

The Evangelization of the Philippines and the Formative Years of the Archdiocese of Manila (1565-1700)

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The Philippines is the only Christian nation in Asia and the Filipino people take extreme pride in this fact. The joyous and tumultuous welcome of Pope John Paul II last January 1995 by perhaps as many as four million people in Manila is a clear sign of this.

Many people, however, do not know how this Christianization of the Philippines came about. Fifty years after Legazpi and Urdaneta arrived in 1565 the main task of Christianization had been accomplished. How was this achieved? What were the reasons for this rapid diffusion of Christianity among the inhabitants of the Philippine Islands? Who were the people responsible for this unique fact? Why did the Filipino respond easily to the call of the Gospel? Is Christianity the effect of the Cross or of the Sword? Did Christianity come to the shores of the Philippines as a call to salvation or as a cultural imposition from a Western nation?

In 1965 the Church and the whole nation celebrated the IV Centennial of the arrival of Christianity in the Philippines. Magellan's coming to the Philippines and the baptism of Humabon in 1521 are significant for Christianity. His coming was extremely important for other reasons which do not belong to this place to study. Magellan's preaching cannot be taken as the beginning of the Christianization of the Philippines.

The establishment of the diocese of Manila and the appointment of Domingo de Salazar, O.P. as the first bishop in 1579 is also another pivotal event in Philippine ecclesiastical and civil history. The IV

Centennial of the diocese in 1979 was joyfully celebrated by the whole nation, and more specially, by the Archdiocese of Manila.

On August 14, 1594, Pope Clement VIII with the bull "*Super Specula Militantis Ecclesiae*" elevated Manila to a metropolitan see and created three other suffragan dioceses, dismembered from her, to wit: Nueva Segovia (Lallo), Cáceres (Naga) and Santísimo Nombre de Jesús (Cebu). This very year 1995 commemorates the IV Centennial of that memorable event. The event happened far away in time, no less than four hundred years ago, but its importance cannot be minimized. Pastorally and spiritually speaking the recalling of the event should enkindle in the faithful the fire of Jesus' love. It should be a bell calling them to action, to respond to the challenges of the times. Are we ready to enter the Third Millennium of Christianity with arms folded? Pope John Paul II's visit last January 1995, and his constant call for a New Evangelization, could be the best means to bring the Church in the Philippines beyond the threshold of the year 2000.

In this article of mine I shall try to present a brief history of the initial evangelization of the Philippines and a study of the formative years of the Archdiocese of Manila up to 1700. The year 1700 is purely functional, not chronological.

Since history does not happen in a vacuum, I shall give a very brief description of the social, political and religious state of the Philippines at the time of the Spanish Contact. That will bring us already into the main part of the study.

My work does not presume to be an exhaustive one. It is my wish that the celebration of the IV Centennial of the Archdiocese of Manila should spur students and scholars to return to the sources and move some of them to write the history of the Evangelization of the Philippines.

A. THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippines at the Time of the Spanish Arrival

At the time of the Spanish arrival the Philippines was a fragmented nation. There was no social, political, cultural, linguistic and religious unity. The most basic unit of government was the *barangay*. It was a unit of government based on kinship and blood relationship.

Within the *barangay* there were different social classes. At the apex of the ladder stood the *datus* or chieftains. The Spaniards called them *reyezuelos* or kinglets. Immediately under them we find the *maharlika* or nobles. In a lower scale the *timawas* or freemen.

This is a division offered by historians. My study of Philippine history has convinced me that *maharlika* and *timawa* are two distinct names for the same social reality. *Maharlika* is the name given by the Tagalog people; *timawa* is the name given by the people of the Visayas.

In the lowest scale we find the *alipin* of the Tagalog people.¹ The Spaniards called them slaves. Some historians know them as the dependency class. This last class was subdivided into two distinct classes: the *aliping namamahay* or servant class and the *aliping saguigilir*, or slave class properly speaking. The last class were chattel slaves.²

Spain did not find in the Philippines a central government. There were neither kings nor princes. Precisely the political fragmentation of the country facilitated greatly the conquest of the Archipelago.

In spite of the great political, social, cultural, linguistic and religious fragmentation, there were some common trends found everywhere in the country.

The people of early Philippines believed in the existence of a supreme god, called *Bathala* by the Tagalogs, *Laon* by the Bisayans, a name that denotes antiquity, and *Cabunian* by the Ilocanos and the people of Cordillera Central.

Bathala was the great god, creator of heaven and earth, legislator, judge of the living and the dead. He lived in a place called *langit* (heaven), but people knew little as to the nature of that place. *Bathala*

¹ Loarca, referring to the people of Pintados or Visayan Islands, mentions three types of slaves, to wit: (1) *tumataban*; (2) *tumaranpuc* and (3) *ayuey*. Cfr. *Relación de las Islas Filipinas*, 1582 in E.H. BLAIR and J.A. ROBERTSON, *The Philippines Islands*, 1493-1898, 55 vol., 1905-1909, 5, 143-144. Herein after BRPI.

² Cfr. JUAN DE PLASENCIA, OFM, *Costumbres de los Tagalos*, in FRANCISCO DE SANTA INES, OFM, *Crónica de la Provincia de San Gregorio Magno de religiosos descalzos de N.S.P. San Francisco en las Islas Filipinas, China, Japón, etc.*, 2 vols., Manila, 1892, II, 292-603. (Original edition 1676). BRPI, 7, 173-185. Cfr. L. JOCANO, *The Philippines at the Spanish Contact*, Manila, 1975, 8-15.

was so infinite and powerful that mortal people could not address their prayers to him. He was not a provident god. The great *Bathala* lived in his world, in isolation and without any concern for the people. Like the ancient Jews, the early Filipinos did not dare pronounce his name. If ever they did it was with tremendous fear and a sense of reverence and awe.³

In view of this the early Filipinos did not address their prayers to the *Bathala*. The Filipino Olympus was filled with many secondary gods and deities. The belief in spirits called *anitos* by the Tagalogs and *diwatas* by the Bisayans was universal. This belief influenced radically their lives. The *anitos* were the intermediaries between the great *Bathala* and the people.

Like the ancient Egyptians and Babylonians, the early Filipinos worshipped the forces of nature. They divinized the sun, the moon and stars. The sea, the earth, the mountains and rivers, the lakes and forests, and some trees like the bamboo and balete.

They crafted images in honor of these *anitos*. The first missionaries found them by the thousands, some made of metal, but most often of stones and wood. These images in turn were called *anitos*.

It is at the level of the existence of the *anitos* and other minor deities where the battle between Christianity and paganism took place in the Philippines.

At the beginning of the evangelization the missionaries discussed about the existence of temples in the Philippines. The matter was solved by Plasencia. In his *Relation of the Worship of the Tagalogs* he said that no temples were found anywhere in the Philippines. The explanation is found in the fact that worship was done to the spirits of nature. This worship was done anywhere it was felt the spirit resided. There was a kind of impermanence in everything they built. The worship was done now in the river, now in the mountain. Now it was done along the shoreline, now in the thicket of the forest.

The missionaries and early Spaniards did not destroy the temples. They did not set them on fire. Let us quote Plasencia, who made

³ Cfr. MIGUEL DE LOARCA, *Relación de las Islas Filipinas*, in BRPI, 5, 171-175.

a great effort to study the religious customs of the people and who personally interviewed some of the oldest and wisest people:

In all the villages, or in other parts of the Filipinas Islands, there are no temples consecrated to the performing of sacrifices, the adoration of their idols, or the general practices of idolatry. It is true that they have the name *simbahan*, which means temple or place of adoration; but this is because, formerly, when they wished to celebrate a festival, which they called *pandot*, or "worship," they celebrated it in the large house of the chief. There they constructed for the purpose of sheltering the assembled people, a temporary shed on each side of the house, with a roof, called *sibi*, to protect the people from the wet when it rained... On the post of the house they set small lamps, called *sorihile*; in the center of the house they placed one large lamp, adorned with leaves of the white palm, wrought into many designs. They also brought together many grains, large and small, which they beat successively while the feast lasted, which was usually four days. During this time the whole barangay, or family, united and joined in the worship they call *nagaanitos*. The house, for the above-mentioned period of time, was called a temple.⁴

Although they did not have temples where to adore their deities they did have a priestly class. They were generally women called *catalonans* by the Tagalogs and *baylans* or *Babaylans* by the Bisayans. There were very few male priests. In the view of the Jesuit historian and anthropologist Alcina, who had known some of these priests in the Visayas during his stay of over 40 years in the XVII century, they were travesties. The priestesses exercised their ministry, to use a Christian term, for a limited period of time, or simply when they were called to.

