

## ABBREVIATIONS

- A.P.O.S. Archbishop's Archives, Port-of-Spain  
B.A.T. BENEDICTINE, T. INITIATIVES  
P.C.C. Presentation College IN, San Fernando,  
W.O.S.S. P. SECONDARY, EDUCATION  
P.P.A. St. Benedict's Co IN, La Romaine, Past Pupils  
Assoc SOUTH TRINIDAD  
R.B. Rule of St. Bened FROM  
S.G. Sunday 1930 TO 1968  
T.G. Trinidad Guardian,

by

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- A.P.O.S. Archbishop's Archives, Port-of-Spain.
- B.A.T. Benedictine Archives, Tunapuna.
- P.C.O. Presentation College Office, San Fernando.
- P.O.S.G. Port-of-Spain Gazette.
- P.P.A. St. Benedict's College, La Romaine, Past Pupils Association.
- R.B. Rule of St. Benedict.
- S.G. Sunday Guardian.
- T.G. Trinidad Guardian.

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*This thesis is dedicated in love to my brothers of the Benedictine Community at Mount St. Benedict. As we reflect on our past together, may we be challenged to live more fully in the present.*



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St. Benedict. Indeed it may be thought that the work in modern times which is most conformable in character to St. Benedict's agriculture is the cultivation of the minds of the young, the eradication of faults, and the implanting of virtues and of knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

In 1912, when a group of Benedictine monks arrived in Trinidad to establish the monastery at Mount St. Benedict, there were over one hundred such schools attached to Benedictine monasteries worldwide, catering to the needs of approximately 15,000 pupils. The Archbishop of Port-of-Spain, the Most Rev. John Rius Dowling (1909-1940), very warmly welcomed the idea of having a Benedictine community in his Archdiocese, laying down

only one condition, viz. the **Chapter 1** should assist, when required, in establishing parochial life in the Archdiocese. It was as a direct result of one of **Introduction** assignments that the Benedictines first became involved in secondary education in south. Benedictines have traditionally been involved in education over the centuries.<sup>1</sup> At the turn of the nineteenth century, secondary education was perhaps "the commonest and best recognized form of Benedictine external work."<sup>2</sup> There have been much debate about the compatibility of such involvement with the monastic ideals of solitude and community life.<sup>3</sup> However, Abbot Butler contends its relevance.

Moreover education does bring back into the life of the monastery that element of work which is one of the constituent elements of the monastic life as designed by St. Benedict. Indeed it may be thought that the work in modern times which is most conformable in character to St. Benedict's agriculture is the cultivation of the minds of the young, the eradication of faults, and the implanting of virtues and of knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

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only one condition, viz. that they would assist, when required, in establishing parochial life in the Archdiocese. It was as a direct result of one of these parochial assignments that the Benedictines first became involved in secondary education in south Trinidad. of San Fernando was confided to the Benedictine Fathers of Mount St. Benedict. In the following pages I intend to outline the general history of Benedictine involvement in secondary education in south Trinidad from 1930 to 1968, and to show how some of their initiatives reflected genuine struggles to reconcile this task of education to their spirituality, so that the Benedictines should devote themselves especially to the primary, intermediate and secondary education of the Catholic youth of the district.

*Fit non solum pro parochiae profectu, modo communi accepto, sed etiam prout instructio primaria et superior animarum salutem praesertim autem puerorum promovet.* (see Conv. No. 2).

According to Dom Adelbert van Duin,\* the first Abbot of Mount St. Benedict (1947-1972), this education clause in the "Convention", was included on the initiative of the monks, and with the idea of a secondary school uppermost in their minds. On Benedictine involvement in education, Abbot Adelbert is very clear:

I am very much in favour of it. My predecessor, Fr. Hugh, always said that the one thing that the monastery should be involved in, other than the monastic



observance, is education. Chapter 2 was very dear to his heart. I simply followed in his footsteps."

### "Per ardua ad astra"

At the time there was no Catholic secondary school in the The Parish of San Fernando was confided to the Benedictine Fathers of Mount St. Benedict by virtue of a "Conventio" signed by Archbishop John Pius Dowling of Port-of-Spain, and Dom Hugh van der Sanden, Conventual Prior of the monastery, on August 30, 1929.<sup>4</sup> The agreement was to take effect from January 1, 1930, and contained an explicit stipulation that the Benedictines should devote themselves especially to the primary, intermediate and secondary education of the Catholic youth of the district.

The newly appointed parish priest, Fr. Sebastian Weber, O.S.B. Fit non solum pro parochiae profectu, modo communi 1930, he accepto, sed etiam prout instructio primaria et superior nando presb. animarum salutem præsertim autem puerorum promovet, etc.

The (see Conv. No. 2). "Per ardua ad astra" ("Through difficulties to the stars") was chosen to instill hope and confidence among the students. According to Dom Adelbert van Duin,<sup>5</sup> the first Abbot of Mount St. Benedict (1947-1972), this education clause in the "Conventio", was included on the initiative of the monks, and with the idea of a secondary school uppermost in their minds. On Benedictine involvement in education, Abbot Adelbert is very clear: children sent to the school. The accommodation in the

basement was definitely inadequate.

I am very much in favour of it. My predecessor, Fr. Hugh, always said that the one thing that the monastery should be involved in, other than the monastic under

certain observance, is education. It was very dear to his legs by the heart! I simply followed in his footsteps. The Governor, both by the Archbishop, and the Prior of Mount St. Benedict. On the At the time there was no Catholic secondary school in the south of Trinidad. Besides the limited space of those in the north, there were not many parents who could have afforded to bear the heavy financial burden of sending their children to Port-of-Spain to be educated in a Catholic school. There was a secondary school for boys in the south, Naparima College, operating since 1884, but it was a Presbyterian College, and, in any case, could not cater for the increasing numbers of parents desiring higher education for their sons. provide quarters for

The newly appointed parish priest, Fr. Sebastian Weber, O.S.B., sought to address the need, and on the 30th March, 1930, he opened up the lowly basement room of the San Fernando presbytery to 29 students, with ages ranging from 8 to 16 years. The motto, "Per ardua ad astra" ("Through difficulties to the stars"), was chosen to instil hope and confidence among the students to aim for the highest levels of excellence, overcoming whatever difficulties may come their way. The original teachers were Mr. Edgar Mitchell, and Mr. Vernon Ferrer, both past students of St. Mary's College in Port-of-Spain. As the news of this venture began to spread, more and more parents sought to have their children sent to the school. The accommodation in the basement was definitely inadequate! Overton replied that it would be as "Colony House," the southern residence of the Governor on his visits to San Fernando, together with the adjoining buildings, were being prepared to be disposed of by the Government under



certain conditions. The site was deemed suitable for the College by the parish priest, and inquiries were made from the Governor, both by the Archbishop, and the Prior of Mount St. Benedict. On the 5th November, 1930, Sir Alfred Claud Hollis, Governor of the Colony, wrote to the Archbishop informing him that the Government, advised by the Education Board that they were not required to seek such is prepared to consider an offer of £5,000.00 for the transfer and property, on the condition, that the Government would, on payment of reasonable rent thereof, be permitted to remain as tenants of the quarters at present occupied by the divisional Engineer and district Engineer until such time, as it is found possible to provide quarters for these officers.erry Hill Teacher's College in London, where he qualified with a Teacher's certificate. His first concern was This news was warmly received by Fr. Sebastian, the parish priest. On 21st November, 1930, Fr. Sebastian and Fr. Ludger visited the Archbishop to express concern that a group ("ring") of High Street moguls were about to go in for the purchase of these same properties. His Grace promptly addressed a letter to the Governor assuring him that he was prepared to pay the £5,000.00, and the two priests took the letter immediately to the Governor's residence. On reading it, Governor Hollis accepted the offer right away, and inquired how soon the Colony House would be needed. Fr. Sebastian informed him that he wanted to start the College in January, 1931, and the Governor replied that it would be available by that time. His priority was to improve facilities at On 29th November, 1930, Fr. Sebastian, Weber, Fr. Wilfrid Broens, assistant parish priest, Dr. P. T. Vilain, Mayor of San



Fernando, and several interested gentlemen from the south, wrote a letter to the Honourable Director of Education in Port-of-Spain applying for permission to establish a secondary school in the town of San Fernando,<sup>10</sup> on the premises known as "Colony House," under the title "St. Benedict's High School." They were duly advised by the Education Board that they were not required to seek such permission. Plans were thus set in motion for the transfer and development of what was then called "St. Benedict's College."

1934-1939

1931-1933 The third Principal, Fr. Ludger Nauen served in that capacity from Fr. Odilo van Tongeren, O.S.B., was appointed as the first Principal of the new College (1931-1933). As he had recently returned from Strawberry Hill Teacher's College in London, where he qualified with a Teacher's Certificate. His first concern was to employ additional staff, as the number of students was increasing rapidly. Within a few months, he had taken on Messrs. MacDavid, Churchill Johnston, R. M. Hercules, Albert Rigsby, and Fr. Wilfrid Broens, O.S.B. In 1932, the College made its first attempt at the Cambridge Junior School Certificate Examinations, and both candidates, Kenneth Lamsee and Ben Winchester, passed. Fr. Odilo also made the first attempts towards obtaining Government recognition and aid. "a-hour working day," "the effects of machinery to mankind," and "whether House examinations

1933-1934 "cute fair tests of a boy's knowledge." He published and edited Fr. Odilo was succeeded as Principal by Fr. Placide Ganteaume, O.S.B. in 1933. His priority was to improve facilities at the College, and he actually led the excavation of a portion of the San Fernando Hill to provide a playground for the students.



the Monastery, and thus began the practice of annual bus outings to Mount St. Benedict on the patronal feast. It was also during his term as Principal that the College registered its first candidates in the Cambridge Senior School Certificate Examination of July, 1934. The subjects registered were: English, Religious Knowledge, Latin, French, Spanish, Mathematics, and Hygiene.<sup>11</sup> Dining House, which he started. It was situated on the same grounds with

#### 1934-1939

The third Principal, Fr. Ludger Nauert served in that capacity from 1934 to 1939. He inherited a growing students body of 110, and applied himself immediately to the task of obtaining Government financial aid. An application was made to the Government on 9th November, 1934 for affiliation to the Queen's Royal College.<sup>12</sup> St. Benedict's College thus became affiliated to Q.R.C. in December, 1935, and so established itself as one of the approved secondary Schools of Trinidad and Tobago, entitled to Government assistance. The Benedictines were re-assessing the practice. Fr. Ludger encouraged literary and debating activity among the students. To this effect, he established the St. Benedict's College Debating Society, which met regularly to debate on such issues as "the benefits of a five-hour working day," "the effects of machinery on mankind," and "whether or not House examinations constitute fair tests of a boy's knowledge." He published and edited a magazine in 1936 to mark the first years of the College's existence, and some of the articles were written by members of the Debating Society. Other extra-curricular activities, such as football, cricket, boxing, and singing were also encouraged. As



far as possible, the College tried to provide an all-round education for the students, the common life being a crucial feature and Fr. Ludger set up the first science laboratory to cater for about 18 students. He also built the first Chapel, thus concretizing that pivotal Benedictine motif: the primacy of prayer. However, the initiative which would become the dominant issue, vis-à-vis Benedictine initiatives, was the College Boarding House, which he started. It was situated on the same grounds with the College, and intended primarily for boys whose parents resided away from San Fernando. The average number of boarders was 18. For boys under the age of 12 years the boarding fee was \$20.00 per month, and for others, \$21.00 per month, payable in advance. The Boarding House was known as "St. Benedict's Home," and staffed by a matron, who lived in a nearby cottage on the same grounds.

