for, maybe with some omissions because of my lack of memory."

Signed +Eduardo Boza Masvidal.

Chapter 6

CLOSING OF CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF HAVANA, AND BEGINNING OF BISCAYNE COLLEGE, MIAMI, LATER CALLED UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS.

When the Augustinian Fathers left Cuba, it was a short time before accepting the petition of Bishop Coleman Carroll to inaugurate a new Catholic College in Opa Locka, a suburb of Miami. The Provincial felt that some of the priests expelled from Cuba could be used in college work and accepted the offer. Fr. Edward McCarthy, and Fr. Robert Sullivan, took up residence near the site of the future college, first on 183rd Street, near 29 Ave., and later at 164th, opened a business office for preparing the way for the new college. Some of the priests, former prisoners of the Cuban Revolution, and some previous professors from the University of Villanueva, would form the professional group of Biscayne College. But not without the presence and support of Fr. Lorenzo Spirali, who had founded and supported the Catholic University of Havana. For so many years,. Here he would help too.

Professor Richard Raleigh, early and long time administrator at Biscayne College, has written "A HISTORY OF THE EARLY YEARS OF BISCAYNE, 1962-1966", wherein the relation between the Catholic University of Havana and Biscayne College-St. Thomas University is neatly established. He speaks of his friend, Fr. Spirali, who went to see some of his Cuban friends to find support for his idea...a monastery for the Augustinians who were teaching in the College. Fr. Spirali's visits took him to many exiled Cuban friends: the Fanjuls, the Fili Sanchez, the Labarreres, among others. Also members of the Gibson family, related to the Johnson Wax Company, were favorable to supporting the new college through their friendship with Fr. Spirali. They helped him to build the monastery, properly called Casa San Lorenzo...to keep in mind always the support of Fr. Spirali (Lorenzo Spirali) in the new college. His work was well known and appreciated even in Rome. In the fall of 1965, in Rome, the Augustinians in General Chapter were visiting the Holy Father, Pope Paul VI. They were startled as the Pope spontaneously said:

* "We know that our beloved and tireless Fr. Spirali, Founder of the Catholic University in Cuba, has died. But do you know how he obtained the permission and approbation from the President of Cuba? After trying many

times and without being successful, one day he asked the President how many eyes he needed to see well.

“What are you asking? It is rather obvious”, said the President.

“No, no, Your Excellency, answer me”, insisted Fr. Spirali.

“Why, two” replied the President.

“Then Cuba needs two intellectual eyes to see well, concluded Fr. Spirali. It has one already: in the State University. It needs the other: the University of the Church.

“The President was so impressed with this remark, that he immediately promised him the permission and approbation”.

There is no doubt about Fr. Spirali’s help in the new Biscayne College of Miami....later to become the important University of St. Thomas ...he was a man of God in all his activities. Adrienne Roberson, the first secretary of Biscayne College, knew Fr. Spirali and said of him “to not have been able to meet him, a person missed an awful lot. I loved him dearly”.

The following is from A HISTORY OF THE EARLY YEARS OF BISCAYNE, written by long-time professor Richard Raleigh, and he says:

“Fr. McCarthy recounted his early problems, looking for students. At the beginning we were not able to do that. We did not have the resources at the beginning, so it was mostly by word of mouth. But what was most surprising in enrollment was that we got thirty four students the first year. These students came to a college that didn’t exist and they were all local, from the Miami area. We did not have a finished building, they did not know anything about our faculty, and we did not have a four year program and we were just going to teach freshmen subjects and still we got thirty four students”.

And further, Fr. McCarthy spoke of the tense beginning. “People helped us a great deal—Clyde Atkins, Leonard Usina, Robert Mackle were helpful in the construction of dormitories...also the willingness of the faculty. The people who came over from Cuba like Pedro Diaz Maestre and Raul Shelton, Jim O’Mailia and early faculty, like yourself (Richard Raleigh) and

Fledderman and so forth that we hired along the way who worked for very small salaries and the willingness to do what had to be done. The cooperation that we got from everybody was really what made the first years possible.The fact that we got it going at all was a miracle."

"A small bit of history was made the day that Fr. Sullivan, the Dean of the new college, accepted the first two students: John Boyle, from Christopher Columbus High School, and John Peck from Curley High School ...3\22\62. John Boyle remembered that Fr. Sullivan had said that this was the Augustinian Order and that Castro had of course confiscated all church property down in Cuba and that was the end of Villanueva in Havana. So they were going to try to reestablish the long tradition of Villanueva here in Miami. It was a college that could stand on its own."

John Boyle continued: "Our matriculation session was down here at Pace High School. We were on the second floor of one of their classroom buildings and we could look across to the north and see the work that was being done on Kennedy Hall. We actually registered at Pace and we were told to report to Barry College for classes" Barry was only for women then and the men students were the first. After a few months, Kennedy, the first building, was ready for occupancy."

Boyle also commented on the first days at Kennedy Hall in Biscayne College. "It was one of the loveliest buildings I have ever seen"..

Boyle continues: "At the end of our sophomore year, a number of the fellows felt that they had to make a switch to an accredited college..so we lost half the class right there in the sophomore year.....we were into cycling then because there were so few of us..."