The early Filipinos lacked a code like the Bible or the Koran. They prayed when they had a need. There were no times or seasons pre-established to worship the deities. There was no religious calendar fixed in advance. All was left to the need of people and to the whims of the *anitos*.

The first Filipinos offered sacrifices to their gods in the form of animals, mainly goats and chicken. Their religion shocked the first missionaries who came into contact with them, but they were not as horrified as they were with the sanguinary and bloody sacrifices of the Aztecs of Mexico. In the Philippines, unlike in Mexico, the gods did not

⁴ *Relation of the Worship of the Tagalogs* BRPI, 7, 185-186.

demand human blood. In the Philippines there were no human sacrifices. The Dominicans of Isabela and Nueva Viscaya tell us that occasionally the natives had offered human sacrifices to the gods. But this must have been very rare and in isolated places. With the coming of the Gospel we do not hear of it any more.

At the beginning of the Christianization of the Philippines the missionaries found a rich and complex religious map. There was a mosaic of religious practices. The pagan gods could not resist the power of the Christian God. To become a Christian meant to go to the sources of salvation, to accept Christ as Saviour. It also meant to become free from human misery and spiritual oppression. The primitive religion could not resist the call of the Gospel. One of the reasons why the first Filipinos embraced joyfully the Christian religion was because they saw in it their full spiritual liberation.

Conquest and Colonization of the Philippines

The discovery of the Philippines by Magellan is one of the great events of the world history. Magellan and his crew sighted the coast of Samar and other islands on Saturday, March 16, 1521. They called them the *Archipiélago de San Lázaro*, not because it was discovered on the feast of Saint Lazarus but because that Saturday, the eve of Passion Sunday, the Gospel of the Resurrection of Lazarus was read, according to the Mass Liturgy before Vatican II.

A new archipelago had been discovered. Magellan, a man of the Iberian peninsula, a man of XVIth century Spain, a man sent to discover and conquer the Spice Islands, became a missionary in an unknown land. Fr. Pedro Valderama, a secular priest, celebrated the first mass on Philippine soil, on March 31, 1521, Easter Sunday. On April 7 the Spaniards entered Cebu. One week later, April 14, Sunday, a most curious ceremony took place: the baptism of the kinglet of Cebu, Humabon, who received the name *Carlos* in honor of Carlos I, king of Spain (better known in history as Emperor Charles V). Humabon's wife received the name of *Juana*, in honor of the queen-mother Juana of Spain, the *Juana la Loca* of Spanish history. Together with them around eight hundred people were baptized.⁵

⁵ Cfr. ANTONIO PIGAFETTA, *First Voyage Around the World*, Filipiniana Book Guild, Manila, 1969, 39-40.

We are all familiar with this story. With no catechesis, with no knowledge of the Christian religion, everything tumbled down soon after, together with the cross erected by the Spaniards, after Magellan's death on the shore of Mactan on April 27, 1921.

The conquest, colonization and evangelization of the Philippines started in earnest with Miguel L. de Legazpi and the Augustinians. They entered Cebu on April 27, 1565. There a Spanish soldier, called Juan Camus, found the image of the *Santo Niño*, the same Magellan had given to queen Juana, wife of Humabon. A formal act of its finding was taken. Soon a church was built to honor the *Santo Niño*.

In 1571 Legazpi conquered Manila and made it the capital of the new Spanish colony. Manila was given a royal character on June 24 of the same year. From now on it was to be known as the *Muy Noble y Siempre Leal Ciudad de Manila*.

In 1572 Legazpi wrote to the king: "It is a magnificent place if your majesty wants to remain in the East. We are near Japan, China, the Moluccas and Borneo. The harbors are excellent, there is plenty of wood and materials for ships. The people are good, of good character and easy to be converted."⁶

Unfortunately Legazpi died soon and suddenly on August 20, 1572. He died poor but well loved.

E.G. Bourne, an American historian of the beginning of this century, wrote about him:

The work of Legazpi during the next seven years entitles him to a place among the greatest of colonial pioneers. In fact he has no rival. Starting with four ships and four hundred men, accompanied by five Augustinians monks, reinforced in 1567 by two hundred soldiers, and from time to time by similar small contingents of troops and monks, by a combination of tact, resourcefulness and courage he won over the natives, repelled the Portuguese and laid such foundations that the changes of the next thirty years constitute one of the most surprising revolutions in the annals of colonization.⁷

⁶ *Colección de documentos inéditos de Ultramar* (CIU), Segunda Serie, III, Madrid, 1887, 100.

⁷ Introduction to BRPH, I, 32-33

The project of Philip II and of Spain in the Philippines took basic inspiration in Francisco de Vitoria's *Relectiones de Indis*. When we read the *Instructions*⁸ of Philip II to Legazpi we seem to be reading Vitoria's *Relectiones*. Phelan, an American historian and an expert on the matter, wrote:

Fillip II's project of a peaceful occupation of the Philippines was an outgrowth of that Dominican-led movement whose outstanding spokesmen were Victoria [sic] and Las Casas. The Dominicans sought to outlaw bellicose methods. In this task they found in the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas a veritable arsenal of arguments...

The adoption by the Spanish court of the Dominican-inspired ideal of pacification coincided with the founding of the Philippine colony.⁹

Fillip II found in Legazpi the right man for a peaceful conquest of the Philippines. Legazpi is the Pacifier and Creator of the Philippines. Phelan writes again:

The initial phase of the conquest under the leadership of Legazpi... was not executed without some bloodshed. Neither can it be called sanguinary. Legazpi's achievement may not be as spectacular as Cortes' or Pizarro's, but it was a remarkable accomplishment. To the conqueror of the Philippines must be given the credit in large measure for realizing substantially but not completely Fillip II's ideal of a pacific occupation."¹⁰

The conquest of the Philippines is due fundamentally to the cross of the missionary not to the sword of the conquistador. Spain's military presence in the Philippines during the 333 years of her stay was insignificant. That is why a viceroy of Mexico could write soon after the conquest of the Philippines:

In every friar the king of Spain had in the Philippines a captain general and an entire army.¹¹

⁸ Cfr. *Instructions of Philip II to M.L. de Legazpi*, BRPI, Vol. 34, pp. 249-254

⁹ J. L. PHELAN, *The Hispanization of the Philippines. Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses, 1565-1700*. The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1959, 9.

¹⁰ Ibidem, p.10.

¹¹ Cfr. E.G. BOURNE, Ibidem, 42.

What the enemies of the presence of Spain in the Philippines never obtained was that the Spanish Crown would accept their suggestions, the abandonment of the country. The missionaries and their procurators in Spain, with apocalyptic and prophetic language, rebuked the king for even entertaining the thought. To leave the Philippines would be treason to God and to history. What would the enemies of Spain and the Gospel say, that because in the Philippines there was neither gold nor silver, like in Mexico and Peru, the Spaniards had abandoned the land? That idea was absolutely repellent to the missionaries. The Filipinos would abandon the Christian religion. The Dutch, or even perhaps the Chinese, or the Japanese, would conquer them. As a missionary told the king: the Philippines must remain as an arsenal of faith and an unfathomable deposit of Christianity in the East. The Philippines were maintained, especially during the first two hundred years for exclusively religious purposes, in spite of the great economic bleeding it meant to Spain and to the Viceroyalty of Mexico.

The Augustinians: Pioneers of the Christianization of the Philippines.

The first friars to come to the Philippines in 1565 were the Augustinians, in the expedition led by Legazpi. Since the technical advisor of the expedition was Andrés de Urdaneta, a former mariner and soldier, probably the king decided to send a group of Augustinians to accompany the expedition. Five of them left Mexico on November of 1564, to wit: Andrés de Urdaneta, as superior of the mission, Andrés de Aguirre, Martin de Rada, Diego de Herrera and Pedro de Gamboa. In the opinion of Pablo Fernández, they were highly apostolic men.¹²

We are face to face with giants of the mind and the spirit. The friars who came to the Philippines during the first one hundred years were men of high learning and of proven virtue. Most of them had passed through the halls of the best universities in Spain and Europe, especially Paris, Salamanca and Alcalá. Some of them, like Urdaneta, were mariners and cosmographers. Others, like Martin de Rada, mathematicians and astronomers. Most of them were theologians, men of the Renaissance, masters of the best knowledge of the age.