1939-1946 *Edificia jam erecta et ea quae bonum videbitur Ordinario*  
*Ordinis S. Benedicti Patribus apud S. Ferdinandum*

Fr. Boniface van de Kamp, O.S.B., assumed the principalship in 1939, at a time when the Benedictines were re-assessing the practicability of operating St. Benedict's as a truly Benedictine College under the existing conditions. By 1940, the student body had grown to 160, and the community at Mount St. Benedict were experiencing a greater strain on their resources, viz. the supply of personnel, and financial support. Fr. Boniface did have the moral support and encouragement of the coadjutor Finbar Ryan, and even moreso after he was appointed Archbishop in 1940. On several occasions, His Grace Dr. Ryan, O.P., had intimated that St. Benedict's should be run as a Benedictine College,<sup>13</sup> and managed according to Benedictine principles and traditions. For this to



be achieved, however, it was imperative that there be a resident community at the College, the common life being a crucial feature and source of Benedictine spirituality.<sup>14</sup> The fact that the Benedictines did not own the property was a major disincentive towards establishing a resident community there. The Prior and his council realized this and took steps to have the ownership transferred to the Monastery.

In a memorandum to Archbishop Dowling dated January 8, 1940, the Prior, Fr. Hugh, and his Council,<sup>15</sup> expressed second thoughts about article 13 in the "Conventio" of August, 1929, wherein was specified that the Archdiocese shall be the owner, not only of the then existing buildings, but also of any buildings constructed in the future by the Benedictines in the parish. There and the

Archdiocese will have part of wider ecclesiastical

Edificia jam erecta et ea quae bonum videbitur Ordinario et Ordinis S. Benedicti Patribus apud S. Ferdinandum degentibus - consulto O.S.B. Superiore seu Priore pro tempore - construere semper bona dioecesana remanebunt, una etiam cum suppellectile ordinaria.<sup>16</sup>

The Prior and his Council felt that this clause was not in keeping with the Benedictine tradition of involvement in education. It was from Abbot Gallus's statement that,

Throughout its history it was the common practice of the Benedictine Order to have schools attached to their Monasteries, but such schools were always the property of the Monastic Family there residing.<sup>17</sup> school, St.

In view of the above, the Prior and his Council suggested that the Colony House property with all its outstanding debts be handed over to the Benedictines.<sup>19</sup> The Archbishop was also reminded that in the light of the vow of Stability<sup>20</sup> which all monks take, the Community is decidedly Trinidadian, regardless of the nationality of its individual members, thus implying that they are committed to the best interests of the Colony. Reverend Dr. Finbar Ryan, the An official reply was received on December 12th, 1940, from the newly appointed Archbishop Dr. Ryan. He advised against making any adjustments to the "Conventio" at the time. an integral part of the curriculum. These sentiments were also expressed by His It may well be that any change in regard to the Conventio between the Benedictine Fathers and the Archdiocese will form part of wider ecclesiastical changes after the war. At present communication with the Holy See, moreover, is practically impossible, and an alienation of such a substantial part of the Archbishop's property could not be effected without formal permission from Rome.<sup>20</sup> we have always produced

Not to be daunted, Fr. Boniface continued to be inspired by the school's motto "Per ardua ad astra." He had taken his cue from Abbot Butler's statement that,

state can exist without well founded family life.<sup>21</sup> The education given must be of the best, well abreast of the highest educational standards of the day: otherwise a monastery is not justified in having a school.<sup>21</sup> had constantly stressed the importance of the Boarding School. In a



He worked untiringly towards providing more modern facilities, able to accomodate a much greater number of students. Within two years he had witnessed the construction of a new College building at a cost of \$40,000.00. The building was designed by Br. Gabriel Mokveld, O.S.B., to accomodate 350 students, and included a modern science laboratory. At its solemn blessing on Friday 22nd January, 1943, by His Grace, the Most Reverend Dr. Finbar Ryan, the Honourable F. J. Nichols, Acting Colonial Secretary, was full in praise of the achievement. He commented favourably on the facilities provided for the teaching of woodwork as an integral part of the curriculum. These sentiments were also expressed by His Grace in his brief address. The Acting Director of Education, Captain E. W. Daniel remarked: "I do not know what we should do in this Colony if it were not for the assistance given to Government by the Christian Churches." Earlier in the evening, Fr. Boniface had welcomed the Assembly with these words: "Whereas Fr. Ludger had begun the Boarding House in response to what he felt was 'This school was built for youth, the hope of the future'... In our Benedictine schools we have always produced loyal citizens of the state and we have produced men who have faith and courage... We have built this school to educate and bring before the minds of those who are young, the noble ideals of family life, of culture and of peace of... No monks, Fr. Boniface can exist without well founded family life."<sup>22</sup> A few months, to obtain some teaching experience, with the understanding that Fr. Boniface had always insisted on giving the College a peculiarly Benedictine character, and for this purpose had constantly stressed the importance of the Boarding School. In a



letter to His Grace dated November 25th, 1941, he said:

1746-1747 I would like to submit to you a general scheme for the College. As it is supposed to be a Benedictine School, the ideal is, of course, a complete Boarding-School. This, however, is impossible. Still something of that B. S. atmosphere has to be brought in, if we want to preserve the specific Benedictine spirit. The three factors necessary in education are: the home, the school, and the Church, these three factors have to be found in the School.<sup>23</sup> negotiations between Fr. Presentation, and Fr. Placide of St. Benedict's, the college. This obsession with the idea that a Benedictine school was synonymous with a Boarding school coloured his entire term as Principal.<sup>24</sup> In 1944, he submitted a ten-year development plan to His Grace, which included quarters for 70 boarders. Whereas Fr. Ludger had begun the Boarding House in response to what he felt was a genuine need at the time, Fr. Boniface sought to establish the system as an essentially integral element in creating a Benedictine milieu in the school. Benedictine schools is another quest. In January, 1943, the Benedictines became further involved in education with the opening of the Mount St. Benedict's College (later called "The Abbey School"), at Tunapuna. One of the monks, Fr. Ildefons, was sent to the College at San Fernando for a few months, to obtain some teaching experience, with the understanding that he would return to join the teaching staff at Tunapuna. The opening of this College further added to the problems in the south, as the monastery was now less able to meet the increasing



remains of the growing southern college.  
concerned. Its management was put in the hands of a laywoman.  
1946-1947

Fr. Boniface resigned as Principal in April, 1946, and Fr. Placide Ganteaume was recalled to assume the post. It was at this time that the Archbishop approached the Irish Presentation Brothers to consider replacing the Benedictines at the College. The Presentation Brothers had already established two colleges in the West Indies (in St. Lucia, and Grenada), and Br. Evangelista Griffin, the Superior General, thought favourably of expanding to Trinidad. After a series of negotiations between Br. Kelly of Presentation, and Fr. Placide of St. Benedict's, the College became the concern of the Presentation Brothers. Only January 12, 1948, thought and action, prayer and work, the spiritual and the material. His idea of community life concerned itself equally with the sacred and the profane, \*den\*ying neither, but keeping a proper relation between them. He was thus concerned with the fact that St. Benedict's College, San Fernando, was run by Benedictine Fathers is one matter. Whether it was run according to the spirit and tradition of Benedictine schools is another question. That the Benedictines satisfied an educational need in south Trinidad is undisputed. That they provided a Benedictine witness in so doing is another matter. Initiatives were taken, as we have seen, by Benedictines. But, were these initiatives Benedictine? I beg to suggest that, although genuine attempts were made to incorporate Benedictine spirituality to the task of education, the overall results fell short. The College to the Presentation Boarding House idea, for example, was a failure from its



very inception, at least as far as a Benedictine initiative is concerned. Its management was put in the hands of a laywoman! The ideal would have been for it to be run by the monks themselves. Another notable lacuna was the absence of a visible monastic presence of community life. According to Abbot Butler, the success of a Benedictine school qua Benedictine school would depend on the presence of a large monastic community.<sup>25</sup> There were severe constraints here. And, as we have seen, the opening of another large secondary school in Tunapuna had adversely affected the possibility of improving Benedictine involvement in the southern College.

Alfred North Whitehead suggests that Benedict brought Platonic theory down to earth.<sup>26</sup> Benedict constantly sought to marry thought and action, prayer and work, the spiritual and the material. His idea of community life concerned itself equally with the sacred and the profane, demeaning neither, but keeping a proper relation between them. He was thus concerned with the whole man. St. Benedict's College, in the mould of the model secondary school of its time, did place much emphasis on the academic, although encouraging extra-curricular activities at the same time. It was only with the opening of the new building in 1943, however, that a non-academic subject, woodwork, was placed on the curriculum. It may have been a bold step at the time, but, I think that in the tradition of Benedictine spirituality, other practically oriented initiatives may also have been introduced, e.g. the teaching of agriculture.

The handing over of St. Benedict's College to the Presentation Brothers in 1948, marked the end of a page in the

history of Benedictine involvement in secondary education in south Trinidad. However, it was not the end of the chapter! Within a decade another page was to begin.