However in the fall of 1964 campus life changed dramatically with the coming of northerners. Biscayne became a resident college. There were a hundred students flying south, and as Fr. McCarthy explained: "We were assured that the dormitory would be ready in September when classes were to begin...but it simply was not ready...and the Kimberly Hotel on the beach was glad to have us...the students would live in this motel... and be transported by bus to and from campus.. The dorms were eventually completed early in November of '64."

On June 6, 1966, Biscayne College graduated its first Class. Only nine

of the original 34 had survived the four years and they all became recognized professionals.

In the early 70's the Dolphins football came, and then the Orioles. And it became routine to read the references to Biscayne College in the sports section of newspapers and magazines throughout the country, as Professor Raleigh continues his work on early days at Biscayne, and arrives at a note on Fr. Spirale.... "he did not live to see it, but he got his monastery for the priests in 1966".

After Fr. McCarthy finished his presidency at Biscayne College, 1968, Fr. Dr. Ralph Shuhler, OSA, guided the College for one year and then the Rev. John M. McDonnell, OSA arrived from California as the new President from 1969 to 1975, and many administrative accomplishments made the College larger and larger. In 1975 Rev. John J. Farrell, OSA, arrived and held the reins until 1980, when the famous Fr. Patrick O'Neill, OSA made many movements to expand the College to a University level, notably in his Law School achievement.

Fr. O'Neill asked Fr. Kelly to leave his missions in Peru and come to help the Bilingual association which he had begun to help the many Cuban arrivals in Miami. Fr. Kelly apparently was helpful enough for the University, under Dr. Green, to offer him an honorary degree and Dr. John Bradley made the presentation:

"Fr. John Kelly, just 14 days from now, on May 28 you will celebrate the 47th anniversary of your ordination as a Catholic priest in the Order of St. Augustine. In recognition of your many years of service as a man of God, as an educator, as a missionary, and specially for our long association with the Universidad de Santo Tomae de Villanueva in Havana, Cuba, to which this University can trace its roots. The St. Thomas University Board of Trustees, the President, Administrators, Faculty, and Students, wish to recognize you and your accomplishments by conferring upon you our highest degree, Doctor of Humane Letters.

"Fr. Kelly, you were born November 26, 1915, in Du Bois, Pennsylvania, which in your own words is 'God's Country'. At a very early age you wanted to be a priest. So, when you finished High School, you went to the Augustinian Prep Seminary in New York. Later, you attended Villanova University where you received a Bachelors degree. It was at

Villanova University that you began to study Spanish. Little did you know at that time the impact that a knowledge of Spanish would have on your future.

“From Villanova University you went on to the Catholic University in Washington to complete your studies for the priesthood and earn your master’s degree in Spanish. You were ordained on May 28, 1942. In 1943, because of your knowledge of the Spanish language, you were sent to Havana, Cuba, to be a parish priest in the Parish of St. Augustine. It was there that you met the amazing Fr. Lorenzo Spirali, you also learned that it is one thing to study Spanish, and another thing to understand spoken Cuban Spanish.

On January 1, 1945 Fr. Spirali began construction of the Villaueva Church on the outskirts of Havana...one of the many churches he built or remodeled. Fr. Spirali thought it would be a good idea for Cuba to have another university. So in the incomparable Spirali tradition, he raised the money and built the Universidad de Santo Tomas de Villanueva. Completed in 1946, Villanueva became the first private University in the history of Cuba. While the university was under construction, Fr. Spirali came to you one day and said: ‘Boy, go down to the Univeresity of Havana and get a degree’. Since nobody said no to Fr. Spirali, you did as you were told and earned your Ph. D. In 1948 you began to teach at Villanueva, and on July 5, 1950, you were made president of that institution which had 76 students and 38 professors. You immediately met with the faculty and told them that each professor would have to bring two new students in the fall, or not come back. They did.

“The years that followed were to be the most turbulent in the short history of that institution. You were the president of a university which, under Cuban law, did not officially exist and whose graduates were not recognized as such. It took seven years to get the Cuban government to enact legislation recognizing private universities. But the worst was yet to come. When Fidel Castro came into power in 1959, one of the first laws enacted by his government invalidated two and a half years of education of Villanueva students. This was the period of time which the University of Havana had been closed during the latter years of the revolution. As president of the Association of Private Universities, you were charged with job of opposing the law on behalf of private universities in Cuba. The result was that you became public enemy number one of the revolution, and Fidel Castro sent you a message, that if you did not leave Cuba, Santo Tomas de Villanueva

would not be allowed to reopen. So on April 8, 1959 you left Cuba, never to return. Villanueva was closed by the Cuban Government on April 17, 1961, the day of the Bay of Pigs invasion. At that time the University had an enrollment of 1600 students.

“But this was just the beginning of a new life for you. Between 1959 and 1976, you carried on your priestly work in various parishes in California and New York. But your desire to be a missionary was strong. In 1976, you volunteered for mission work, and you were sent to Morropon in Peru. Morropon is the center of a 2500 square mile Parish of which 70 percent is desert, and 30 percent Andes Mountains. There were 35 villages which had to be visited each month, either on foot, on horseback, or by jeep.

“You spent almost 10 happy years in Morropon helping the poor by bringing them the word of God. You were happy because you were doing priestly work, and administering the sacraments. In your words, ‘It did not matter how many degrees I had’. By 1985 you felt you were getting too old to climb mountains, so you came to us here at St. Thomas University.