¹² Cfr. P. FERNANDEZ, *History of the Church in the Philippines: 1521-1898*, Manila, 1979, 19.

They were, above all, zealous and apostolic men, a product of a reformed Spanish Church well before the appearance of Protestantism in Europe. They were men of the Catholic Reformation. Most of them had been greatly influenced by the reformistic zeal of Trent. They were dreamers of new kingdoms for God, convinced of being messengers of an unequalled message: God's salvific message. They were ambassadors of Christ. Some of them were seized by messianic and millennial hopes.¹³

Many of those who came to the Philippines had been missionaries in Mexico. The first bishop of the Philippines, Domingo de Salazar, had spent 23 years in Mexico and Florida. These people knew much about missionary methodology. In the Philippines there was no need to improvise. The methods had been tested for years in Mexico.

The Augustinians who came with Legazpi in 1565 settled first in Cebu. There they constructed a small church and convent in honor of the *Santo Niño*. Cebu became the cradle of Christianity in the Philippines.

The Augustinians did not rush to baptize people. They let some years pass before accepting people to baptism. This was not due to lack of zeal. Rather, they had learned from the sad experience of the apostasy of Humabon and the Cebuanos during the time of Magellan. But as missionaries they could not wait for long.

One of the main reasons for the Augustinians not to rush in accepting Filipinos to baptism was the fact that they were not sure whether Spain would remain in the Philippines. They thought the king would order them to go to China, Japan and other kingdoms. As soon as they came to know of the king's decision to stay in the Philippines, Legazpi moved to Manila, which became the center of Spanish colonizing and evangelizing efforts.

Legazpi donated a piece of land to the Augustinians, where they built the monastery of San Pablo, better known in history as *San Agustín de Manila*. It became the center of their missionary expansion. From here the Augustinians, few as they were, spread to the other provinces of the Philippines. With new 'missions' they soon tried to go

¹³ Cfr. J. L. PHELAN, "Some Ideological Aspects of the Conquest of the Philippines", *The Americas* XIII, January, 1957, 221-239.

beyond. They were the only missionaries up to 1578, when the Franciscans arrived. By that time they had baptized a good number of Filipinos. The Augustinians had established themselves in Pampanga, Cagayan, Laguna, Batangas, Cebu, Panay and Manila. They had 16 convents and 18 towns for 46 missionaries.¹⁴

A very transcendental event in the history of the evangelization of the Philippines is the division of the country into spheres of missionary influence in 1554. The division was based on geoethnic, cultural and linguistic reasons. The Augustinians were given missions in the Tagalog region. The whole region of Ilocos was theirs, plus the provinces of Pampanga and Batangas. In the Visayas Islands, they had Cebu, Panay and some smaller ones. The Augustinians, through the centuries, were always the most numerous in the Philippines, oftentimes they had more missionaries than all the other religious orders combined. Their missions were the richest and most compact. They were also the most populated. Soon they felt the need to be reinforced by missionaries from Spain and Mexico, the so-called *criollos*. The Augustinians worked well and generously. Perhaps they tried to go too far and too wide at the same time, with certain detriment to the religious formation of the Filipinos living in their missions.¹⁵

The Franciscans and the "Bait" of China

For years the need had been felt for new missionaries to come to the Philippines. Guido de Lavezaris, governor of the Philippines (1573-1574), had already requested for Franciscans in 1573. On July 2, 1578 they arrived in Manila.¹⁶

With the Franciscans' arrival, and with new workers for the Augustinians, the process of evangelization was accelerated. Slowly and steadily the foundations of Christianity were being laid out. Since the land had not yet been divided into spheres of missionary responsibility, the Franciscans took over many islands and regions. Soon they settled down to some concrete regions. In Manila, they founded Santa

¹⁴ Cfr. P. GALENDE, OSA, "The Augustinians in the Philippines" 1565-1890", *Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas*, 435, 1965, 38.

¹⁵ Cfr. J. L. PHELAN, *The Hispanization...*, p.60.

¹⁶ Cfr. L. PEREZ, OFM, *Origen de las Misiones Franciscanas*, Madrid, 1916, 6.

Ana de Sapa, Paco, Pandacan, Loreto and the famous convent of San Francisco del Monte. Outside Manila they worked in the provinces of Laguna and Quezon (Tayabas) and, above all, in the region of *Bikol*.

The Franciscans, like the rest of the missionaries, came moved with what we call the "bait" of China. From the time of St. Francis Xavier (1506-1552), the missionaries dreamed of entering the mysterious land of China, the Grand Cathay of Marco Polo. They hoped to force the doors of China open to the Gospel. Soon after their arrival to Manila, without the permission of the governor and the bishops, the Franciscans left for China. During their first years in the Philippines they never ceased in their efforts to enter China. Domingo de Salazar considered this as wrong zeal. Why not remain in the more fertile missionary fields of the Philippines? Why not engage in the ministry of the Filipinos, so receptive to the Gospel of Christ? Only when they came to realize the futility of their efforts to enter China did the Franciscans decide to give themselves body and soul to the evangelization of the Philippines.¹⁷

If we were to mention something more peculiar to the Franciscans—although this was done by all the missionaries in the Philippines—it was their great success in gathering the people dispersed in *rancherías* and bring them into more compact villages and towns. This is known in history as *reducciones*. The early Filipinos lived in scattered settlements, far from human communication. The task of evangelization would be very hard if they were to continue living in the bush and the mountains. There was a need to 'reduce' them to more compact towns. They had to be educated, as the Spaniards said, to live in *policía*. To live together, *bajo el sonido de la campana*, under the sound of the bell. This had to be done for evangelical reasons. The missionaries achieved this without any violence, with great respect for their religious and cultural feelings, though a certain moral coercion was always necessary to break their initial resistance. Juan de Plasencia, the man most responsible for the project, was not only a great missionary but a good historian and anthropologist. In his work, *Costumbres de los Tagalogs*, written in 1589, he left a civil and criminal code of the Filipinos, which the Spaniards respected from the beginning. Plasencia "codified" from the wisest and oldest leaders of the people their

¹⁷ Cfr. *Letter of Domingo de Salazar to the King Philip II*, Manila, June 18, 1582, Archivo General de Indias, (AGI), Filipinas 74.

customary laws and customs. Today his work is a jewel for the religious and cultural anthropology of early Philippines.¹⁸

One of the greatest achievements of the early missionaries was precisely this creation of a new civilization in the Philippines. They created the typical town so common today in the country, the plaza, the church, the town hall, the school. The people were offered not only the blessings of the Gospel, but also the blessings of civilization and human interaction. Man is a rational being, called to live with other fellow human beings. His vocation is better fulfilled in the community, together with the rest of his brothers and sisters.

The missionaries, heirs to the view of the *polis* of Greece and the *civitas* of Rome, transplanted this set-up to the concrete social and political reality of the Philippines. In the town better services could be given, both religious and social, and a security not afforded in the isolated settlements along the rivers and in the mountains.

The Franciscan missions, like those of the Augustinians, were quite compact, more populated and homogeneous than those of the other religious orders. Phelan says that

instruction in the Franciscan parishes was of the highest quality in the islands. Not only did the Franciscans retain a respectable degree of discipline among themselves, but also they enjoyed the good fortune of holding a series of populous and compactly organized parishes in the Tagalog and Bikol country.¹⁹

The Jesuits in the Philippines: 1581-1768

The Jesuits came to the Philippines in the company of Domingo de Salazar. They reached Manila on September 17, 1581, under the direction of Antonio Sedeño. He was accompanied by Alonso Sánchez and a lay brother called Nicolás Gallardo. Soon they settled in what later would be known as *Intramuros*, where they built a church near the *Puerta Real*.

Some years were to elapse before they engaged in any permanent ministry, since they did not know their final destination. In 1591,

¹⁸ Original Spanish in F. DE SANTA INES, O.F.M., *Crónica*, 'I, 592-603. English Translation in BRPI, VII, 173-196.