In order to safeguard the communitarian dimension of monastic life, the Benedictine Constitution of the Congregation, to which the Abbey at Tunapuna belongs, provides for the establishment of "cells", with no fewer than 3 members. These "cells" are small communities, set up apart from the parent monastery, under which jurisdiction it remains. A "cell" had been established at the San Fernando Presbytery in 1930, in order to carry out the parochial ministry to which the Benedictines had been assigned. In 1953, Dom Basil Matthews, O.S.B., had been sent to San Fernando to join the "cell" under Fr. Maurus Maingot, who had been parish priest since 1951, after the retirement of Fr. Sebastian Weber. Due to the vastness of the parochial territory, the services had to be divided. Fr. Maingot was directly responsible for the central area of Harris Promenade, Fr. Odilo van Tongeren was given responsibility for the Mon Repos district, and Dom Basil was assigned the country districts of Ste. Madeleine, Rambert Village, Picton, La Romaine, and surroundings.

For many years, La Romaine had been a plantation area with a working-class population. In the early 1950's, there was as yet no school for the villagers, and many of the children attended an old primary school at Rambert Village. Between San Fernando and the deep south there was no established secondary school at the time. The principle of free secondary education for all was only to be accepted in the Colony from 1960, and with the idea existing



only for a restricted number (Chapter 3 through College Exhibition Examinations), by and large, secondary education was a luxury for the privileged class. "Nihil omnino Christo" College Exhibition Examinations, only 236 candidates were awarded free places in. In order to safeguard the communitarian dimension of monastic life, the Benedictine Constitution of the Congregation, to which the Abbey at Tunapuna belongs, provides for the establishment of "cells", with no fewer than 3 members. These "cells" are small communities, set up apart from the parent monastery, under which jurisdiction it remains. A "cell" had been established at the San Fernando Presbytery in 1930, in order to carry out the parochial ministry to which the Benedictines had been assigned. In 1953, Dom Basil Matthews, O.S.B., had been sent to San Fernando to join the "cell" under Fr. Maurus Maingot, who had been parish priest since 1951, after the retirement of Fr. Sebastian Weber. Due to the vastness of the parochial territory, the services had to be divided. Fr. Maingot was directly responsible for the central area of Harris Promenade, Fr. Odilo van Tongeren was given responsibility for the Mon Repos district, and Dom Basil was assigned the country districts of Ste. Madeleine, Rambert Village, Picton, La Romaine, and surroundings. For many years, La Romaine had been a plantation area with a working-class population. In the early 1950's, there was as yet no school for the villagers, and many of the children attended an old primary school at Rambert Village. Between San Fernando and the deep south there was no established secondary school at the time. The principle of free secondary education for all was only to be accepted in the Colony from 1960, and with the idea existing



only for a restricted number (through College Exhibition Examinations), by and large, secondary education was a luxury for the privileged class. In 1956, based on the College Exhibition Examinations, only 236 candidates were awarded free places in secondary schools. *tern of Christ himself, the Divine Master.*

It was not any wonder, therefore, that the then existing denominational schools in the south, viz., Naparima Boys', Naparima Girls', Presentation Boys' (formerly St. Benedict's), and St. Joseph's Convent were all prestige schools with a limited clientele. In this scenario, La Romaine, with its largely poor and working-class population, was nowhere to be found. And, just like the Nazareth of Jesus, it may have been asked: "Can anything good come from that place?" (John 1: 46). *t. He divided up the Estate* Not only was Dom Basil convinced that something good could come out of La Romaine, but he was prepared to prove it. In late 1954, he had been involved in a series of public debates with Dr. Eric Williams,<sup>22</sup> on the role of the church in education. Whereas Dr. Williams was advocating state controlled education, Dom Basil was arguing philosophically for Church involvement in education. Dom Basil was willing to demonstrate his point, not merely on the academic or philosophical platform, but also, in the practical arena. And the virgin soil of La Romaine provided an ideal setting in which to cultivate that seed which was sprouting in his mind. *of \$250,000.00.<sup>23</sup> It opened its doors for the first time* By 1956, Dom Basil had embarked on an ambitious and comprehensive project that had the full support of the Archbishop, Dr. Finbar Ryan. His aim was to create a Christian school that would have as its purpose the formation of the educational system



of the Colony. Known as the Nissen Working Party, they reported that ... the whole man - in his body, his mind, his will, his heart and his soul and to mould together all these human parts into the coordinated whole of a perfect man, a man after the pattern of Christ himself, the Divine Master, a little Lord in God's great creation.<sup>26</sup>

For this, he chose as the school's motto, "Nihil Omnino Christo" ("Christ Above All").<sup>27</sup> The seed in the mind of Dom Basil had grown into the tree that is St. Benedict's College, La Romaine.

Mr. Emmanuel Lucky, a proprietor, had invested heavily in property in La Romaine, and was responsible for a vast improvement in the physical amenities of the district. He divided up the Estate into lots by cutting several streets, and offered these lots for sale at a reasonable fee. Dom Basil approached the Lucky family, and he was given a favourable offer. In 1955, with the purchase effected, an old plantation residence on the land was re-divided and used as a primary school, and school chapel. Mass was celebrated every Sunday for the people. The idea of a secondary school for the district had fired the imagination of the parents in La Romaine, and further south. Soon, many of them, and some generous merchants were coming forward to assist Dom Basil in making his dream a reality. The College was finally completed at a cost of \$250,000.00.<sup>28</sup> It opened its doors for the first time on the 11th September, 1956, with an enrollment of 220 students, a staff of two, and Dom Basil as principal.<sup>29</sup> In 1954, three foreign educationists had been brought in by the Government to do an investigation into the educational system



of the Colony. Known as the Missen Working Party, they reported that the curriculum was unrealistic and the methods obsolete.<sup>32</sup> Dom Basil was aware of these deficiencies, and made some innovative moves in his approach. Although St. Benedict's was a Grammar school, his approach tended more towards the comprehensive system, because of the great emphasis placed on the practical disciplines.<sup>33</sup> St. Benedict's could thus be regarded as the forerunner of the present attempts at comprehensive education in our schooling system. By introducing such subjects as Music, Art, Business Education,<sup>33</sup> Rural Science<sup>34</sup> and Home Science,<sup>35</sup> he had shown both a sensitivity to the geo-cultural context of the school, and also a desire to instil that Benedictine ideal of marrying thought and action, the spiritual and the physical, or simply of developing the whole person.

participation from the community at Tunapuna. He arranged a scholarship in Business Education for Fr. John Osborne, O.S.B., with the understanding that, Early in 1957, as Apostolic Delegate, Monsignor Vittore Righi, visited the College, and made a favourable report to the Holy See. The Vatican Newspaper, "L'Osservatore Romano", subsequently carried a report on the opening of the College, which it pointed out, "...augurs well for the work of Christian instruction and education in the Archdiocese of Port-of-Spain."<sup>36</sup> On the 11th September, 1957, exactly one year after its opening, the College was recognized for state aid. This served as a much welcomed fillip for the school.

Education was given special attention. In keeping with the holistic approach to education, Dom Basil sought to cater as well to the physical needs of the students. To this end, a luncheon system was established in 1958,



subsidised service was offered at twenty-five cents for a balanced meal. This was indeed a pioneering initiative, and could be regarded as the precursor to the present school-feeding program in our country. Other contribution to the broad-based education at the St. Benedict's College, La Romaine, was never perceived by the community at Tunapuna, as a Benedictine project, i.e. as a project originating from the monastery,<sup>37</sup> and Dom Basil's involvement in it was not always positively regarded. When Fr. Maurus Maingot died in 1959, Dom Basil was suggested to succeed him as parish priest of San Fernando, with the intention of dissociating him from the College.<sup>38</sup> However, this move was resisted by Archbishop Finbar Ryan, who had great admiration for the work that was being done at the College.<sup>39</sup> It was Dom Basil's desire to encourage greater Benedictine participation from the community at Tunapuna. He arranged a scholarship in Business Education for Fr. John Osborne, O.S.B., with the understanding that, on completion, he would teach at the College. In 1959, Fr. John left for Pitman's College in London, and after a year and a half, having attained his Diploma in Business Education, he was employed at the College as a special teacher. He was also appointed Dean of Discipline, and Deputy-Principal.<sup>37</sup> Fr. John's presence in the school helped to create the impression that the College was indeed a Benedictine one, or, at least, tending in that direction.

During this period, Business Education was given special attention. This pioneering work was further augmented with the employment of the former Chief Accountant at the Bus Company, Mr. Sam Seunarine (now, Dr. Sam Seunarine), in 1962. His approach, in



keeping with the school's policy, was not merely theoretical, but also practical. The students ran the College bookshop, and set up a model post office, bank and stock exchange, as part of their training.<sup>40</sup> Another contribution to the broad-based education at the school, was the formation of the "Military" Band under Major Rupert Dennison. Major Dennison had become famous through his involvement with the Police Band. On his retirement in 1959, and on the initiative of Dom Basil, he agreed to offer his services to the College. *ary and Debating Society.*

During these early years, the student body was increasing rapidly, so that by 1961, there were 780 students, and 35 members of staff. By 1962, eleven boys were registered to write the Higher School Certificate examination for the first time - a significant achievement, in view of the fact that academic distinction was not the primary purpose of St. Benedict's College.

on that. The fact that many of their homes had absentee fathers, inspired me to tell you that the primary purpose of St. Benedict's College... is not the pursuit of academic distinction ... Here we aim at making men, men worthy to live and living worthily.<sup>41</sup> *pective roles, attitudes, functions and duties of the members of the christian*

To attain this ideal, the program at the College was divided into three parts:

- It was (1) Religious and Moral, *levels of responsibility among the*  
students (2) Scholastic, and  
(3) Social and Cultural.<sup>42</sup>

Religion played a pivotal role in the school. The motto, Nihil Omnino Christo, was designed to highlight the primacy of Christ in



the life of the student. Religion was taught by Fr. John, and also by other members of the teaching staff. There was also weekly Mass and Confession, the daily Rosary, and religious groups like the Legion of Mary. Non-Catholics were given classes in Ethics. The scholastic aspect was supplied in the broad-based curriculum, which included both general and practical studies. The social and cultural area included physical training, organized sports and games, The College Orchestra, The College Choir, Drama, and the Literary and Debating Society.

There was much emphasis placed at the College on the themes of Community and Family Life.<sup>43</sup> Dom Basil thus drew from his own Benedictine background, where the ideal of community life is a key motif. He was aware that the country-style living, the rural background of most of the students had provided them with a certain perception of family living, and he was prepared to build on that. The fact that many of their homes had absentee fathers, inspired him to stress Family Economics as an important subject in the curriculum. For Dom Basil, Family Economics is, <sup>lego</sup>. It was after this idea was abandoned that the land was given to the school an education in the respective roles, attitudes, functions and duties of the members of the Christian family.<sup>44</sup>

It was thus geared to increase levels of responsibility among the students.