“Shortly, due to the shortage of priests in Peru, you will be leaving us for the parish of Suyu, near the border of Ecuador. You will be responsible for 68 villages, happily most are accessible by car.

“We are sorry to see you leave, but our loss will be their gain. We look forward to having you back in two years.

“Throughout your life as a priest, you have brought dignity and humility to priesthood. Your simplicity and your desire to be God’s servant have been an example to all who have known you. Who you are can best be summed up by your philosophy, and I quote you: ‘God and I. The only important thing in my life is God. I came from him, and I must return to him on His terms and not on mine. I am only an instrument of God, whether I be a teacher, missionary, or anything else’.

Dr. John Bradley refers to Fr. Kelly in a speech made subsequently in the University.

“Just a week ago, I had the honor of presenting Fr. Kelly for an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters at St. Thomas University. At that time, I spoke of his many accomplishments....which, quite frankly, are many.

“Today I would like to talk of Fr. Kelly, as a man and as a priest. I have known Fr. Kelly for 37 years. As a matter of fact he performed the marriage ceremony for my wife, Carmen, and I, 30 years ago this past March.

“It is difficult to separate the man and the priest. Fr. Kelly, from a very early age decided he wanted to be a priest. And, therefore, everything he did was with that ultimate goal, always in his mind. Everything he did was with that ultimate goal, always in his mind. I think that this relationship with God can best be summed up by his philosophy.

“God and I. The only important thing in my life is God. I came from Him, and I must return to Him on His terms, and not on mine. I am only an instrument of God, whether I be a teacher, missionary, or anything else.

“This great love and respect for God is present in everything he does; whether it be climbing the mountains around Morropon in Peru as a missionary, or as president of a University, or as a parish priest, or teaching English here in the Villanueva Center.

“When you meet Fr. Kelly, you immediately realize that he is a true man of God. He is quiet, unassuming,; . He does not talk a lot, but he listens a lot. And when he talks, people listen I think that he is probably everybody’s image of what a priest should be.

“Fr. Kelly seems to have a very clear idea of what is right and what is wrong, and this becomes very evident to those around him...and he is respected for this quality.

“As a man, he is straight forward, and fears no one. A good example of this was his fight with Fidel Castro. As a president of the association of private universities in Cuba, he was charged with the job of opposing Law 11, which invalidated two and one half years of education of private university students. I don’t know if he was the sacrificial lamb or not, but he so irritated Fidel Castro that he was told that if he did not leave Cuba, the Univeridad de Santo Tomas de Villanueva would never be allowed to reopen.

“He is also a man of infinite patience. Some time last fall while he was writing his second book, I think it is his second book, because when asked how many books he has written, he says he can’t remember. He inadvertently erased about 50 pages of text in the computer. I got an early

morning call to come over to the Monastery to see what could be done. I had helped him learn word processing. Although it was probably more of a case of the blind leading the blind. He was very resigned to the fact that the pages were lost. Most people would have gone around the bend, not Fr. Kelly; he shrugged his shoulders and started rewriting.

"His modesty is legendary. He is probably the most unpretentious person I have ever met. While he was president of Santo Tomas de Villanueva, he would drive himself around in a beat-up old Ford, or Chevrolet. Those of you from Cuba will remember that this was the period of the 'cola de pato' and other large cars. One day one of the priests there remarked that if he were president of the University, he would have a big black car and a chauffeur.

"My first and only bout with him came two or three years after I joined the Villanueva faculty. He had a strange formula for calculating teachers' salaries which I don't think anyone really understood. One day he called me into his office, sat me down, and said that he made a mistake in calculating my salary for the year. He then told me my salary would be less. Before I could open my mouth, he looked straight at me, and asked what are you going to do about it. I felt very small in that big office, with the president staring at me with a big cigar in his mouth. The only thing I could get up enough courage to say was nothing, and I got up and walked out.