¹⁹ Cfr. J. L. PHELAN, *op. cit.*, 61.

reinforced with some missionaries from Spain, they accepted the mission in Taytay and Antipolo, near Manila. In 1593 Pedro Chirino established the mission of Tigbauan, in the province of Iloilo. Their mission was raised a few years later to the rank of vice-province. From that moment on they started in earnest their work in the Philippines. Soon they accepted the islands of Samar, Leyte and Bohol as their main field of missionary activity. Sedeño, still their superior, to help themselves in their labors in the Visayas Islands, established a central house in Cebu, which would serve as a point of support and departure in those difficult and isolated regions.

The Jesuits, like the rest of the orders present then in the Philippines, accepted some ministries near Manila. In concrete, in the course of time, they created Santa Cruz and San Miguel and developed Quiapo, a thriving native community at the time of the arrival of the Spaniards. They went to some towns in the province of Cavite, like Silang, Maragondon, and Cavite Viejo.

The vice-province became an independent province from Mexico in 1605. The Jesuits found in their missions of Samar, Leyte and Bohol the same difficulties the other missionaries experienced in the rest of the country. One of the main problems was the isolation and dispersion of the human settlements. The inhabitants lived scattered and lost in thousands of small *rancherias*. Thus the Jesuits in order to better assist them in their spiritual needs and teach them the Christian doctrines created what we could call roving teams. Starting from the main house, a small team of missionaries and helpers left to teach and preach the Gospel. After their return to base another one did the same until, in the course of time, they were able to create bigger towns. Since the people did not come to the missionary, the missionary went to encounter the people.²⁰

The Jesuit mission in the Visayas were exposed to the piratical raids of Moros, so rampant at that time in the interior seas of the Philippines. In view of this the Jesuits requested the Spanish government to do something to solve the problem. In their opinion the best was to establish themselves in Mindanao, whence the Moros came

²⁰ Cfr. H. DE LA COSTA, S.J., *The Jesuits in the Philippines: 1581-1768*, Harvard University Press, 1969, 136-171. This masterful work in my opinion is the best ever written on Philippine history.

from. Thus the mission of Zamboanga was born in 1635. Others were created soon after. These missions were under the military protection of the Spanish-Filipino garrisons.

The Jesuits worked with generosity. The perils they faced were unequal. In 1663 governor Manrique de Lara withdrew the troops from Mindanao and the Moluccas as a precautionary measure against the possible invasion of the Chinese pirate Chen Ch'engking, better known in Philippine history as Coxinga. The danger of invasion disappeared for the good of the Philippines. The Spanish-Filipino forces and the Jesuits did not return to Mindanao until 1718. By that time the Moslems had acquired an Islamic consciousness. The work among them, always difficult, became almost impossible.

From their base in Zamboanga, elevated to the state of College-Residence, the Jesuits spread to the Archipelago of Sulu and all along the southwest coast of Mindanao, down to the area of Cotabato. In 1748 the sultan of Jolo, Ali Muddin I, came to Manila to be further instructed in the Christian religion. The Jesuits suspecting his political motivations, opposed the project but the Dominicans, less acquainted with the psychology of the Moslems and more ignorant of the political problems of the Sultanate of Sulu, supported the project of the baptism of Ali Muddin. He was baptized in Paniqui, Tarlac, by bishop Juan de Archederra of Nueva Segovia. The bishop of Manila opposed the whole plan. Some time after Ali Muddin was imprisoned by the Spanish authorities in Zamboanga, on his way to Jolo. The authorities doubted the sincerity of his conversion. Ali Muddin was brought to Manila as a prisoner. He remained there for many years. As a result of this, Ali Muddin's brother, the new sultan of Sulu, intensified the raids against the coasts of Visayas and Luzon. The Jesuit missions, like those of the Recollects, bore now the brunt of the destructive raids of the Moros.²¹

The work of the Jesuits in their mission in the Philippines came to an end with their expulsion from the Spanish overseas dominions in 1767. Charles III (1759-1788), for reasons he said he wanted to keep secret in his bosom, but simply due to the hatred of the Bourbon monarchies of Europe against the Jesuits, ordered their expulsion from

²¹ H. DE LA COSTA, S.J., "Muhammad Alimuddin I Sultan of Sulu, 1735-1773," in *Asia and the Philippines*. Collected Historical Papers, Manila, 1967, 81-114.

all the Spanish overseas dominions. The decree took effect in the Philippines in 1768. The Samar missions and some in Leyte passed to the Franciscans. Bohol and Mindanao to the Recollects. Other minor missions in Negros, Cebu and Panay were absorbed by the other religious orders. The Jesuit parishes in Manila and the Tagalog region were taken over by the Filipino secular priests.

Their expulsion meant a terrible loss to the Philippines, especially in the missionary and educational aspects.

The Dominicans, Evangelizers in Northern and Central Luzon

The first Dominicans to come to the Philippines were Domingo de Salazar, first bishop of the Philippines, and his personal secretary Cristóbal de Salvatierra. Salazar had left Spain with eighteen Dominicans in 1580, the ones supposed to establish the Dominican Order in the Orient. During the crossing to Mexico and soon after, all of them died except Salvatierra.

From Mexico City Salazar sent to Spain and Rome Juan Crisóstomo with a primordial task: to request the king and the pope to send a large Dominican mission to the East. Crisóstomo, after some years and with great difficulties, gathered a mission of forty which left Cádiz, Spain on July 17, 1586. Some died during the crossing to Mexico, others soon after, but the majority abandoned their project to go to the east in Mexico City, when they heard from the very lips of the Jesuit Alonso Sánchez, that the doors of China, for most of them their main aim, were hermetically closed. Only fifteen religious left Acapulco for Manila. Three more sailed straight to Macao. The fifteen arrived in Cavite on July 21, 1587. On July 25, Feast of James the Apostle, they entered Manila. The bishop, a Dominican like them, the governor and the rest of the people, joyfully welcomed them.²²

The very year of the arrival, after the founding of the mother house in Manila in honor of their patriarch *Santo Domingo*, they went to various provinces of the Philippines. Four of them went to Bataan,

²² Cfr. D. ADUARTE, *Historia de la provincia del Santo Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores en Filipinas, Japón y China*, Ed. Manuel Ferrero, Madrid, 1962, 2 vols., I, 35 & ff.

near Manila. Six left for Pangasinan. The rest remained in Manila, two of them engaged in the ministry of the Chinese. Bataan, like the rest of the country, was sparsely populated. The people lived scattered in the mountains. Slowly they reduced them to live together and thus the towns of *Santo Domingo* of Abucay, Orani, Samal, Balanga, Orion and Hermosa were created.

A second group went to Pangasinan, in northwestern Luzon. The first foundation was *Santo Domingo* of Binalatongan (San Carlos City). From there they spread to other places. The evangelization of the province was not difficult, during the Spanish period there were some revolts that hindered the process of Christian growth and consolidation. We must remember the uprisings of Andres Malong in 1662 and, still the more important revolt of Juan de la Cruz Palaris in 1762, during the British occupation of Manila. A good number of towns were destroyed. The Dominicans labored strenuously to bring the people to lay down their arms.

The most extensive and most difficult ministry of the Dominicans in the Philippines was the vast Cagayan Valley, in the northernmost part of Luzon. It is crossed by the biggest river in the country, the Ibanag, called *Rio Grande* by the Spaniards, and today simply called Cagayan River, and other smaller ones, like the *Chico* and *Magat* Rivers. The evangelization was hard and costly both in labors and in lives. The climate was harsh, the mountains wild. On both sides of the long and wide valley lived ferocious and savage tribes. The Dominicans came to Cagayan in 1594. Steadily they went up the river. To the east of the valley lies the formidable *Sierra Madre*, reaching all the way to the Pacific. To the west the *Cordillera Central*, inhabited by different Igorot tribes, like the Kalingas, Apayaos, Bontocs and Ifugaos. Many of them were headhunters.

At the beginning of the XVIII century the Dominicans had evangelized what today is properly called the province of Cagayan. The provinces of Isabela and Nueva Viscaya, an essential part of Cagayan Valley, were much more difficult to evangelize. By the middle of the XVIII century we can say that Nueva Viscaya and Isabela were also Christian.