#### 1963-1968

Dom Basil knew that "the human qualities underlying athletic



activities are the same as those underlying spiritual life activities." He was aware that there is more to a game of football than what meets the eye. It can educate us, for instance, in the value of co-operation. The human qualities of discipline, dedication, enthusiasm, and perseverance, which are necessary ingredients in attaining success in the sporting arena are the same qualities necessary to attain progress in the spiritual life. His emphasis on sport at St. Benedict's was thus an attempt to make of it a new instrument for education. Although the College performed creditably in the sporting arena from its inception, it was in the period under review (1963-1968), that it took off in a most dramatic manner. This was due largely to the donation by Archbishop Finbar Ryan of five acres of land for the continued development of the College. The area was converted into the sporting grounds, and called "The College Commons." It is situated between the South Trunk Road and the Gulf of Paria, and had been purchased by the Roman Catholic Church for a proposed Catholic Teachers Training College. It was after this idea was abandoned that the land was given to the school. The Archbishop blessed the new grounds and pavilion on Sunday 7th July, 1963. In Dom Basil's address, he stressed the relation between sport and education.

Academically, the school was not performing well. In 1963, In blessing and opening this pavilion today we celebrate and only a centre for the cultivation of manly sports among the boys of St. Benedict's College. But we do more than that. We open an arena for organized and competitive sports - a necessary adjunct to a school which is fully



what a school, that is, a school life. The sports-ground is his  
address an extension in the field of our educational endeavours  
principally in the classroom. Here in the playing fields we hope  
that the boys will learn, in some measure, to translate  
this into the interests of their youthful lives the lessons  
of thinking, acting and reacting, which they are being  
taught in classroom, on campus and in chapel.<sup>46</sup> many past  
students who were doing well at various Universities abroad.

The school excelled in football, due to Dom Basil's  
initiative in bringing down three first-class coaches. The first,  
Americo Brunner, a Hungarian-born Brazilian coach, was taken on in  
1965. In 1938 he had been voted as the world's second best  
footballer, while playing as a full-back for the Hungarian  
National team. He was followed by two Surinamese coaches,  
Lagadeau and Wooter. In 1965 and 1966, St. Benedict's won the  
National College League Championship, and five of the College boys  
were selected to represent the National team. It was at this time  
that stars like Warren Archibald, Leroy DeLeon, and Jan Steadman  
emerged.<sup>47</sup> Football was of such importance at St. Benedict's,  
that, even before the coming of Brunner, a first form building was  
opened in 1964 and named "Pele Hall", after the Brazilian football  
superstar. Monk had passed that way, and had made a contribution  
to it. Academically, the school was not performing well. In 1965,  
199 students sat the G.C.E. "O" Level Cambridge examinations, and  
only 1 passed 5 subjects. No student got more than 5 subjects.  
In the G.C.E. "A" Level examinations of the same year, 13 students  
sat, and only 2 passed 2 subjects. Many critics disparagingly  
labelled St. Benedict's as "the football school," and criticised

what they perceived to be an over-emphasis on sport. In his address at the tenth anniversary graduation exercises (1966), the principal outlined a number of factors that should be taken into consideration when viewing the examination results.<sup>40</sup> He followed this up by lauding the successes of the College in cultural activities, such as The College Quiz, Public Speaking Contests, Music, and Football. He also made mention of the many past students who were doing well at various Universities abroad.

In 1966, the student body was 800, and the staff had risen to 40. By this time, Dom Basil was the only Benedictine at the College, as Fr. John had resigned in 1964, in order to devote himself exclusively to pastoral affairs in the sub-district of La Romaine and Rambert Village. In 1968, Dom Basil left St. Benedict's College and began lecturing at various universities in the United States. From 1970 to 1977 he had a teaching career in the social sciences department at Howard University. Mr. Edwin Caines was appointed as principal to replace him. Dom Basil's resignation closed the chapter on the involvement of Benedictines in secondary education in south Trinidad. The name of the school, however, has been retained. This serves as a reminder that at one time in the past, a certain Benedictine monk had passed that way, and had made a contribution to the education of the people there! In the country he was so determined to help.

Severe birth pangs accompanied the growth of the College in its embryonic stage, not the least being the muted support of the St. Benedict's College, La Romaine, was largely the brain-child of one Benedictine monk, who, having emerged on the public stage of a



changing Trinidad and Tobago, it was determined, to make his own contribution. Several years before his debates with Dr. Williams, which had catapulted them both into the public eye, the then Secretary of State for the Colonies in England, Colonel Stanley, had said that the people who will improve conditions in the West Indies, the only other member of the community to join the staff, had only remained for 3 years, and so, for most of the time, Dom Basil... must come from the West Indies, be of the West Indies, and work with the West Indies, and it is upon not a month that the future of the West Indies will depend.<sup>47</sup> In the school, particularly in his emphasis on sport, served to In a lecture at the Public Library on Tuesday, November 9, 1954, entitled, "Aristotle: Education and State Control," Dom Basil, had boasted of his own eligibility to so contribute: time, or in spite of the fact that he was a Benedictine? I suggest that Dom Basil was I am a West Indian. I am as much West Indian as anybody as a part, here.<sup>50</sup> used this spirituality in developing the College, and that he adapted the Benedictine tradition in education to meet However, Dom Basil's claim to West Indianhood did not arise merely from the accident of his place of birth. He had also made a positive decision for the West Indies! His vow of stability, for instance, which he took as a Benedictine monk, had rooted him doubly among the people, and within the country he was so determined to help. an appropriate response at the time.

Severe birth pangs accompanied the growth of the College in its embryonic stage, not the least being the muted support of the community at Tunapuna. It is to Dom Basil's credit, therefore, that he could have used some basic tenets of Benedictine

spirituality, such as the primacy of Christ, and a wholistic worldview, and adapt them to the demands of the time. He was aware that a truly Benedictine education is best effected by the witness of a resident Benedictine community, and he made attempts to encourage other monks to join him at the College. Fr. John Osborne, the only other member of the community to join the staff, had only remained for 3 years, and so, for most of the time, Dom Basil was the only Benedictine at the College. However, as a monk outside his monastic community, he was not a monk without a community. Many of the initiatives he took in the school, particularly in his emphasis on sport, served to foster a spirit of togetherness and community. One must therefore ask: were the initiatives taken at St. Benedict's College, La Romaine, so taken because Dom Basil was a Benedictine, or in spite of the fact that he was a Benedictine? I suggest that Dom Basil was motivated by the Benedictine spirituality of which he was a part, that he used this spirituality in developing the College, and that he adapted the Benedictine tradition in education to meet the demands of the time in which he lived. In the 1950's and 1960's, there were waves of nationalism sweeping throughout the Caribbean, and a greater stress was being placed on meeting the needs of the people. The comprehensive model, employed by Dom Basil, a model compatible with the ideals of Benedictine spirituality, seemed an appropriate response at the time. As we have already seen, the model of Boniface never realized its



#### Chapter 4

The "Basil model," was set at a time when new ideas of nationalism were very much Conclusion Trinidad. Don Basil, in adapting to the spirit of the 1950's and 1960's, was much more. The story of Benedictine initiatives in secondary education in south Trinidad from 1930 to 1968, is generally the story of a few monks, and more especially the story of two monks: Boniface and Basil. They were each motivated by a vision of education which sought to remain faithful to Benedictine principles and traditions. However, they differed on what constituted the essential elements of such a vision. Whereas Boniface stressed the importance of the Boarding school idea, Basil emphasised a broad-based comprehensive approach. as stepping stones for the acade In the 1930's and 1940's, Trinidad was a Colony in name as well as in mores. The "Boniface model," in keeping with the times in which it was set, drew heavily from the standards of the mother country. The English Benedictine Congregation laid great emphasis on religion and languages, especially the classics, in their schools. The Abbeys of Douai, Buckfast, Ealing, and Downside, all belonged to this tradition, and conducted Boarding schools catering for an elite clientele.<sup>21</sup> It was to this model that Boniface was tending - one not necessarily conversant with the pristine values of the Rule of St. Benedict, eg. the importance of manual work.<sup>22</sup> So, although much lip-service has often been paid by Benedictines to the values of manual labour, and a balanced approach of prayer, work, and study, their experience in education has often been coloured by a definite bias in favour of academics. As we have already seen, the model of Boniface never realized its

purpose. The "Basil model," was set at a time when new ideas of nationalism were very much in vogue in Trinidad. Dom Basil, in adapting to the spirit of the 1950's and 1960's, was much more conscious of addressing the needs of the people, and thus stressed the more comprehensive approach. The emphasis on sport at St. Benedict's College, La Romaine, was a means of creating a feeling of self-worth among the students, which, it was hoped, would eventually lead them to perform more effectively at other levels, such as at the academic level, and, in the work-place on leaving school. Although Dom Basil tried to break away from the Grammar school model, it seems as if he was entangled in its web. The non-academic subjects had been seen as stepping stones for the academic, and, therefore regarded, if not officially, at least subliminally, as being of secondary importance. In terms of its relevance to the geo-cultural context of the school, the early emphasis on agriculture was not maintained, and such an important industry in the south as the Petroleum sector was never addressed in the curriculum. It is with issues like these that I think a truly Benedictine approach should deal. Dom Basil did attempt to adapt pristine Benedictine principles to the needs of the time, but, I think, he did not go far enough. Benedictinism is not merely about religion, and liturgical worship. Rather, it is deeply concerned with the very stuff of what the earth is made.

Benedictine spirituality has a double effect. In the first instance, it roots the individual/community in a radical, ongoing turning to God. And, secondly, it heightens one's consciousness



of a sense of place, due to the vow of stability. A commitment to God must always be accompanied by a commitment to one's place, and all that that place entails: its people, its culture, its geography, and its history. When applied to education, a Benedictine approach, when so perceived, must employ a critical reading of what constitutes the real needs of the place, and address them in the curriculum.

