



# PARDO

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El Pardo was once a town formed through the merger of Bulacao, Inayawan, and Basak by decree of the Governor General on March 10, 1863. Today it is a barangay in Cebu City known by its official name Poblacion Pardo and is bounded by Brgys. Bulacao, Kinasang-an, and Cogon Pardo.

As a parish, El Pardo or just plain Pardo, traces its history as a visita of San Nicolás, separated as an independent parish on April 10, 1866 with Fray Meliton Talegon as the first parish priest (Yap et al 1981, p. 96). The parish honors Sto. Tomás de Villanueva as its patron saint. A bell inscribed with the words “SE HIZO ESTA CAMP. EL AÑO 1810, Siendo Mntro de Este Pueblo d. S. Nicolas Fr. Manuel Cordero,” is Pardo’s link with its mother parish.

Construction of the present-day church to replace a previous one made of light materials was started by Fray Manuel Ybeas, who was parish priest from 1873 to 1893. The church was designed by Domingo de Escondrillas, a Spanish engineer-architect in Cebu who also designed several other edifices. The plan of the church is in the Latin-Byzantine Order as the architect noted that there was no other church in the towns of the district with such a design.

The church fabric is made of finely-cut coral stones covering walls of thick coral rubble mixed with lime mortar and evinces a fortress-like façade. A single towering belfry integrated with the façade at the middle pierces the sky and dominates the skyline of this former town. Entrance to the church is through an arched portico. The symbol of the Order of St. Augustine is emblazoned in low-relief right above the portico. Horizontal lines divide the façade into several horizontal segments. Two large cylindrical structures, which end up above in a domed parapet-like space, flank both sides of the façade. Entrance to this parapet-like



*El Pardo. It was erected into a parish by the Diocese separating it from the town of San Nicolas, on April 10, 1866 with approval from the superiors; it has the name of Sto. Tomas de Villanueva.*

*The Church which actually is served with a cannon, is made of columns subjected with fabric (of stone) up to the middle of its height, and the rest of tabique pampang, roofed with nipa; it is 59.50 meters long, 12.60 wide and 8 tall. It has another new church under construction of mamposteria, with two towers and portico in the frontispiece, spacious and of strong walls, almost to the point of being finished.*

*Cemetery: It is an enclosure of sorosoro; but it has already begun working on the fence of mamposteria.*

*Parish Convent: The basement is of mamposteria and the rest of wood and tabique pampang; this building is connected to the church, and it is roofed with nipa.*

*Barrios: It has Inayawan to the south and Bujisan about ½ hour; Taob about ½ and Guilaguila about 2; it is situated about ½ hour from the sea on the southern coast of the island. Its distance from Cebu to the northeast is about 1 league; to the south, Talisay, about 1 league; and to the southwest, Minglanilla, about 1 ½ league.*

*Felipe Redondo, 1886, pp. 140-151.*



The interiors of the church have been modernized although there are still a number of elements that are part of the original. There are five altar reredos, including the one at the main altar, with each reredo containing an image of a particular devotion. The main altar reredo, with a ciborium or canopy, contains an image of Sto. Tomás de Villanueva as amidst four panels painted with religious images.

The nearby rectory, though quite modern in look from the outside, still retains some of its original form in the interiors.

space is through a small portal at the access leading to the top of the belfry. The topmost part of the belfry itself is a balustered balcony offering breathtaking views of the city and beyond.

It is a bipartite structure of stone and wood. A spacious lobby and receiving area at the second level is embellished with painted ceilings, carved decorative screens, among others.