

HISTORY

Foundation of the Congregation in Habana-Cuba

*"Havana lacks a History (...)
the oldest ones invent another story,
a lie, as it should be (...)
between Havana-that-does-not-exist
and Havana-a-paradise-lost."*

Abilio Estévez

Two religious (Vicente Urquía and Esteban Mariezcurrena), who founded the first house of the Province of San Pedro in America, were also the founders of the second in another Spanish-speaking nation, Cuba, an island state of Central America, in the group of the Greater Antilles. The foundation took place in Havana, the capital city and port in the northwest of the Island, comprising a population of one and a half million inhabitants.

FIRST SUPERIOR

The first superior of this house was Father Martín Garmendía, who left Spain with his first collaborators and brothers of the community: Fathers Segundo Urquía, Casimiro Egües, Martín Gorostidi, Manuel Oyarbide, Julio Sampedro and Ignacio María Eguibar. It has to be acknowledged that the foundation was built in very precarious conditions, since these founders did not even have a house. Yes, there was a simple chapel, quite large, called "Our Lady of Charity of Cobre", the patron of Cuba, in a quite extensive neighborhood at the outskirts of the city. Ecclesiastically, this chapel depended on the parish of Calabazar. The first founders lodged in a house whose owners were of Spanish descent.

FIRST EFFORTS

The first efforts of the founders were dedicated to obtaining resources to build the house on the property attached to the chapel owned by the Archdiocese. The work carried out in this regard by both Fr. Garmendía and Br Vicente was immense and selfless, until the work was completed: A beautiful house, next to the chapel, on the Bejucal road. The new house could later welcome the religious who arrived from Spain and who did extraordinary work as will be seen later.

CHAPLAINS

From the beginning, the community led by Father Martín Garmendía, assumed the religious care of various institutions. Father Manuel Oyarbide took care of the chaplaincy of a psychiatric hospital run by the Brothers of St John of God; Fr Martín Gorostidi, organist at "Jesús de Miramar" of the Capuchin Fathers, and also chaplain of a women's educational institution under the charge of the Vincentian nuns-Daughters of Charity in the old part of the city; Fr Segundo Urquía, treasurer of the house, looked after the Chaplaincy of the University of La Salle administered by the Brothers of Saint John Baptist de la Salle; Fr Ignacio María Eguibar was chaplain of the Champagnat College of the Marist Brothers.

Some other small chaplaincy work was carried out and the worship in the chapel itself "Our Lady of Charity of Cobre." Good pastoral work was done in all the institutions, which was economically remunerated in a satisfactory way, which made it possible to advance the work of the construction of the house and partially help the economy of the Province.

To be continued...

FATHER GREGORIO URQUIOLA, SSS

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Anniversaries of Ordination and Profession in November 2021

08.11.1996	Fr. Thomas SMITHSON	HOUSTON, U.S.A.	Profession 25
26.11.1961	Fr. Santos BERASATEGI ARAMBURU	TOLOSA, Spain	Ordination 60