Both Boniface and Basil were constrained by the time and place in which they lived. The fact, however, that they worked within these constraints to apply themselves to the task of education in a way which each perceived as Benedictine, is indeed a tribute to them. They were not always supported by the community at Tunapuna. Nevertheless, their initiatives in south Trinidad would always be remembered as Benedictine initiatives, if only for the fact that, albeit often alone, they presented their ideals, as Benedictine ideals. authorized the establishment of the first Benedictine Abbey in the Caribbean. This singular honour was awarded to the Monastery of Mount St. Benedict, and, on June 3, 1947, the very young Dom Adelbert van Duin, Ph.D., L.C.D., was elected its first Abbot. He was only 32 years at the time of his election, and for the next 25 years during his reign as Abbot, until his resignation in 1972, he did much to encourage the involvement of the Benedictines in education. Before 1947, the canonical status of the Monastery was that of a Conventual Priory, and the superior was called the Conventual Prior. This post was held by Dom Hugh van der Sanden from 1923 to 1947, and Dom Adelbert referred to him as "my predecessor," in the interview.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Cuthbert Butler, Benedictine Monachism (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1919), pp. 322-326; Lowrie J. Daly, Benedictine Monasticism (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1965), pp. 268-272; Columba Cary-Elwes, Monastic Renewal (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), pp. 152-168. Mr. Vernon Ferrer, one of the original teachers at

<sup>2</sup> Butler, p. 326. The students came from fairly well-off homes.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 375-376. in appendix 3. B.A.T. 1991

<sup>4</sup> A copy of the contents of the "Conventio" is in Appendix 1. Although it is dated in the sixth month (Sextilis), this refers to the liturgical, and not to the calendar year, which is, therefore, the month of August, and not June. A.P.O.S. P.O.S. 1991

<sup>5</sup> Adelbert van Duin, Personal interview, Nov. 3, 1991. In commemoration of the 14th centenary of the death of St. Benedict, His Holiness Pope Pius XII had authorized the establishment of the first Benedictine Abbey in the Caribbean. This singular honour was awarded to the Monastery of Mount St. Benedict, and, on June 3, 1947, the very young Dom Adelbert van Duin, Ph.D., I.C.D., was elected its first Abbot. He was only 32 years at the time of his election, and for the next 25 years during his reign as Abbot, until his resignation in 1972, he did much to encourage the involvement of the Benedictines in education. Before 1947, the canonical status of the Monastery was that of a Conventual Priory, and the superior was called the Conventual Prior. This post was held by Dom Hugh van der Sanden from 1923 to 1947, and Dom Adelbert referred to him as "my predecessor," in the interview.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.



<sup>7</sup> This amount was disputed by Dr. Steve Bennet, one of the original students at the College, in an interview on September 28, 1991. He insisted that there were 32 students in the original batch. However, I have used the figure of 29, as it corresponds to the number of students on a photograph taken at the time. See appendix 2 for photograph of original batch of students. According to Mr. Vernon Ferrer, one of the original teachers at the College, most of the students came from fairly well-off homes.

<sup>8</sup> See copy of letter in appendix 3. B.A.T. the community he belongs to. Fr. Ludger Nauer was one of the assistant priests attached to the presbytery at San Fernando. He was subsequently appointed as the third principal of the school in 1934.

<sup>9</sup> See copy of letter in appendix 4. A.P.O.S. God chose to

<sup>10</sup> See copy of Exam results in appendix 4. P.C.O.r, to become

<sup>11</sup> According to the Education Ordinance of 1870, the college council of the Queen's Royal College was empowered to affiliate secondary schools, such schools upon application becoming entitled to grants-in-aid from public funds.

<sup>12</sup> See article 6 of memorandum in appendix 6. A.P.O.S. idea of

<sup>13</sup> The Rule of St. Benedict was written primarily for cenobites, i.e. "those who belong to a monastery, where they serve under a rule and an abbot" (R.B. Ch.1 v.2). John Cassian, a monk whose writings were highly recommended by Benedict, traces the cenobite spirituality to that practiced by the early Christians in the time of the apostles. The ideal of the common life is contained in Luke's description of the early Christian community (Acts. 4: 32-35), and is both the pattern and goal of Benedictine spirituality.



not <sup>15</sup> See copy of memorandum in appendix 6. the difficulty of

establishing <sup>16</sup> See appendix 1. community at the College.

<sup>17</sup> See article 3 of memorandum in appendix 6. this, it was

precisely <sup>18</sup> See article 9 of memorandum in appendix 6. The

Benedictines were not here suggesting a cash transaction, but merely a transfer of the property, for the reasons given in the memorandum. and on March 16th, 1946, he was advised by the

Arch<sup>19</sup> The vow of stability commits the monk to remain faithful to his spiritual journey in the place and within the community he belongs. In his rule, Benedict warns against the type of monks who "spend their entire lives drifting from region to region" (R.B. Ch.1 vv.10-11). Theologically, the vow of stability is rooted in the "scandal of particularity," by which God chose to become human, not in a merely general sense, but rather, to become human, in a particular man, in a particular place, at a particular time, and among a particular people in history. The theology of the incarnation, challenges us to find God precisely in the time, in the place, and in the community in which we live. Bates, Deputy

Chair<sup>20</sup> See copy of letter in appendix 7. B.A.T. The idea of having ownership transferred to the Benedictines was not pursued after the war, and, in addition, as we shall see, the school was eventually handed over to the Presentation Brothers. (P.O.S.G.),

and <sup>21</sup> Butler, p. 375. Guardian (T.G.), and "Sunday Guardian"

18.<sup>22</sup> "Acting Colonial Secretary Supports Increasing Public Demand For Higher Education In Trinidad," Sunday Guardian, 24 January, 1943, p. 2. S.G., 19 Nov., 1934, p. 3; "Aristotle Meant

The<sup>23</sup> See copy of letter in appendix 8. A.P.O.S. Fr. Boniface knew that a complete Boarding School in the Benedictine sense, was



not possible at the time. This was due to the difficulty of establishing a resident community at the College.<sup>24</sup> It is ironic, therefore, that in spite of this, it was precisely over an issue involving the Boarding House that eventually led to the demise of Fr. Boniface as principal. His overly indulgent attitude to the matron did not find favour with his Superiors, and on March 16th, 1946, he was advised by the Archbishop to have the matron dismissed, and to close down the Boarding House. The reason given was that his association with the matron constituted "a spiritual danger for you, and for the good name of the Benedictine community." His relations with his Superiors at the monastery became further strained, and in April, 1946, he tendered his resignation as principal.

<sup>25</sup> Butler, p. 376. Character: Dr. Williams Sees Danger In

<sup>26</sup> Edward L. Henry, "Benedictine Education - Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow," American Benedictine Review, Vol. XV (1964), p. 170.

<sup>27</sup> Dr. Eric Williams, a Doctor of Philosophy graduate from Oxford University, was, at the time of these debates, Deputy Chairman of the Caribbean Commission's Research Council. He became the first Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago in 1962, having led the Colony to Independence. The debates and related topics were featured in the "Port-of-Spain Gazette" (P.O.S.G.), and in the "Trinidad Guardian" (T.G.), and "Sunday Guardian" (S.G.) Newspapers as follows: "Aristotle Backed Religion in Education," P.O.S.G., 12 Nov., 1954, p. 9; "Dr. Williams And The Denominations," P.O.S.G., 19 Nov., 1954, p. 8; "Aristotle Meant The Ideal Man For The Ideal State," *ibid.*; Earl T. Otis, "Red Herrings Alleged In Aristotle Issue," P.O.S.G., 24 Nov., 1954, p.



4; Citizen, "Dr. Williams Criticised," *ibid.*; "Dr. Williams Sees Hopeless Confusion Among Education Experts On Question Of State Or Denominational Control," P.O.S.G., 25 Nov., 1954, p. 6; "Another Critic Of Dr. Williams," P.O.S.G., 26 Nov., 1954, p. 4; "Dr. Williams Told State-Controlled Education Logical in Russia, China," P.O.S.G., 5 Dec., 1954, p. 14; "Crowds Ask More and More Aristotle," T.G., 11 Nov., 1954, p. 2; "Religion The Essence Of Civilized Living - Aristotle Aimed At Producing A Good Man, Says Dom Basil," T.G., 11 Nov., 1954, p. 12; "Dom Basil Concealed Slavery In Aristotle's Ideal State," T.G., 18 Nov., 1954; "Dom Basil Called On To Make Choice Publicly: *Either Catholicism, Or Aristotelianism*, Says Dr. Williams," T.G., 20 Nov., 1954, p. 10; 5 Letters to the Editor, T.G., 24 Nov., 1954, p. 6; "Intellectual Training Way To Sound Character: Dr. Williams Sees Danger In Church Control Of Schools," T.G., 25 Nov., 1954, p. 2; 5 Letters to the Editor, T.G., 27 Nov., 1954, p. 6; Lenn Chongsing, "The Battle Continues On Aristotle And Art," S.G., 21 Nov., 1954, p. 3b; "Fifteen Questions on Education," S.G., 28 Nov., 1954, p. 14b. The "Catholic News" was conspicuously silent on the issue. There was only one article about the debate, and it was written anonymously in: Catholic News, 20 Nov., 1954, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> Basil Matthews, "The Principal's Address," given at the Solemn Blessing and Formal Opening of St. Benedict's College Sports Pavilion at College Commons. La Romaine, 7 July, 1963.

P.P.A. and wholesale trade, Import and Export Trade, Banking and

<sup>21</sup> This motto was probably inspired by R.B. Ch.72 v.11: *CMNINO* "Christo nihil praeponant," ("Let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ") - a pivotal theme in Benedictine spirituality.



<sup>30</sup> Basil Matthews, "The Principal's Report," given on the First Speech Day of St. Benedict's College. La Romaine, 1961: "The cost of the physical establishment of St. Benedict's College has been practically \$250,000.00. Where other secondary schools have got two thirds of capital costs in building grants from Government, we, unfortunately or fortunately, were not privileged to receive even one cent." B.A.T. with the teaching of cookery.

The <sup>31</sup> Dom Basil continued in the post of principal until his resignation in 1968. The figures for the number of students and staff were also taken from the principal's report of 1961. It seemed like a Herculean task for just 2 teachers to manage and teach 220 boys. When I asked Fr. John Osborne about this, he offered two speculations: (a) without government support in the first year, there were severe financial constraints, and staff was necessarily limited, and (b) most of the boys who first came to the school may have been of the same level of education, and classes could have been much larger than what may obtain in a school with different pupils at different academic levels. College.