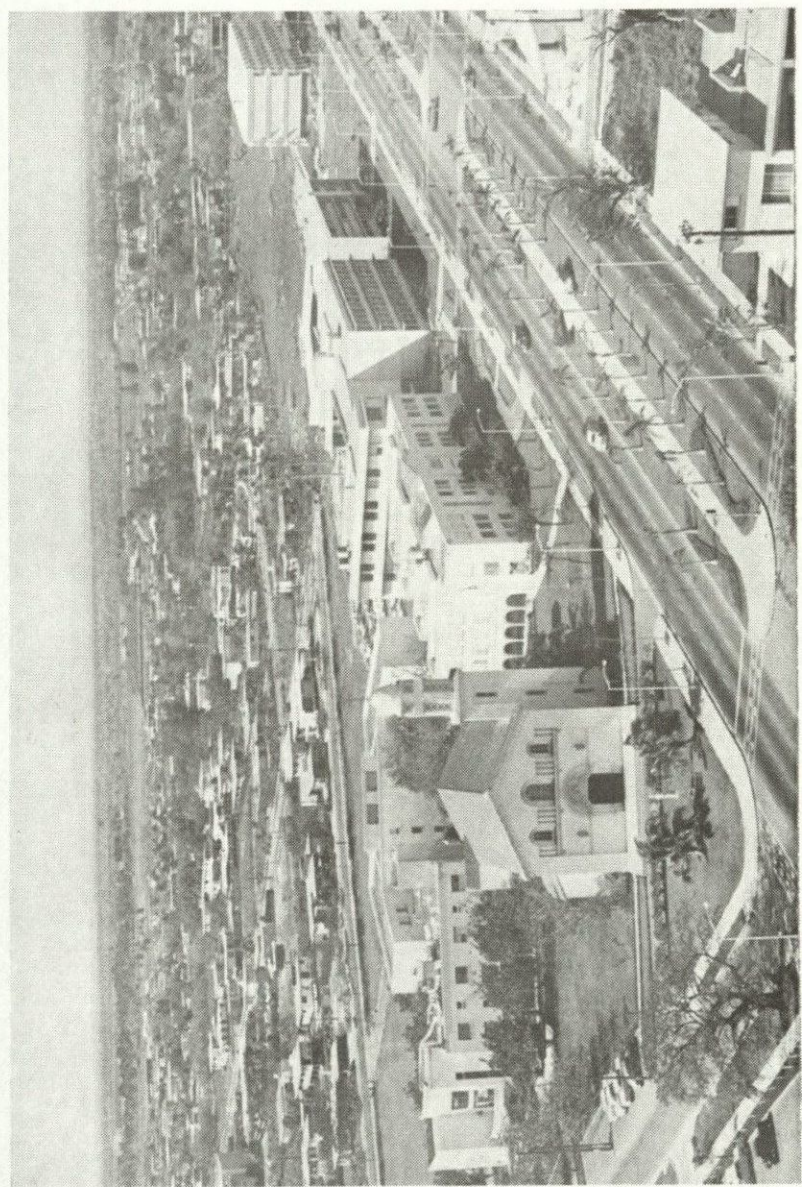
"When Fr. Kelly felt he was too old to be climbing mountains, he came to St. Thomas at Fr. O'Neill's invitation to be the chaplain of the bilingual center, to get the alumni of Villanueva together, and to teach. He has done all of these things. Many men would say: I have worked hard and now it is time to rest. Not Fr. Kelly. He is going back to Peru to be a missionary in the town of Suyo, which is close to the border of Ecuador. Suyo is the center of 69 villages. Fortunately, most of them are accessible by car.

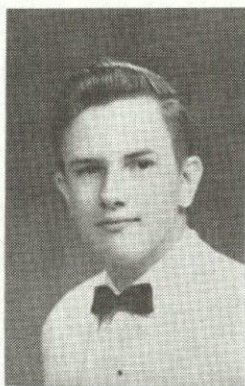
"Today, Fr. Kelly, we have come to say 'Hasta Luego'..not "adios". You have promised to return in two years. We hold you to that promise. We wish you God's speed, and always keep in mind that you are in Peru on loan".

Fr. O'Neill had many projects for his University and did his best to administer properly, but unfortunately the advancement of the University was so great that it fell into financial problems, and the Provincial decided to turn over the University to the Miami Diocesis.

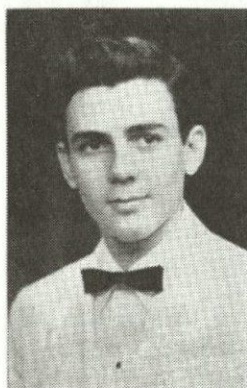
A new President was in order, and Dr. Pascuale di Pascuale was placed in charge and managed the University for one year, 1987-88. followed by Dr. Richard Greene from 1989 to 1993 and Fr. Kelly returned to his missions in Peru. Meanwhile the masterful President, Fr. Edward McCarthy, was again asked to manage the University of St. Thomas, until the Diocese moved happily to acquire the special administration of Monsignor Franklyn M. Casale in 1994 from the University of Seton Hall, of northern New Jersey. Mnsr. Casale very shortly, with the early help of Fr. McCarthy, would manage the bulging University of St. Thomas to its wonderful situation at present....a Catholic University of renown, with its many associates from Cuba and elsewhere.

The future of the St. Thomas University, and everybody knows and accepts, is in the hands of the Divine Master. May He bless it.





JAVIER CALVO FORMOSO



JULIAN MARTINEZ INCLAN



JOSE IGNACIO MARTI STA. CRUZ



RAMON PEREZ LIMA

Arte y Decoración

EULALIA SUAREZ GASTON



MARIA LENZA CHAPLE



ONDINA VIETA PEREZ -LAMAR



MARIA GONZALEZ PUJOL



ADOLFO ALBAISA MOLINA



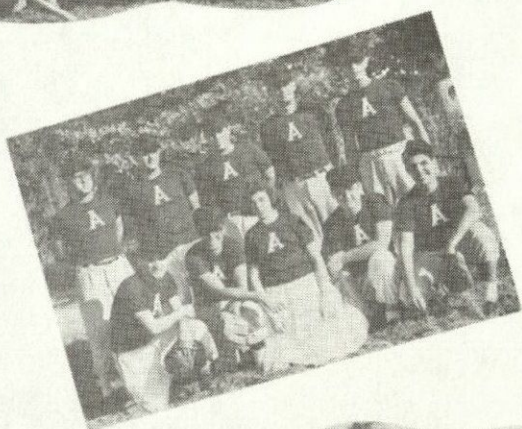
Equipo de Ciencias Comerciales (Noche) con su Madrina Lourdes Blanco.