The Dominicans made a great effort to evangelize what was called until recently the *Provincia Montañosa*. At the beginning of the XVII century they started their mission among the Mandayas or

Apayaos. They created small towns and built some churches. All faded away in the course of time. The Dominicans went back to the missions of the Mountain Province towards the middle of the XIX century. But the story of this enterprise falls outside the scope of our work.

To the north of the large island of Luzon are found some small islands called the *Babuyanes*. They were evangelized, with no small difficulties, by the Dominicans from 1691. Still more to the north, near Taiwan, we have another small group called the *Batanes*. The Dominicans visited them from the *Babuyanes*. From 1783, supported by the governor José Basco (1778-1787), the Dominicans settled down there for good. They opened as a central house there *Santo Domingo de Basco*. In short time the inhabitants, peaceful by nature, embraced Christianity. The Dominicans have remained put in *Batanes* until the present day.²³

The Augustinian Recollects (1606)

The last major order to come to the Philippines are the Recollects. On May of 1606 ten priests and four brothers arrived in Cebu. In June of the same year they were in Manila. From there they spread out to the remotest and most isolated islands of the archipelago. When they arrived the land was already divided into spheres of missionary influence, but since the Philippine Archipelago was vast and the islands numerous, there were still many of them unassigned, where the Spanish presence was hardly felt and Christianity had not been preached.

In 1607 three priests went to Zambales, not far from Manila. It was a rugged mountainous province that stretched from Mariveles tip in Bataan to Bolinao point, in the actual province of Pangasinan. It was sparsely populated. The people were *Zambals*, less civilized than the rest of the Malays of the islands, and *Negritos* headhunters and nomads, roaming wild through the thickly forested mountains.²⁴

²³ For the history of the Dominicans and their missions vide, P. FERNANDEZ, O.P., *Dominicos donde nace el sol*, Barcelona, 1958. Of the same author "Dominican Apostolate in the Philippines" *Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas*, 435, 1965, 148-170.

²⁴ Cfr. P. HERCE, O.R.S.A., "The Recollects in the Philippines", *Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas*, 435, 225-228.

The missionary progress in Zambales was slow but at the end of the Spanish period Zambales had been christianized, except the *Negritos* who moved freely and wild in the impenetrable forests of the province.

One of the most difficult ministries assigned to the Recollects was the island of Mindanao. The Recollects opened missions there soon after their arrival to the Philippines. They established themselves in the northernmost part of the island, facing the Pacific Ocean, the Caraga region. From the beginning their missions were open to the depredations of the Moro piratical raids coming from the Western part of Mindanao and the Archipelago of Sulu.

The Recollects did all the kinds of odd jobs in order to defend their wards against the incursions of the Moros. Some of them organized the people militarily and formed standing armies. Pedro de San Agustín, Portuguese by birth and a former soldier in the battlefields of Flanders, organized a small army and crossed swords with Sultan Kudarat, the most famous of all the Moro chieftains in the decades of 1630-1640. The forts of Siargao and Caraga, in northeastern Mindanao, are a mute testimony of the tasks of military defense that history demanded from many missionaries. History knows Pedro de San Agustín as *El Padre Capitán*.

The bishop of Cebu, the Augustinian Pedro de Arce, requested the Recollects in 1622 to take charge of the island of Palawan. The first missions were established in Cuyo, Calamianes and the island of Palawan properly speaking.²⁵ Those towns, unfortunately, served as human quarries for the Moro pirates of Southern Philippines. The missions of Palawan and adjacent islands progressed but little during the XVII and XVIII centuries.

The Philippine is a vast archipelago. Lost in the inner seas of the Philippines are found islands of all sizes. The Recollects took charge of the islands of Romblon and Masbate. All of them poor and open to the depredations of the Moros. The Recollects never gave up their missions, in spite of the difficulties and meager results.

The field of evangelization of the Recollects was far and wide. Negros Island is perhaps where they achieved an almost total success.

²⁵ Cfr. HERCE, op.cit., 232-235.

By the story of the evangelization of Negros belongs to the XIX century. Hence, we shall not discuss it here.²⁶

B. THE FORMATIVE YEARS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MANILA

The Creation of the Diocese of Manila and Election of Domingo de Salazar as First Bishop

The initial evangelization of the Philippines was the primary task of the Augustinians. They exercised the ecclesiastical jurisdiction through a privilege of Paul III (1534-1549) until the arrival of the Franciscans. But in 1578 Philip II, through the Council of Indies, proposed to Rome the name of Domingo de Salazar as first bishop of the country.²⁷

The Spaniards of the Philippines had written on a number of occasion to the king requesting that Manila be erected into a diocese or an archdiocese. They asked him in 1575 to erect Manila as a diocese and appoint Diego de Herrera, an Augustinian missionary in the Philippines, as the first bishop.²⁸

Herrera was one of the best missionaries found in the Philippines. He had spent years in the mission field and had shown great courage in denouncing the abuses of the Spaniards and the Filipino datus. In the opinion of these recommending him he was "a man of letters, of good life, and has worked much in the conversion of the natives."²⁹ The king

²⁶ Cfr. A. M. CUESTA, O.R.S.A., *History of Negros*, XXXII, Historical Conservation Society-The Recollect Fathers, Manila, 1980.

²⁷ Cfr. *Original Consultation of the Council Indies to Philip II proposing for the newly elected Bishopric of the Philippines, Fr. Domingo de Salazar, O.P.*, Madrid, July 18, 1578, AGI, Indiferente General 798, ramo 3, 9.

²⁸ Cfr. *Letter of Juan Pacheco Maldonado to Philip II about the Population of Luzon*, Manila, 1575, in *Archivo Histórico Hispano-Agustiniano* (AHHA), XXIV, El Escorial, 1925, p. 220. BRPI, III, 300-301. ISACIO RODRIGUEZ, O.S.A., *Historia de la Provincia Agustiniana del Smo. Nombre de Jesús de Filipinas*, Vol. I, *Bibliografía*, I, Manila, 1965, pp. 228-230.

²⁹ Cfr. *Ibidem*.

did not accept the recommendation. Herrera died in 1576 in the shipwreck of the galleon *Espíritu Santo* against the coasts of Catanduanes.

The Council of Indies recommended, some years later, Domingo de Salazar as bishop of the Philippines. In November of the same year the king wrote to his ambassador in Rome to present Salazar's name to the pope. Gregory XIII (1572-1585), in the consistory of February 6, 1579, appointed him as first bishop.³⁰

The bull *Illius Fulti Praesidio* separated Manila from the Church of Mexico and thus became an independent diocese. It would take the name of the *Conception of Mary*, changing the original name of *San Pedro* that had had from the very beginning.

Salazar was ordained bishop in Madrid in 1579. By May of that year we find him in Seville, waiting for the fleet to sail to Mexico. Finally on June of 1580, after having waited in Seville for a year, he sailed for Verapaz, Mexico with 18 Dominicans, four clerics and some servants.³¹ Most of the Dominicans died during the crossing or soon after their arrival in Mexico. After a short stay in Mexico city Salazar started the difficult inland trip to the seaport of Acapulco. Beyond layed the awesome and unknown expanse of the Pacific. On March 29, 1581 the galleon *San Martín*, 400 tons, put out to sea for the long haul across the Pacific. He had with him only one Dominican, Fr. Cristóbal de Salvatierra, who was to serve him as a faithful secretary. He was accompanied by six Franciscans, headed by Antonio de Villanueva, a larger group of eighteen Augustinians, under Juan Pimentel, three Jesuits, under Antonio Sedeño, and seven clerics, one of whom died during the crossing and another became a Franciscan.³²

After four months of sea travel, towards the end of July, the galleon *San Martín* crossed the *embocadero*, or *San Bernardino Strait*, and headed for Manila. Unable to make any headway because of

³⁰ Letter of Philip II to his Ambassador in Rome, November 2, 1578, Archivo de la Embajada de España ante la Santa Sede, legajo 4, fol. 103. Cfr. BRPI, IV, 119-124.

³¹ Cfr. AGI, *Contratación* 5538, Lib. I, ff. 170-170v; fol. 263; Lib. II, fol. 15.