<sup>32</sup> Ministry of Education, Historical Development of Education in Trinidad and Tobago: 1800-1962 (Port-of-Spain: Government Printing Office, 1962), p. 5. Interview, Oct. 17, 1991; Nigel

<sup>33</sup> Business Education included such areas as: Principles of Accounts; Typewriting; Secretarial Duties; Economics and Public Affairs; Commerce with detailed studies in current developments in Retail and wholesale trade, Import and Export Trade, Banking and Finance, Insurance, Transport and Warehousing. For more information, see Fareed Ali et al., eds., Vigil (La Romaine: St. Benedict's College, 1967), pp. 40-41. Benedict's College. La



<sup>34</sup> Rural Science began with gardening on a small scale, and with the idea of developing it into a full-scale agricultural program. This would have included the idea of having Agricultural Science as one of the subjects taken at the "O" level examination. This, however, never came to fruition in Dom Basil's term as principal.

<sup>35</sup> Home Science began primarily with the teaching of cookery. The name was later changed to Family Economics. A definition of this is given by Dom Basil on p. 22 of my thesis.

<sup>36</sup> This information is taken from page 19 of a stenciled publication put out in 1961 to mark the fifth anniversary of the school. B.A.T.

<sup>37</sup> This view was expressed by both Abbot Adelbert van Duin, and Fr. John Osborne, during my interviews with them on Nov. 3, 1991, and Oct. 17, 1991 respectively.

<sup>38</sup> John Osborne, Personal interview, Oct. 17, 1991.

<sup>39</sup> There was also a Vice-Principal in the School, Miss Beulah Dean, regarded by Dom Basil as the co-founder of the College. However, Fr. John's post as Deputy-Principal was considered by Dom Basil to be a more senior position than that of Vice-Principal.

<sup>40</sup> Sam Seunarine, Personal interview, Oct. 17, 1991; Nigel Eastman et al., eds., Vigil (La Romaine: St. Benedict's College, 1989), pp. 15-16.

<sup>41</sup> Basil Matthews, "The Principal's Report," given on the First Speech Day of St. Benedict's College, La Romaine, 1961.

<sup>42</sup> Basil Matthews, "Principal's Address," given at the Tenth Anniversary Graduation Exercises of St. Benedict's College. La



Romaine, 1966. P.P.A. better than the results in the comparable

new<sup>43</sup> Basil Matthews, Personal interview, Oct. 15, 1991. however

Coll<sup>44</sup> Basil Matthews, "Principal's Address," given at the Tenth Anniversary Graduation Exercises of St. Benedict's College. La Romaine, 1966. P.P.A. Education Department is the recognised

lead<sup>45</sup> Thomas Ryan, "Towards a Spirituality for Sports," in Concilium, Oct. 1989, p. 111. at building grants and the lack of

coll<sup>46</sup> Basil Matthews, "The Principal's Address," given at the Solemn Blessing and Formal Opening of St. Benedict's College Sports Pavilion at College Commons. La Romaine, 7 July, 1963. P.P.A. 1954, p. 9. Personal explanation for

<sup>47</sup> It will be worthwhile, I think, to re-examine this experience in the light of the present controversy concerning the employment of a foreign coach for the National Football team. their

hand<sup>48</sup> The following observations were noted by the principal: 1) The Common Entrance Examinations sends to us, on the outskirts of San Fernando, the lowest-level, left-overs from other older well-established and recognised Secondary Schools. 2) These same boys experience a well-nigh insurmountable obstacle in travelling to and from School. Hence we are plagued by frequent absences and late coming. 3) These same boys come from homes in the low-level economic bracket and from homesteads where parents keep boys home to "help". 4) Indifference to the purchase of Text Books, or in some cases genuine poverty. 5) Next, the "traffic" in Staff makes administration a headache and "teaching" a mockery. We have to rely on mercurial Vith Form "graduates" who use us as a stepping stone to the profession of their choice. 6) Even with the handicaps aforementioned, the public examination results of St.

Benedict's College are better than the results in the comparable newly-established schools. 7) In cultural activities, however - P.O.S.G. Quiz, Inter-College Public Speaking Contest, Music, Football and Cricket, St. Benedict's College is well abreast of the best. Our Business Education Department is the recognised leader in its field. 8) Very poor physical accommodation due to the total absence of Government building grants and the lack of collective financial resources possessed by Order-owned Colleges.

<sup>47</sup> P.O.S.G., 25 Nov., 1954.

<sup>48</sup> "Aristotle Backed Religion in Education," P.O.S.G., 12 Nov., 1954, p. 9. Personal interview. Sept. 28, 1991. (One of the

<sup>49</sup> The British Library, The Benedictines In Britain (London: The British Library, 1980), pp. 99-102.

<sup>50</sup> R.B. Ch. 48 v. 8: "When they live by the labour of their hands, as our fathers and the apostles did, then they are really monks." St. Basil. Personal interview. Oct. 15, and Oct. 16, 1991.

(The founder and first Principal of St. Benedict's College, La Romanel, was St. Basil.)  
<sup>51</sup> Mc Sweeney, George. Personal interview. Oct. 2, 1991. (Past pupil of St. Benedict's College, San Fernando, and Secretary of Presentation College for many years).

<sup>52</sup> Mitchell, Edgar. Telephone interview. Feb. 19, 1992. (One of the first teachers at St. Benedict's College, San Fernando).

<sup>53</sup> Murray, Anthony. Personal interview. Aug. 10, 1991. (Monk of Mount St. Benedict, and past pupil of St. Benedict's College, San Fernando).

<sup>54</sup> Osborne, John. Personal interview. Oct. 17, 1991. (Deputy-Principal, Dean of Discipline, and Teacher at St.



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6. In fine anni 1839 priores monasterii contrahentes, id est Ordinarius Portus Hispanie et Vicarius Generalis Sancti Benedicti, hanc Conventionem renovare poterunt sine contrahente ad finem anni 1839.
7. Hanc Conventionem Prioratus Sancti Benedicti se obligat sicut scilicet ex hac Conventione ordinis generalis, subditis hanc, linguam Anglicam ore scriptoque hanc scilicet, Sanctus Ferdinandus mittere illique illos cusper retinere pro cura et ministerio parochiali.
8. Alter ex his Conventionibus Ordinarius a Superiore dicti Prioratus presentabitur et Ordinarius cum approbet et in dictis parochiis Sancti Ferdinandi parochias annexas instituat, alterque pariter et in vicariis ejusdem parochias Ordinarius instituat.
9. Archiepiscopus cum Ordinarius se obligat quadraginta sex scuta (dollars) annuatim Parochia tradere et triginta quatuor scuta et sexaginta sex scuta (cents) Vicario ejus quilibet anno annuo, - quando gubernium Civile Ecclesie hinc Catholice subsidium annuatim tradat. - et contra gubernium hinc vel subtraheret dictum subsidium vel dimineret, tunc Pastores et Fideles parochias Sancti Ferdinandi sub directione Ordinarii Provinciani Pastoralibus necessitatibus considerent vel omnino vel partim, prout autem ex parte gubernii Civili exigeret.
10. Quando Prioratus ordinis Sancti Benedicti poterit tertium Sacerdotem, - secundum legem civilem, in quantum fieri possit et quod primum, - hunc gradumque presbitum, qui in instructione Catholica a Directorum et Ordinarius nominatur pro parochia Sancti Ferdinandi et a gubernio acceptatur, hic cum illis duobus Patribus residebit et aut ab Ordinarius aut ex Scholis Internationales vel Superioris scriptibus triginta scuta annuatim recipiet.
11. Et scuta Superioris Sancti Benedicti quarta Partem ejusdem Ordinis aut pro ministerio parochiali aut pro juventute educanda in eadem parochia destinaret, Ordinarii scuta et triginta scuta item annuatim providere, vel ex Scholis sumptibus vel ex fundo ejusdem.
12. Ita ut propter scilicet jura, Consilia et Miscellanea stipendia quatuordecim scuta annuatim quadraginta scuta et sexaginta scuta annuatim exigerent.
13. Adhucque per scripta et ex quod hanc videlicet Ordinarius et Ordinis S. Benedicti



## APPENDIX 1

CONVENTIO Archidiecepsim Portus Hispaniae inter et Prioratum  
Ordinis Sancti Benedicti apud Montem S. Benedicti in Insula SSae  
Trinitatis inita.

1. haec Conventio fit respectu parochiae Sancti Ferdinandi in Insula SSae Trinitatis ut nunc dicta parochia constituitur et limitatur (Videsis, Folia Hebdomadalia "Catholic News" diei V Maii A.D. 1917).
2. Fit non solum pro parochiae profectu, modo communi accepto, sed etiam prout instructio primaria et superior animarum salutem praesertim autem puerorum promovet.
3. Fit ergo ut sub directione Patrum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti Christi Regnum extendatur in illa Parochia cura et operibus pastoralibus et scholasticis.
4. Conventio in omnibus et quibuslibet suis numeris subicitur Sanctae Sedis revisioni et approbationi per S. Congregationem de Propaganda Fide.
5. Fit per decem annos, scilicet a die 1 Januarii A.D. 1930 ad diem 31 Decembris A.D. 1939.
6. Initio anni 1939 partes praedictae contrahentes, id est Ordinarius Portus Hispaniae et Superior Prioratus Montis S. Benedicti, hanc Conventionem renovare poterunt pro aliis decem annis vel simpliciter "ad beneplacitum Sedis Apostolicae" aut terminare conventionem ad finem anni 1939.
7. hac Conventione Prioratus Montis S. Benedicti se obligat duos saltem ex suis monachis ordinis sacerdotalis, salutis bonae, linguam Anglicam ore scriptoque bene calantes, Sanctum Ferdinandum mittere ibique illos semper retinere pro cura et ministerio pastoralis.
8. Alter ex his sacerdotibus Ordinario a Superiore dicti Prioratus presentabitur ut Ordinarius eum approbet et in dictae parochiae Sancti Ferdinandi parochum amovibilem instituat, alterque pariter ut in Vicarium ejusdem parochiae Ordinarius instituat.
9. Archiepiscopus seu Ordinarius se obligat quadraginta sex scuta (dollars) menstrua Parcho tradere et triginta quatuor scuta et sexaginta sex asses (cents) Vicario ejus quolibet etiam mense, - quamdiu Gubernium Civile Ecclesiae hinc Catholicae subsidium annuum tradat. Si autem Gubernium nobis vel subtraheret dictum subsidium vel diminueret, tunc Pastores et Fideles parochiae Sancti Ferdinandi sub directione Ordinarii Dioecesis Pastorum necessitatibus consulere vel omnino vel partim, prout mutatio ex parte Gubernii Civili exigeret.
10. Quando Prioratus Ordinis Sancti Benedicti poterit tertium Sacerdotem, - secundum legem civilem, in quantum fieri possit et quam primum, - donis graduque praeditum, qui in Instructionis Catholicae Directorem ab Ordinario nominetur pro parochia Sancti Ferdinandi et a Gubernio acceptetur, hic cum aliis duobus Patribus residebit et aut ab Ordinario aut ex Scholae Intermediae vel Superioris sumptibus triginta scuta menstrua recipiet.
11. Si autem Superior Montis S. Benedicti quartum Patrem ejusdem Ordinis aut pro ministerio parochiali aut pro juventute educanda in eadem parochia destinarat, Ordinarii esset ei triginta scuta item menstrua providere, vel ex Scholae sumptibus vel ex fundo dioecesano.
12. Ita ut praeter solas jura, Cavalium et Missarum stipendia quatuor iidem Patres centum quadraginta scuta et sexaginta asses menstrua acciperent.
13. Edificia jam erecta et ea quae bonum videbitur Ordinario et Ordinis S. Benedicti



# APPENDIX 1

Patribus apud S. Ferdinandum degentibus - consulto O.S.B. Superiore seu Priore pro tempore - construere semper bona dioecesana remanebunt, una etiam cum suppellectile Ordinaria.