SOFT - BALL



¡Strike!

SOFT - BALL



Equipo de Arquitectura y su Madrina María Ofelia García.



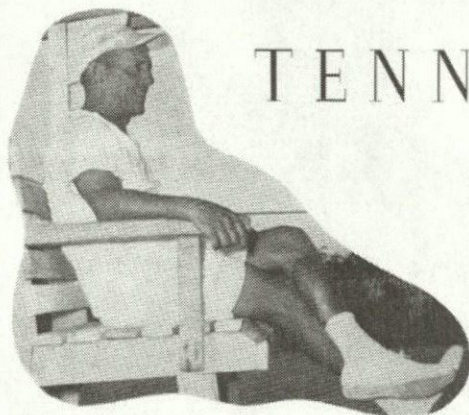
¡Tiralo!



Equipo de Ciencias Comerciales (Día) con su Madrina Georgina Ambrosio.



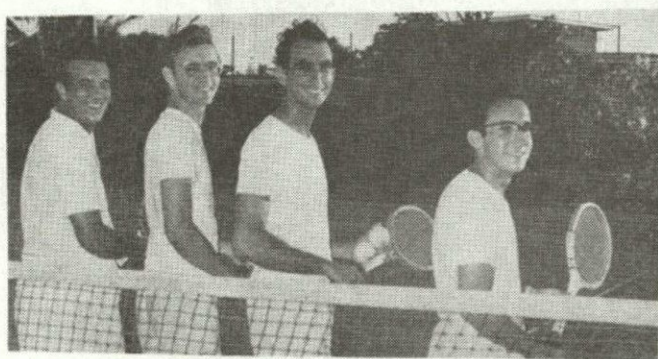
Joffre espera...



"Pepe" observa...



Walterio saca...

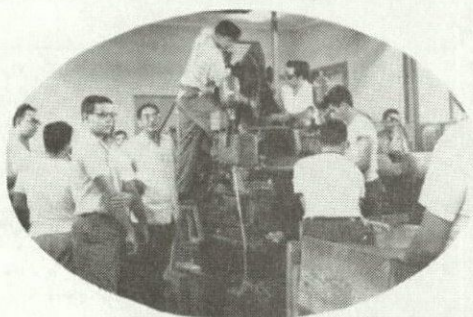


LAS ESTRELLAS POSAN

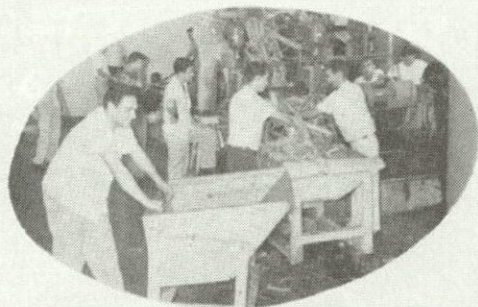
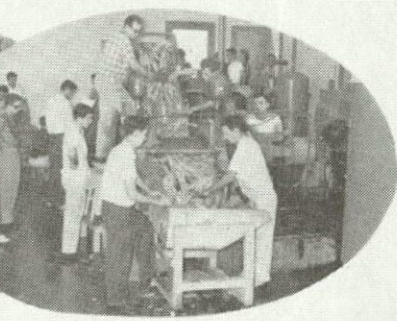
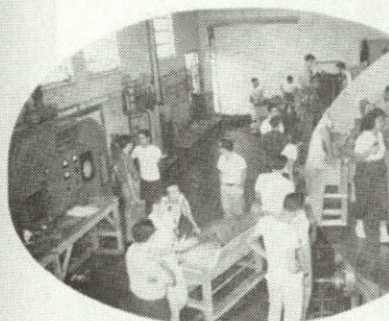