³² Cfr. Letter of Domingo de Salazar to Philip II, Manila, March 14, 1582, AGI, Filipinas 74. Cfr. Letter of the Viceroy of Nueva España, Mexico, April 1, 1581, AGI, Mexico 20.

contrary winds, since it was the season of the *vendabales*, or southeast winds, the galleon took shelter at Ibalon Bay, Sorsogon. As the weather and winds did not change Salazar started his trip to Manila on foot, *modo apostolico*. Salazar entered Manila on September 17, 1581, sixteen months after leaving Sevilla in June of 1580 and two months of overland journey from Sorsogon to Manila. He was heartily welcomed by the people.³³

As soon as Salazar arrived in the Philippines he had to come to grips with the situation. On December 21, 1581 he erected his church.³⁴ Manila was chosen as the seat of the new diocese because it was the most important settlement in the country. It was near China, Japan, Moluccas, Borneo, Java. Cochinchina and other near kingdoms. The limits were immense and unknown even in that age of great exploratory feats.

In 1581, the very year of Salazar's arrival, the Church in the Philippines had only eleven secular priests, three deacons, five sub-deacons and four tonsured. Salazar had left Acapulco with seven clerics. One died during the crossing, the other became a Franciscan. In the Philippines he found six priests.³⁵

Salazar however could count with the support of the Augustinians, Franciscans, Jesuits, the only religious missionaries found in the Philippines at that time, soon to be joined by the Dominicans.

When Salazar arrived in Manila the Cathedral Church was practically in shambles. There was no sacristy. It looked more like a place for horses than a house of worship. There was no place for the Blessed Sacrament. The vestments were nowhere to be found. The only good service had been brought by him from Mexico. To make matters worst, a devastating fire which occurred on February 28, 1583, razed to whole city to the ground. The church went up in smoke. Soon a small church of nipa and wood was built. In the view of the writers

³³ Cfr. *Letter of Don Gonzalo Ronquillo de Peñalosa to Philip II*, Manila, June 25, 1582, in BRPI, V, p.9.

³⁴ Cfr. *Pastoral Letter of Domingo de Salazar erecting his Diocese*, Manila, 21 of December, 1581, in AGI, Filipinas 74.

³⁵ Cfr. *Letter of Domingo de Salazar to the King*, Manila, June 18, 1582, AGI, Filipinas 74.

of the *Memorial* of 1586, due to its extreme poverty and misery, it could not even be called a cathedral church. Neither the building nor the vestments were worthy of a cathedral. It lacked everything, to the shame of the Christians who lived there.³⁶

Towards the year 1590 the church had not been finished. Only due to the entreaties of Salazar himself, and the arrival of the governor G. P. Dasmariñas, did the cathedral church start to be built in stone and of large proportions.

The Synod of Manila: 1581-1586

a. Pastoral character of the Synod

One of the great achievements of Domingo de Salazar was the Synod of Manila of 1581-1586. He convoked it, presided and was the spirit behind. Salazar was a learned man and a missionary of large experience for he had spent 23 years in Mexico before coming to the Philippines. He was a disciple of Bartolomé de las Casas. It was Salazar himself who wrote: "I was reared in the doctrine of the bishop of Chiapas."³⁷

The Synod started in 1581 and with various interruptions it lasted until 1586, the very year when the secretary of the Synod and one of the main protagonists, the Jesuit Alonso Sánchez, departed from the Philippines to Spain as ambassador extraordinaire to the king and pope.

The problems discussed in the Synod were mainly related to the legality of the Spanish conquest and the best means to bring the Filipinos to the knowledge of the Christian faith.

The problems were eminently pastoral and practical, touching the lives and consciences of all the segments of society. Religious and

³⁶ Cfr. *Letter of Domingo de Salazar to the King*, Manila, March 14, 1582, AGI, Filipinas 74. Cfr. *Memorial General*, in F. COLIN-P. PASTELS, S.J., *Labor Evangélica de los Obreros de la Compañía de Jesús de Filipinas*, 3 vols., Barcelona, 1900-1902, I, 415. In our work *Labor*.

³⁷ Cfr. *Letter of Domingo de Salazar to Philip II*, Manila, June 18, 1583, AGI, Patronato 25, ramo 8.

lay people found themselves in total disagreement, to the scandal of the new Filipino Christians

The religious took with scruples the little rice they were given as maintenance, as they considered it the fruit of the robbery perpetrated by the Spaniards.³⁸ The conquistadores complained that they were living in misery and poverty. On top of that they lived with a heavy burden on their consciences, as they had been forced to rob the natives in order to survive and they were denied absolution in confession by strict confessors, unless they restituted the evils inflicted during the conquest.³⁹

The very existence of the Philippines was at stake. Salazar, then, decided to thresh the problems out under the light of Christian principles and the demands of justice. Thus he convoked the *Junta*, as they call it, to be attended by representatives of the ecclesiastical segment and some lay people, men of wide experience in the affairs of the Philippines.

b. Doctrines of the Synod regarding the Legitimacy of the Spanish Conquest of the Philippines

One of the burning points the Synod had to deal with was the legitimacy of the Spanish conquest of the Philippines. By what title could the Spanish king claim sovereignty over the islands? Years before, in the initial stages of the conquest, Martin de Rada, one of the pioneers in the evangelization of the country, had written:

I have taken the opinion of all the fathers who were to be found here. They unanimously affirm that none of the islands here have come into the power of the Spaniards with just title.⁴⁰

³⁸ Cfr. *Letter of Martin de Rada to the Viceroy of Mexico*, Manila, June 10, 1573, in TORRES LANZAS-PABLO PASTELLS, *Catálogo de los documentos existentes en el Archivo General de Indias relativos a Filipinas*, 8 vols., Barcelona, vol. II, XIII. In our work *Catálogo*.

³⁹ Cfr. *Letter of Diego de Aguilar and others to Philip II*, Manila, June 18, 1581, in COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor*, I, 263.

⁴⁰ Cfr. *Opinion of Martin de Rada on Tributes*, San Pablo, Manila, June 21, 1574, BRPI, III, p. 254.

The religious could not escape this question. Their continuity in the Philippines, the levying of tributes to natives, the thorny problem of restitution of the evils committed during the conquest, found their moral and legal basis on the legitimacy of the conquest. The political, social and moral implications were tremendous. If the Spanish King had no legal title to the Philippines it followed that everything done up to then was unjust and immoral; that taxation was no more than robbery; that the conquest was a mere spoliation; and that all those who took part in it had perished in hell. Those living were obliged to restitute *in solidum*.

In the Philippines all authority, *de facto*, was exercised under the name of the Spanish king. But was the sovereign *de iure*? The Synod declared that the Spanish king had not come to rule the Philippines by inheritance nor by donation, nor by just war.

The first point was clear. The second is a confirmation of the teachings of Spanish theologians Vitoria and Soto who denied any legal basis for the papal donation of the Indies to the Spanish kings. And this for a simple reason: the pope did not enjoy universal temporal power over earthly kingdoms; so he could not donate what did not belong to him.

If we were to take the third reason as its sounds it would mean that the Synod declared at the outset that the Spaniards had no just title to the Philippines, as the country had not come into the Spanish Crown by "just war." The theologians had in mind the exclusion of just war by natural right, not by spiritual right.

The Synod faithfully follows the teaching of Vitoria. In the opinion of the theologian, and in the opinion of the Synod, the Christian has the grave duty to preach the Gospel to all the world. This duty and right was passed on by the pope to the Spanish king, especially in regard to the New World. This same duty was delegated by the Spanish king to his viceroys, governors and encomenderos. The authority conferred by the pope to the king was only the one the pope received from Christ, that is, to send missionaries to preach the Good News. The Spanish king could not send the conquistadores to take away lands, or assume governmental authority over new commonwealths. This would be sheer spoliation.

In the mentality of the theologians of the Synod the duty to preach the Gospel implied the right to protect the preachers against those who

opposed the preaching of the Gospel. Thus we read in the Acts:

This is the right the pope delegated to the Spanish king: to send people to protect the ministers of the Gospel, to protect the newly converted Christians and to establish a temporal government that would facilitate the achievement of the spiritual end of free conversion and the maintenance of the new faith. This does not mean that they can take everything, as they have done, as the Gospel does not dispossess anybody of what rightly belongs to him.⁴¹

We see here three titles which Vitoria and the Spanish theologians of the XVI century considered just to declare war and assume political authority over the new kingdoms. These three titles were:

1. Protection of the missionaries.
2. Protection to the newly converted people.
3. Right to depose rulers who oppose the preaching of the Gospel.