14. Ordinarii erit pecuniam aedificiis solidis et commodis in usum Scholae intermediae et augmentum Scholae Primariae puerorum necnon et Scholae Superioris puerorum destinatis providere ex parochialibus vel sumptis dioecesanis, dum Patres O.S.B. apud S. Ferdinandum laborantes illum zelo adjuvabunt in colligendis sumptibus necessariis.

15. Quae exerimtur quaestiones, difficultates, dubia, consilia - quum parochialia tum scholastica - a Patribus O.S.B. apud S. Ferdinandum degentibus et ab Ordinario recognitis primum discutuntur et si opus id fuerit Ordinario Dioecesano dein a Parocho submittuntur.

16. In omnibus quae parochialia vel scholastica respiciant Parochus coram Ordinario respondebit, cum omni animarum salutem sive directe sive indirecte in illa parochia parochus incumbat; sed ordinarius Sacerdotum aliorum duorum vel praesertim Directoris scholarum erit scholasticis rebus omnibus consulere.

17. Prior et Communitas Montis S. Benedicti consentiunt de Sacerdotibus Ordinis S. Benedicti rite praeparandis pro ministerio parochiali et scholastico implendo in eadem parochia quin iura vel Archidioecesi Portus Hispaniae ullam obligationem pecuniarium assumant.

18. Praeparatio haec quoad scholasticam complectetur - quamprimum et in quantum Patribus possibile erit - scientiam peritiamque Directoris scholarum ejusque adjutoris secundum leges civiles relate ad instructionem publicam ita ut Director vel uterque ad stipendia civilia scholastica jus habent eoque recipiat et scholae nostrae libenter ab Auctoritate civili et publicae admittantur.

19. Magistri laici item - quantum possibile sit - gradus scholasticos civiles ante obtulerint quam in scholis apud Sanctum Ferdinandum ut condutores admittantur ut sic etiam jus ad stipendia publica habeant; sed tamen in casibus interdum occurrentibus haec stipendia Director scholarum vel ex scholae sumptibus vel etiam ex parochiae aut fundis dioecesanis praevius debito licentia sumere poterit.

20. Directoris Scholarum erit: a) puerorum elencum accurate conficere, b) contributiones eorum inscribere, et c) Parocho quolibet trimestri libellos de his tractantibus legendos monstrare; quantum etiam expenderit A) pro schola vel scholis ipsis, B) in magistrorum stipendiis, c) in solvendo debito ejusque lucro ratione aedificiorum.

Datum in Porta Hispaniae, die festo Sanctae Rosae Limanae,  
XXX Sextilis A.D. 1929.

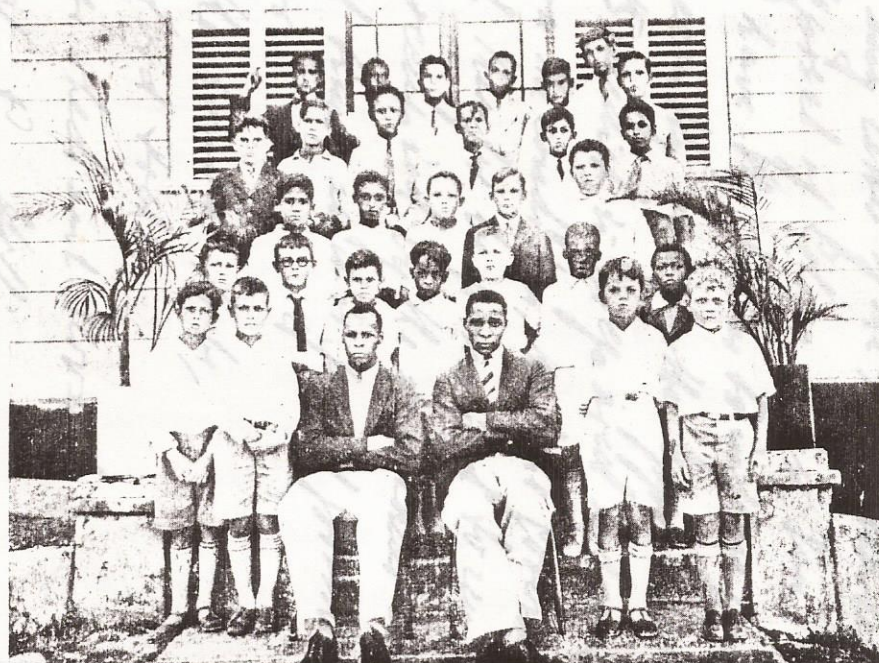
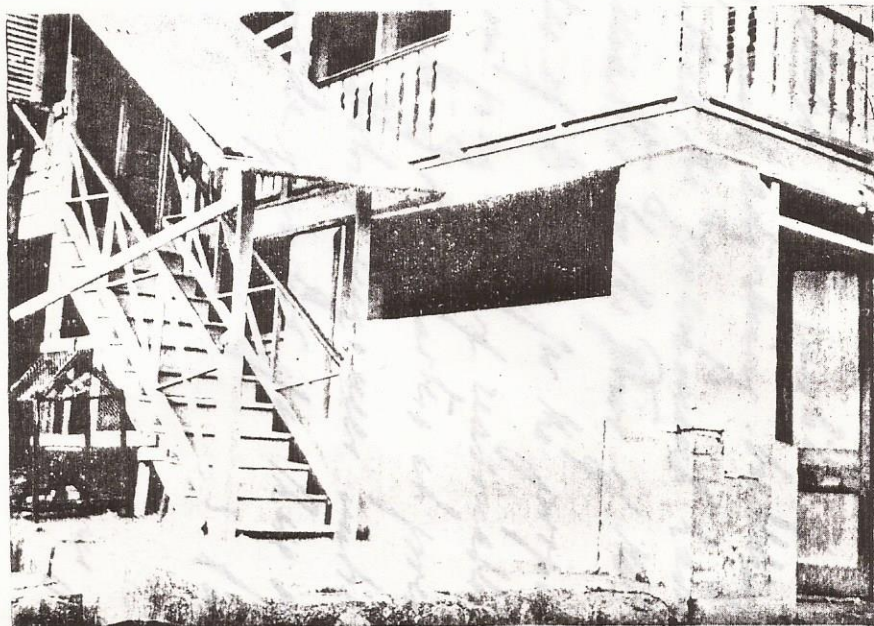
L. S.

Joannes Pius  
Archiepiscopus Portus Hispaniae

L. S.

D. Hugo v.d. Sanden O.S.B.  
Prior Conventualis





ST. BENEDICT'S COLLEGE 1930.



Ms 8358/1820

5<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1830

My dear Archbishop

With reference to my letter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 1830 relative to the position of the dispirited of Exeter House, Devon Sq. - roads, and adjoining buildings, I have the honor to inform you that the Government having recently been further empowered in the matter by the Statute of 1828, I would be happy to send an offer of £5000 for the property, on the condition, that the Government would, on my receipt of reasonable value therefor, be bound to remove or purchase of the gardens and ground occupied by the divisional Ex. - since & which they will not have, as it is found possible to provide quarters for these officers.

I have the honor to be,  
My dear Sir,  
Your friend and servant

J. E. Miller

Secretary

To Her Majesty  
The Lord High  
Treasurer  
of the Exchequer



APPENDIX 4

San Fernando,

29th Nov., 1930.

The Hon'ble

The Director of Education,

PORT-OF-SPAIN.

Sir,

We, the undersigned, beg to approach you with the object of applying for permission to establish a secondary school in the town of San Fernando, on the premises hitherto known as Colony House, under the title "St Benedict's High School."

The aim of this undertaking is to supply, on a larger scale, a need for higher education in the South of Trinidad.

The real need of greater facilities for secondary education in the South of Trinidad appears to be evident from the following reasons:-

1. There have been made, from time to time, urgent appeals to His Grace the Archbishop of Port-of-Spain on the part of the large Roman Catholic section of San Fernando, to provide for the establishment of a Catholic College in that Town, since it is a heavy financial strain on the parents to have to send their children to Port of Spain in order to get them educated in a secondary school under catholic direction.
2. There is, besides, a demand on the part of many other parents for another secondary School in the South of Trinidad, for, though the Mabaruma College is doing excellent work in the line of higher education, especially with regard to the middle forms, it is a recognised fact that this College does not sufficiently appeal to all sections of the Southern Borough.
3. It has been authoritatively stated that the leading

College

APPENDIX 4

Colleges of Port-of-Spain for boys are at present overcrowded. Now, this fact is due to some extent to the number of students who come from the Country districts, and, in particular, from the South, for want of sufficient educational opportunities outside of Port-of-Spain.

1. There is on <sup>the</sup> one hand, the acknowledged fact of the rapid increase of the population of the Southern Borough and the Southern districts, in recent years, whilst on the other hand, the craving for higher education is steadily growing all over the Island and there is no wonder that many persons prominent by their social rank and authority freely advocate and demand greater educational facilities for the Southern Borough and Country districts.

Such are the main reasons, Sir, which we beg to put forward to justify our application for permission to open a secondary School under Catholic management in San Fernando.