Srta. Consuelo Vázquez

Ingenio de Villanueva

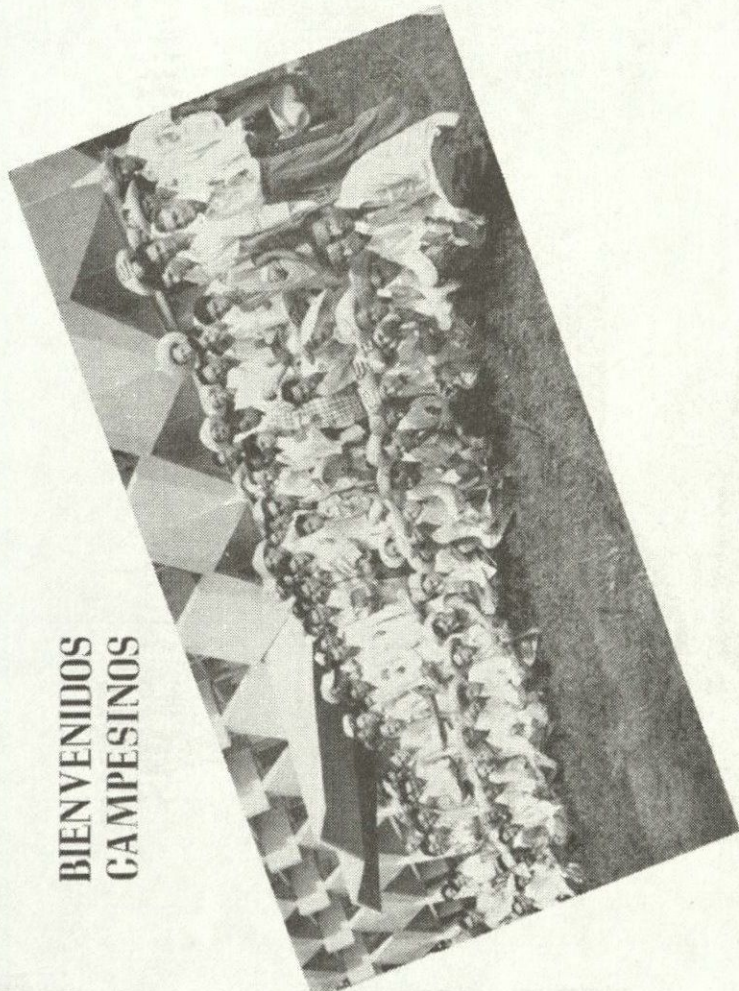


Un grupo de alumnos durante la producción de nuestro pequeño coloso azucarero.

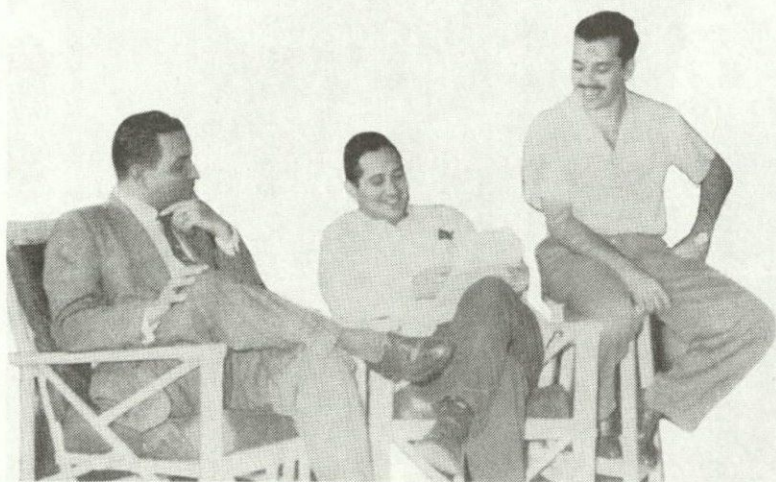
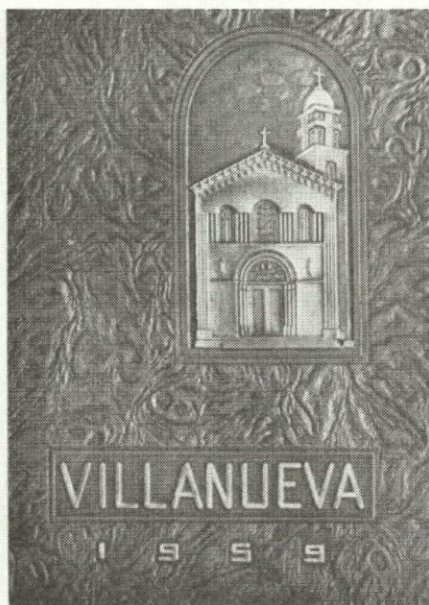


Trapiche en plena molienda

BIENVENIDOS CAMPEÑINOS



Con motivo de la Concentración campesina del 26 de julio, llegaron a nuestra Universidad en la tarde del día 24, este grupo de 108 campesinos. Desde que llegaron no se pensó en otra cosa que no fuera ellos. Quisimos darles lo mejor de nosotros mismos, nuestro corazón... el corazón de nuestra Universidad Católica. Permanecieron entre nosotros hasta el día 29 en que se fueron llenos de gratitud y frases halagadoras para todos.



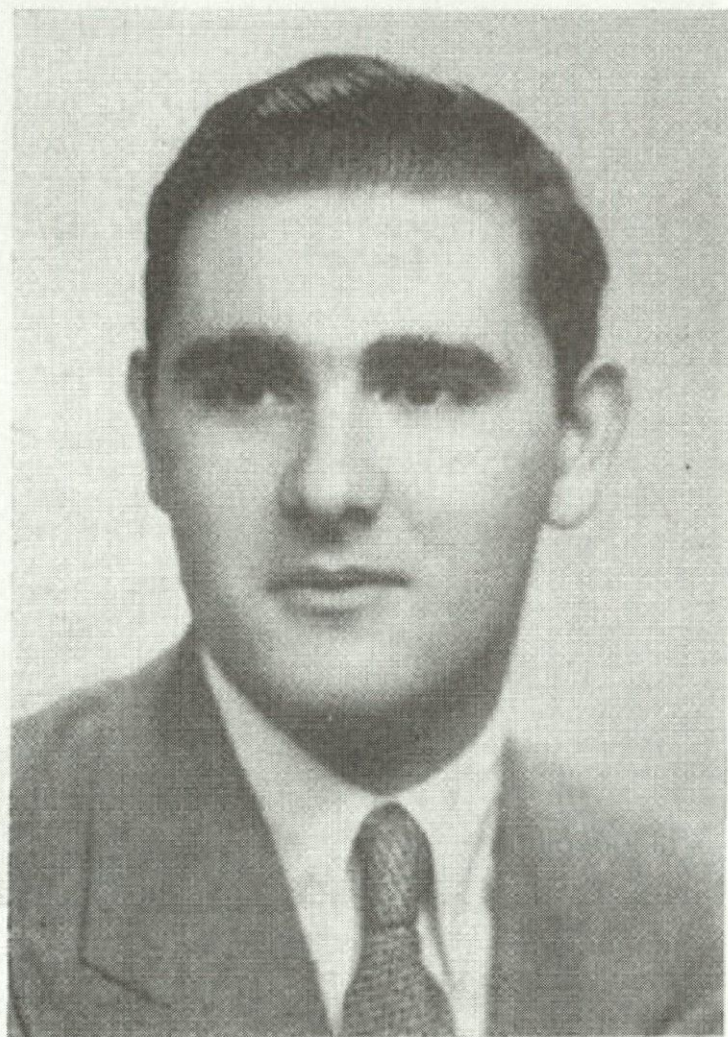
Pedro L. Lorenzo, Rafael Rivas Vazquez, Ernesto Martinez Venegas
Staff Yearbook