From here it follows that any ruler who opposes the preaching of the Gospel, or induces the true Christians to apostatize, can be deposed and the political authority devolves on those who can guarantee these rights: The Acts say:

If the kings, or emperors, or rulers of foreign lands entrusted to our kings, impede the preaching of the Gospel, or the conversion of their vassals, or pervert the newly converted, then they can be disposed, so that this can be assured.⁴²

Was this the case of the Philippines? Had their rulers opposed the preaching of the Gospel? The Augustinians were witness that in the Philippines the rulers did not oppose the Gospel, but rather the imposition of tributes. It this were the case, was not the conquest unjust and mere spoliation?⁴³

⁴¹ Cfr. VALENTIN MARIN, *Ensayo de una síntesis de los trabajos realizados por las corporaciones religiosas de Filipinas*, 2 vols., Manila, 1901, vol. I, 197; Cfr. FRANCISCO DE VITORIA, *Relectio de Indis o Libertad de los Indios*, ed. L. PEREÑA and J. M. PEREZ PRENDES. Madrid, 1967, I, 2, 8, 87; I, 3, 9, 88; I, 3, 8, 89; I, 3, 11, 89; I, 3, 12, 92. In our work *De Indis*.

⁴² Cfr. MARIN, I, 198; *De Indis*, I, 8, 3, 11, 89.

⁴³ Cfr. *Opinion of M. de Rada*, Manila, 21 June, 1574, BRPI, III, 254-255.

The Synod stated that the rulers of the Philippines had not opposed *directly* the preaching of the Gospel, but *indirectly* they had, as the political and social situation of the Philippines, at the time of the conquest, was not requisite for the spreading and consolidation of the Gospel. The Spanish king had to create a political set up to insure the spiritual end of the preaching and triumph of the Gospel. There were three essential conditions to facilitate and insure this end:

1. The existence of a government and a code of laws according to reason, which would not go directly or indirectly against the preaching of the Gospel.

2. A cultural level that would allow the progressive growth of Christianity and all the necessary Christian institutions to maintain it.

3. A people that would respect the right of others, would guarantee the preaching of the Gospel and of whom no suspicion could be entertained that it would destroy the Christian religion and expel the missionaries. If all these conditions were to be found in the new territories discovered by the Spaniards, the Spanish king could send missionaries in virtue of his papal commission, but it would be a tyranny to depose the rulers, as the Gospel perfects and liberates man. To take away the government and let the Spaniards take over would be a terrible injustice. The temporal government should remain with the native rulers.

Was this the case in the Philippines? The religious of the Synod came to examine the concrete Philippine situation, as many people were vexed by the social, political and moral implications of the legality of the conquest. The Synod declared that in the Philippines the three conditions that would invalidate the conquest were not found. The government of the Philippines, in the view of the theologians of the Synod, was imperfect and primitive. The progress of the Christian faith could not be insured. Furthermore, there was a danger of negative reaction that could destroy the advance of Christianity. The laws by which the people were governed were tyrannical. The people were involved in perpetual warfare. All this would mean a clear danger for the safety of the missionaries and the faith of the newly converted people. It was, then, imperative to impose a new government that would protect the missionaries and the Christians.

The conclusion of the theologians of the Synod was that the Spanish king possessed *political dominion* over the Philippines in

ordine as *finem spiritualem*, in order to achieve the spiritual end, the conversion of the natives to the Christian religion which would otherwise be unattainable.⁴⁴

It seems strange that the theologians and jurists present at the Synod justified the conquest by the mixed title of opposition to the Gospel and the low level of culture of the natives of the Philippines. Vitoria, in his often quoted *Relectiones de Indis*,⁴⁵ had written about the possibility of justifying the conquest of America due to the low level of culture of the natives. Yet, he considered that a very dubious title.

The Spanish king, then, was the lawful ruler of the Philippines and he governed through the agency of his royal officials. To let the government and political rule devolve again to native chieftains would not be conducive to the progress of the christian religion. It would destroy the political and social security of the country. In one word, it would be a step back, retrogression. We read in the *Reply to Rada's Opinion*:

Thus it is of great use and profit that the Spaniards have come to the natives hereabout, on account of the security that they have from one another and because they have free recourse to their trade and interests without being hindered or robbed by anyone. They were not accustomed to this security before the Spaniards came hither, because it is a thing publicly known and notorious that even in their own houses they were captured and robbed. They were not free to go fishing on the sea without being captured. Now not only are they safe in their houses, but they go safely to different places, without any harm being done to them. If there are piracies, they are very far from this town and in places where the Spaniards do not go. It is a very ancient custom that the natives had among themselves of capturing, robbing, killing and imprisoning one another. Now there are few injuries committed in comparison to what used to be committed before the Spaniards came here. Everyday there will be fewer because we are even striving to take and punish such pirates.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Cfr. MARIN, I, p. 198; J. GAYO, O.P., *Ideas jurídico-teológicas de los religiosos de Filipinas en el siglo XVI sobre la conquista de las Islas*, Manila, 1950, 63-64.

⁴⁵ Cfr. *De Indis*, I,3,17, 97-98.

⁴⁶ *Reply to Rada's Opinion*, BRPI, III, 264-265.

c. The Preaching of the Gospel to Pagans

The task of preaching the Gospel has been received from Christ. All Christians have received this command. But what about the methods to be used in preaching the Gospel? What should be the attitude of the Christians when confronted with persecution in semi-civilized societies, or in kingdoms entirely opposed to the entrance of missionaries? Were their duty bound to face danger, even death while preaching? Could they invite soldiers as guardians against danger and as deterrent against the persecutors?

From the very beginning of the conquest of America the Spaniards had discussed passionately regarding the best means to be employed in the preaching of the Gospel. It was still a burning problem at the time of Salazar's arrival in the Philippines. Which was the attitude of the primitive Church? Could the apostolic way be applied *ad pedem litterae* to the new times and the new territories discovered and conquered?

Soldiers were unknown in primitive times. The early Christian missionaries, pilgrims for Christ and for His Gospel, traversed the length and width of the Roman Empire, announcing the Good News of Salvation to those ready to listen to them. They relied on the power of the Gospel, on their total commitment to the Good News and on God's inexhaustible grace.

The Synod of Manila accepted this apostolic method as the best in itself. But the fathers realized that they were not living within the Roman World. The times the missionaries were living were very different. The socio-cultural and political situation of the New World differed radically from the Roman and Hellenistic World in which Christianity was born. The Roman World, the world of Peter and Paul, given its high cultural and moral level and its excellent political organization, offered to the Christian missionaries security and freedom to preach the Gospel. The Roman World tolerated all religions as long as they did not attempt to destroy the socio-political and religious set up of the empire. The high level of culture, the proliferation of the new mystery religions, the widespread level of literacy of the people offered an excellent opportunity for Christianity to be heard.

Philosophers, pedagogues, preachers and teachers always had an eager audience in the fora and agoras of the Greco-Roman World. No

hindrance was presented to them. The freedom of religion and speech was incredible. People yearned for religion and for mystical experience. Christianity found the way prepared. The social, political, cultural and religious set up of the Greco-Roman World served as a "pedagogue" to Christ. The Roman Empire at the time of Augustus, the time of the apostles, had truly achieved a universal peace, the PAX ROMANA.

The New World, on the whole, was ferocious and savage. The pure preaching of the Gospel, *modo apostolico*, was the most noble and in accordance with the Lord's command, but it could not be applied to the new territories discovered. The missionaries were not given the chance to preach. Some pagan authorities had strictly forbidden, under penalty of death, the entry of missionaries, especially China. Without soldiers to protect them, they would end being eaten in cannibalistic banquets or killed by ferocious head hunters, in the case of the Americas, or thrown forever in prison, in the case of China.

The Gospel had to be given a hearing. It was, then, imperative for soldiers to accompany the missionaries in their task of evangelization. The fathers of the Synod of Manila had in mind not only the territories under the Spanish control, but also Mindanao, Borneo and more especially China, whose gates remained hermetically closed to the entry of missionaries. The Gospel could not penetrate the mysterious land of the Grand Cathay of Marco Polo. Why not force the gates open? The Spaniards convinced themselves of the futility of peaceful means.

