

Diocesan Seminary To Be Transferred To Larger Premises

New Building in Pokfulam Planned

More Effective Means to Promote Vocations to The Diocesan Clergy

HIS Lordship Bishop Lawrence Bianchi has decided to transfer the Diocesan Minor Seminary which is at present situated in Saikung in the New Territories to Hong Kong Island as soon as new buildings can be completed. Meanwhile plans have been drawn up for a new Minor Seminary in Taikoulo in the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes overlooking Pokfulam Road and Telegraph Bay.

Thanks to the co-operation of the Paris Foreign Mission Society a suitable plot of land has been made available for the erection of the new seminary and the construction is expected to start soon. The architect is Mr. N. J. Chien, who designed St. Francis of Assisi's Church in Kowloon. He has drawn up a plan for the new seminary building which is both functional and pleasant.

The new seminary will be a three-storey building and will eventually provide accommodation for a hundred seminarians. It will consist of a main building housing the chapel, study and recreation rooms and two wings containing six classrooms and the residential section. Besides a covered playground there will also be an outdoor sports field.

Insufficient Facilities

Although the Diocesan Holy Ghost Seminary in Saikung has at present only 35 seminarians the facilities have become insufficient. There is particularly a lack of classrooms and Bishop Bianchi hopes that both students and faculty will benefit from a transfer of the seminary to more spacious and suitable premises.

In announcing his decision Bishop Bianchi also dwelt on the necessity that vocations to the diocesan clergy should keep pace with the growth of the Church in Hong Kong. He pointed out that the gain in the Catholic population of Hong Kong was 70,000 souls since the end of the war, but that during the same period only nine priests were ordained for service in the diocese.

"Too Young"

Many priests are lost to the Church each year because boys are persuaded to put off entering a seminary by all sorts of well meant but false advice. They are often told that "14-year-olds are 'too young'", "they don't know what they are doing" and that "a good home is better than a minor seminary." Another fallacy is the advice that if a boy has a vocation he can't lose it and that he should therefore "try to enjoy life first."

School Curriculum

Usually a boy enters a minor seminary at the age of about fourteen, although the Holy Ghost Seminary in Saikung accepts also older boys who come from colleges and have to complete their Latin, Chinese literature and their Scripture studies.

A boy who has completed his primary education will study at the minor seminary for six years during which time he completes the junior and senior middle school education as well as Latin and other specialised courses which prepare him for the major seminary. With the exception of such specialized training the seminary curriculum is the same as that of other schools in the Colony and the text books used are those approved by the Colony's Education Department. The Minor Seminary is also

to be representatives of Christ.

Becoming a priest is not so much giving up everything as it is receiving everything. They will daily offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass which is a privilege that is given not even to the angels. By the power of Christ they will absolve sinners, instruct others in the faith, anoint the dying and help them to reach heaven.

Vocation Promotion

The plans of Bishop Bianchi, for a more effective programme

FUTURE PRIESTS' TRAINING CENTRE



View of the New Minor Seminary planned for Hong Kong.

regularly inspected by officers of the Education Department.

When a boy passes successfully through the Holy Ghost Seminary he then enters the Regional Major Seminary of Our Lady Queen of China in Aberdeen, Hong Kong. There his studies will consist of three years of Philosophy and four years of Theology. He will hear lectures on many other subjects which prepare him for the priesthood. All during these years of their training the young seminarians are working towards the highest goal that a human being can ever attempt. Their vocation is

the highest as they are going to promote vocations to the diocesan clergy include vocational talks in parishes and centres, convocations, school-retreats and publicity in the Catholic press. Personal, individual direction by the priest, Sister or religious Brother is likewise a most effective means of promoting vocations to the priesthood.

Seminarians are Effective Aids

It must also be the aim of the vocation programme especially in the parishes, Bishop Bianchi

stated, to make the home "vocation-conscious", for the parents sometimes prove the greatest obstacle to a youngster's religious aspiration.

As the new Minor Seminary in Hong Kong will be easily accessible to parents and their boys, they themselves will be able to get acquainted with the life in a seminary — and the young seminarian who is going to be a priest is by the very fact of the joy and happiness that he radiates the most effective aid in a programme promoting vocations.