MARTHA LLOVET ASPIAZU
Colegio La Luz
Asociación Cultural - Acción Católica
English Club - Tennis - Quibú



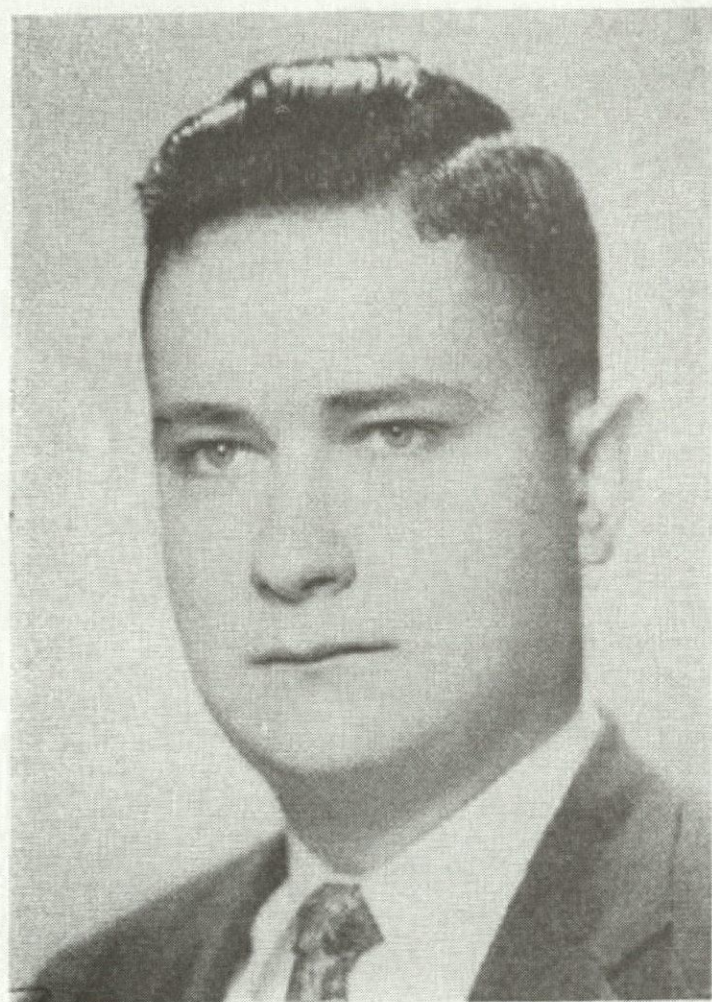
AGUEDA GRANDE NOTARIO
Colegio Sabina Garrido
Acción Católica



JUAN DE DIOS OÑA Y GIBERGA'



GLORIA GARCIA VELEZ
Mount St. Joseph Academy
Chesnut Hill, Pa.
Miss Villanueva 1954-55



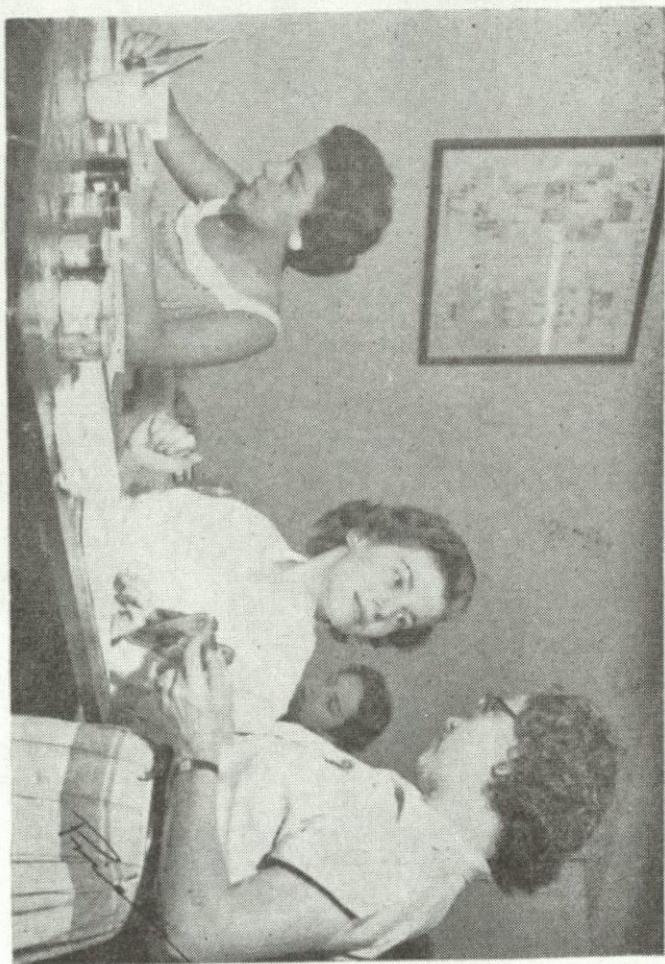
SATURNINO FANLO GUTIERREZ
Escuelas Pías (Víbora)