We are, Sir,

Your obedient servants,

(Signed)

For Sebastian Weber, R.B. P.P.  
 R. Wilfrid Brown, R.B. P.P.  
 P. J. Vidain, Mayor of St. John's  
 O. T. Cuzatou  
 L. E. de Verteuil  
 L. R. de Verteuil  
 P. A. Rostant, R.B. P.P.  
 J. T. de la Cruz, R.B. P.P.  
 Sydney P. Koon  
 William Koon



## OVERSEAS

### Subject

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
LOCAL EXAMINATIONS SYNDICATE  
SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, JULY 1934

DETAILED REPORT

**Needlework:** For candidates taking Needlework only in the subject Household.



## APPENDIX 5

	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Grand Total	f	f	f	f	a'	c												
Elementary Mathematics																		
Credit in Single Pages																		
Additional Information																		
Applied Mathematics																		
Geometry																		
Physics																		
Chemistry																		
Biology																		
Agriculture																		
Art I																		
Music																		
Bookkeeping																		
Shorthand																		
Handwriting																		
Course & Engineering Training																		
Electronics																		
Foodwork																		
Hygiene																		

W. Nelson Williams  
26 OCT 1954

26 OCT 1954

3. Satisfies the minimums required in Group III by the combination of Chemistry and Physics.



Father Prior and the Members of his Council respectfully beg to submit to Your Grace the following

**APPENDIX A & D U M re:**

*"Conventio Archidiecesim Portus Hispaniae inter et Prioratus  
conventus Sancti benedicti apud Montem Sancti Benedicti in  
Insula Sanctae Trinitatis inita."*

1. By virtue of the above mentioned "Conventio" the Parish of San Fernando was confided to the Benedictine Fathers of Mount St. Benedict Monastery in Trinidad on the express understanding that they should devote themselves especially to the primary, intermediate and secondary education of the Catholic youth of the district. (vide Conv. No. 2)  
For teaching purposes the Benedictines are to supply qualified Teachers; the expenses for the training of such Teachers are to be born entirely by the Benedictines - "quin Parochia vel Archidiecesis Portus hispaniae ultra obligationem pecuniarium assumat". - (No. 17.)
2. The conventio stipulates that the existing buildings and buildings to be constructed in the course of time shall remain for ever the property of the Archdiocese. (No. 15.)
3. In the opinion of the Council this last condition seems not altogether in keeping with Benedictine Tradition nor with the dignity of the Community as such. Throughout its history it was the common practice of the Benedictine Order to have schools attached to their Monasteries, but such schools were always the property of the Monastic Family there residing.
4. The Council have no objection that the Parish-Church, Prebtery and primary schools should remain the property of the Archdiocese, but they think that an exception might be made for the College.
5. The management of the College imposes on the Benedictines extra obligations, involving great sacrifices, financial and otherwise, and the Council is aware of its duty to safeguard the interests of the Community as much as possible in accordance with the traditions of the Order.
6. His Grace Sr. Juan, O.F.M. on more than one occasion has expressed the opinion that St. Benedict's College should be a truly Benedictine College, managed according to Benedictine principles and traditions, and that such ideal could be hardly realised unless there was a resident Community.
7. The younger members of the Community would no doubt be greatly encouraged to qualify for the teaching office if they felt they were to labour in a Benedictine College, realising that their efforts are of benefit to the Archdiocese and to the greater honour and glory of God: "ut sub directione Patrum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti Christi Regna extendatur." (No. 3.)

## APPENDIX 6

8. When the Benedictines took charge of San Fernando's Parish they found it necessary to put first of all school buildings in good order, realizing that "he who has the children has the future." To this end they contracted considerable debts. At present the Parish has to find money for the construction of a new school at Cipero, a Chapel at St. Eusebio and to start a Church Building Fund. The Fathers in charge find it difficult to meet all their obligations in due time, and it is hardly possible to reduce the debts by amortization.
9. The situation would be considerably ameliorated if the debts of the Parish were reduced by some 50% and this could be effected by handing over to the Benedictines the Colony House property, where the College is situated, together with the remaining debts on that property.
10. At present the College is a State-aided institution, and has on roll about 150 students.
11. It may be expected that the Benedictines expect a rather substantial gift from the part of the Archbishop, as the Colony House property was valued for the sum of £ 14,000.00 and the actual debt amounts to £ 7,000.00, and it should not be overlooked that the Benedictines, in accordance with No. 14 of the Constitutions, have laboured strenuously to reduce the Parochial debts to that extent, whilst they gratefully acknowledge His Grace's annual subsidy of £ 360.00.
12. Should on the other hand the Archbishop insist on the payment in full of the original cost of the Colony House property, this would tend to retard considerably the so much needed development of the College, which is of primary importance to the Catholic life of the Parish and of the district.
13. An objection which is raised from time to time against the Benedictines is that they are a foreign community. The Council, however, beg respectfully to point out, that whatever may be the Nationality of its individual members, the Community as such is an eminently Trinidadian Family, for by virtue of the vow of Stability the monks are attached for the rest of their natural life to the Monastery of their Profession and nothing short of a dispensation from the Holy See can make them change that Stability.



APPENDIX 6

11. In support of their petition the Council wish to mention in passing the many sacrifices made by the Community in favour of the Archdiocese during the 17 years of their establishment in Trinidad.

There are the main considerations which have prompted the members of the Council of Mount St. Benedict Monastery to submit the present "Memorandum" to Your Grace's kind attention.

Our Community has no other desire but to labour in - and for the Archdiocese of Port of Spain "ut Regnum Christi extendatur cura et operibus Pastoralibus, Scholasticis" atque Monasticis.

Wm. S. D. Warden OSB  
Prior

W. S. D. Hyatt OSB  
Secr. of the Council.

APPENDIX 7

TELEPHONE : 538.

ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE,  
PORT-OF-SPAIN,

December 12th, 1940.

Very Reverend dear Father Prior,

With reference to the Memorandum concerning Saint Benedict's College which you submitted to His Grace the late Archbishop last January, and to me in July, I have to say that I do not think it prudent to make any change in the status quo during the present disturbed state of affairs.

It may well be that any change in regard to the Conventio between the Benedictine Fathers and the Archdiocese will form part of wider ecclesiastical changes after the war. At present communication with the Holy See, moreover, is practically impossible, and an alienation of such a substantial part of the Archiepiscopal property could not be effected without formal permission from Rome.

With every good wish,

*Sincerely yours,*  
*Timon Ryan,*

Archbishop of Port of Spain.

The Very Reverend Hugo van Sanden, O.S.B.,  
Prior,  
Mount Saint Benedict, Tunapuna.





## APPENDIX 8

## St. Benedict's College,

San Fernando,

Trinidad, B. W. I.

St. Benedict's College, B. W. I. 1941

...the House.  
...I would like to submit to you a general  
scheme for the College. It is to be a Benedictine school,  
a ideal Benedictine complete Boarding-school. This, however,  
is impossible. Still something of that B.P. atmosphere has to be  
brought in, if we want to preserve the specific Benedictine spirit.  
The three factors necessary in education are: the home, the school,  
and the Church, these three factors have to be found in the school.  
I propose to stop making a distinction between the College as such  
and the Boarding-house. There ought to be only one name: St. Benedict's  
College. In that College some boys are Boarders, others are not.  
The name Boarding-house has to be abolished forthwith.  
The boys will be divided into 4 Houses of 50 boys each.  
One of the staff will be appointed House-master in each House.  
He will be assisted by a House-Supervisor (a boy) and 2 Prefects (boys).  
These Houses will be named after the patronage of a saint. The first four,  
I think, should be: St. Bede, St. Furber, St. Gregory, St. Augustine.  
Each House will call separately in the morning for prayers,  
a prayer to their patron saint will be used (the same in the afternoon).  
All activities will be done according to Houses, vocalities,  
sports, clubs etc. The idea is to keep the boys around us for  
the better part of the day; by having a Housemaster with them,  
who takes a keen interest in them, they will learn to regard





## St. Benedict's College,

San Fernando,

Trinidad, B. W. I.

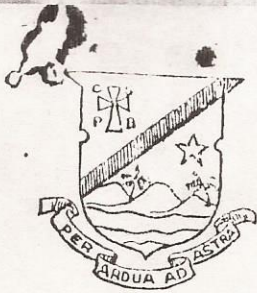
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their school as a second home; by making the atmosphere  
 so to Catholic, in the style of that admirable prayer-book  
 "Lord God", they will take it in, without having it forced down  
 their throats, as so often happens. I want these houses to have a  
 definite home-air. Now the most important thing is co-operation.  
 1) From the staff: 2) From the boys. No 2 is safe, that part  
 is A! Can be still improved, of course, but after 2 years working on  
 it, I have seen that they are willing.

To I: Some of the staff will have to learn, that their task as  
 teachers in a Benedictine school, does not stop at lessons.  
 But here also, the spirit is present. I can lay hands on 4 members  
 of the staff, actually, who are willing to do anything for the boys.  
 And you, please, for the sake of them, who want to be funny, the  
 boys know it, and consent it, if any one of these four is attacked.  
 The others will have to join in. I hope, that you agree to that.  
 This system will produce a healthy, keen rivalry; the boys will  
 learn to be proud of their House, try to make it the best in the  
 Cleveland sense, the general spirit will go up: ad astra.

I am quite prepared to look after the "ardua", together with  
 those, who have loyally assisted me since I became Headmaster.  
 I would be very ungrateful, if I didn't mention their names:  
 Mr. Arango, the Dean of Studies; Mr. Bertrand, the house master,





# St. Benedict's College,

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Mrs Wall, the Matron and Mr Leacock, the Prep. Master, but he is a product entirely of last year's Puffels system, so to him it came naturally.

Old Boy. From January I will start the Union. There will be a specific Catholic Union; members: 1941 Seniors, who have been killed in the last 4 months in tactics of Modern Warfare, from point of view of Catholic religion. The beginning will be small, a cell, and I hope to produce a powerful brigade of shock-troops in the Church. Further information about rules, aims etc. will be subjected for your approval in January. What we want to know, right now, is, will you be our Leader, not in name only, you know, what I mean, Honorable Patronage etc, but our real Leader. The boys are keen, now, and we wish to prevent the usual thing of letting them fall away.

Advertisement. Now that our hopes have been fulfilled and the new building can be opened soon, we should start advertising in and outside Trinidad as a Boarding-school. I write from you to the Bishops of West-Indian dioceses; advertisements in papers etc. Catholic boys in a Catholic Boarding-school should help us to tackle the Ridge School, a hot-bed of bigotry, I do not like at all.