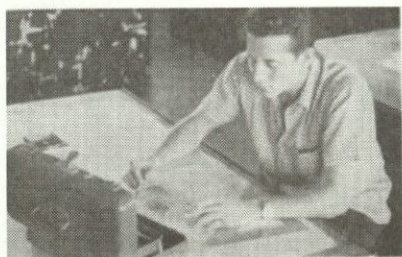
En la plaza Kelly







Prof. Consuelo Vázquez
Gloria Botet
María García



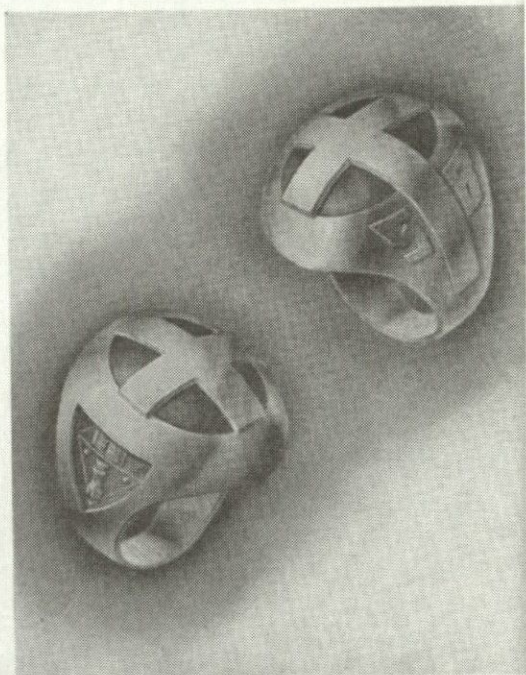
Adolfo Albaisa

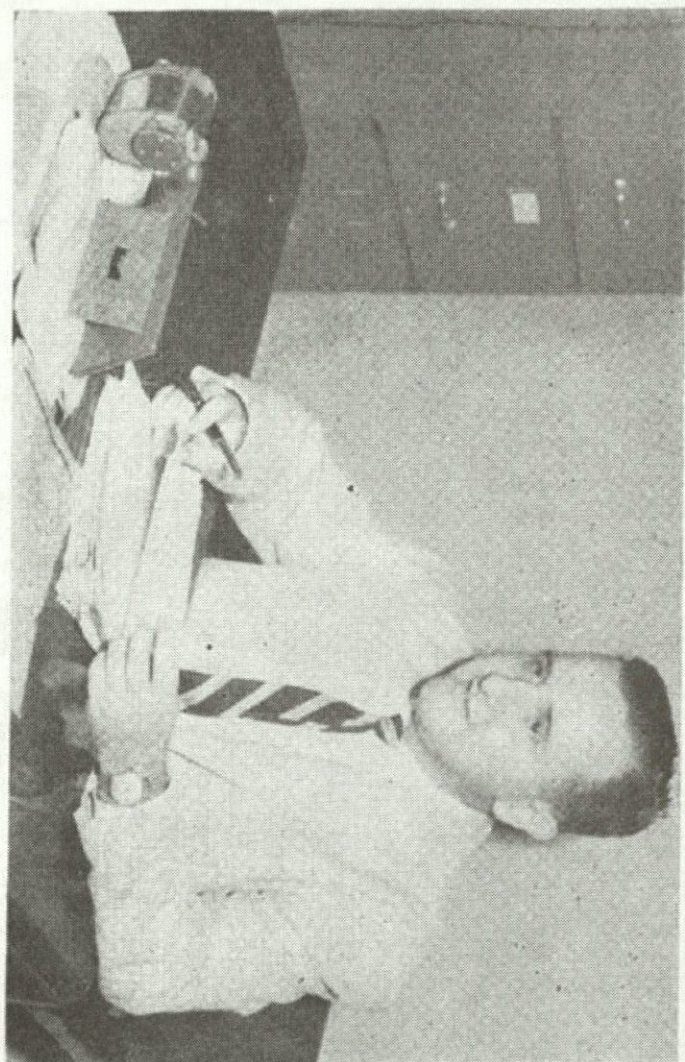
ANILLO DE GRADUACION

Durante el curso académico 1957-58 se celebró un Concurso entre los estudiantes de Arquitectura de nuestra Universidad para seleccionar el anillo de graduación de Villanueva.

Resultó triunfador el diseño de Adolfo Albaisa, entonces alumno de tercer año.

Ya los graduados de la clase de 1958 llevarán el anillo con el escudo y la Cruz de la Universidad Católica.





C.P. Tomás Ogazón
Asistente del Tesorero

Tania Cañizares
Beatriz Torriente
María Carricaburu