This trend of thought is clearly manifested in the Acts of the Synod:

To open the way [militarily] to the Gospel is not evil but just (although many say this method is abominable). The pope commissioned the Spanish king to preach the Gospel according to the passage in the Gospel *Praedicate Evangelium...et pasce oves meas, et alias oves habeo quae non sunt ex hoc ovili.*⁴⁷ As the preachers commissioned by the pope could not do this without grave and manifest dangers, the king, who received the papal commission, had to find, in accordance with prudence, the best means to protect and defend the preachers and thus encourage the newly converted Christians, less through fear of reprisals they

⁴⁷ ("Preach the Gospel... tender my sheep and I have other sheep which do not belong to the flock," etc.).

might abandon the faith or might not even receive it. This is just in itself. It is more just in the new times, and the new lands and the new people, as they are radically different from the times and the people in which the primitive Church was born.⁴⁶

The fathers of the Synod did not defend the doctrine of military conquest first but only the need for soldiers to go with missionaries as protectors, guardians and deterrent, if pagan rulers did not give them the chance to preach the Gospel to those who were ready to listen to them. From here developed the theory of *military protectorate* in mission lands.

d. Evangelization and native languages

Modern and ancient historians of the Philippines mention that one of the great resolution of the Synod of Manila was the adoption of the vernacular language as the means of instruction, in this case the Tagalog. In the opinion of many of these historian this was transcendental, for it meant that the natives were to be instructed in their own language. In this way, they might more easily understand the Christian message. Juan de Plasencia, an expert in the language and customs of the Tagalogs, was requested to put in Tagalog the Catechism, of what later came to be known as the *Doctrina Christiana*.

In the Acts no mention whatsoever is found of this fact. Why then, continue with the story that this was one of the great resolutions of the Synod?

It is possible that the problem might have been discussed during the sessions. The Acts, as they have come down to us, are only a *Suma* of the meeting or *Junta*. They are a resumé of the many things treated and discussed in the Synod. The Acts are meant to be a kind of *Vademecum* for confessors. It is logical to think that in the Acts only the things related to justice and restitution were emphasized. Since these were moral and burning points, touching on the consciences of the people, the Acts of the Synod, as they have come down to us, are an echo of those moral and pastoral problems. This could explain the silence of the Acts about the adoption of the native languages as a means of evangelization.

⁴⁶ MARIN, *op. cit.*, I, 209.

Without any doubt the adoption of the native languages was important for the rapid growth of Christianity. From the anthropological and cultural point of view it meant the survival of those languages.

But the fact of adopting the native languages as the means of preaching and teaching had nothing revolutionary in the missiological pedagogy of the Church in the Philippines. From the beginning of the evangelization of the Americas the missionaries opted for the native languages. The different councils held in America legislated about that fact. The first books printed in the Americas, like those printed later on in the Philippines, were catechisms, dictionaries and grammars. What the Spanish missionaries called *Doctrinas*, *Vocabularios* and *Arte de la lengua*.

Many of the resident missionaries of the Philippines, at the time of the celebration of the Synod, had been missionaries in Mexico. Most of them were experts in the Mexican languages. Some of them, like the Franciscan Juan de Ayora had written the *Arte de la lengua mejicana* and a *Vocabulario español-mejicano*. There is nothing then revolutionary when the members of the Synod had decided that the evangelical preaching should be done in the local languages.

In the light of this "Mexican Experience" there is nothing strange that the Synod discussed the problem and, in view of the different versions of catechisms in existence in the Philippines, with the subsequent danger to corruption of doctrine, they opted for one single version, acceptable to all missionaries. And this was the one that had been prepared by the Franciscan Juan de Plasencia. The Synod

commanded that different copies be made, especially of the translation of the *Doctrina*, so that through it and through no other the missionaries should teach the natives, both because it had been approved by all and in order to have perfect uniformity in all the towns of the Tagalog region.⁴⁹

* J. L. PORRAS, *Sínodo de Manila de 1582*. Colección Tierra Nueva y Cielo Nuevo. XXVII. Sínodos Americanos/ 8, Madrid, 1988, p.146. There is an English edition under the title *The Synod of Manila of 1582*, Historical Conservation Society, LXX, Manila, 1990.

e. The Option for Justice

Some of the missionaries in the Philippines doubted the prudence of celebrating a Synod at that particular time. In their view, the land was new, the spirits excited and the Spaniards given to their personal business. It seemed there was no receptive mood for a sincere dialogue related to questions of justice. To bring the problem into the fore and, what was even worse, to demand the restitution of the tributes collected before was, in the opinion of many people, an invitation to open rebellion.

In new lands things could not be measured with the measure of pure justice, was the opinion of many people. Time was necessary to create stable communities where strict justice could be demanded. There was a need indeed to adjust themselves to the times and the places.

In spite of these serious objections, the majority decided to go ahead with the celebration of the Synod.

There were serious reasons for the celebration of the Synod. It was necessary that people once and for all would come to know what it meant to live according to reason and realize what theology had to say in matters of justice and law. The Spaniards and the Filipinos had to know that if the confessors denied them absolution and demanded restitution for the evils inflicted upon the people, that was what justice and the law of God demanded. And with God's law there was no running away. If nothing was done at that time, and at that particular historical juncture, people might become numb to justice. If the oppressors were not challenged they would go still to further excesses. Even if positive results were not to become apparent immediately, a stand for justice had to be taken.

The effects of the decisions of the Synod were felt very soon. The Synod influenced positively the subsequent history of the nation. Things did not continue as before. The easiest thing would have been to remain quiet, to let the *conquistadores*, the *encomenderos* and *datus* follow their unjust ways. But the Fathers opted for justice and helped that it would triumph, to a great measure, in the colonial context of the Philippines. A good example for the present Church in the Philippines and for the pastors that today govern her!

Domingo de Salazar's Struggle for Justice and Humanization in the Conquest of the Philippines

1. A Question of Human Rights

The problem I want to discuss here must be understood within the wider question of the struggle for human rights carried out during the time of discovery and all through the years of the conquest and evangelization of America and the Philippines in the XV, XVI and XVII centuries. The possibility was given to create a universal and brotherly society, more open to all people. A yearning was felt to establish a world according to justice and love. And this was also happening in the Philippines.

It has been written that in the Philippines there was no struggle for justice and liberation, that a well organized priesthood did nothing for the defense of the Filipinos as the missionaries had done in the vast fields of America.⁵⁰

We have to say that from the very beginning of the discovery of the Philippines the struggle for justice was carried out valiantly by the first missionaries and royal officials. It could not be otherwise, since the missionaries who came to the Philippines had been the defenders of the natives in Mexico. The Augustinians, the Franciscans and the Dominicans in the Philippines remained faithful to the school they belonged to. The voices of those who cried against oppression and for justice in the Americas and in the Philippines are not isolated voices. The people who cried belonged to a school of long tradition that finds its roots in the very founder of the Dominican Order and has its juridical and theological foundation in the teachings of Thomas Aquinas. The school was old for it found its meaning in the Gospel of Christ, in the Sermon on the Mountain. From the beginning of the conquest the Dominicans protested against the abuses of their fellow Spaniards and the local elite. Montesinos, Minaya, Córdoba, Vitoria and Las Casas in America, and Salazar, Benavides and Diego de Soria in the Philippines are the best representatives of the school, but they are not the only ones. The

⁵⁰ Cfr. A. G. KELLER, *Colonization*, New York, 1908, 350, as quoted by L. HANKE, *Cuerpo de documentos del siglo XVI sobre los derechos de España en las Indias y las Filipinas*, Mejico, 1943, XXXVIII.

Augustinians Andrés de Urdaneta, Martin de Rada, Diego de Herrera, Francisco de Ortega and many others that could be mentioned here, are not isolated cases.

In the Philippines, like in America before, the missionaries were great defenders of the natives. When they assumed the defense of the Filipinos they did so because they were by vocation the fathers of the poor and the oppressed. Salazar was a classmate of Bartolomé de Medina and Domingo Bañez, student of Domingo de Soto and Melchor Cano and "disciple" of Francisco de Vitoria and Bartolomé de Casas. In the words of the same Salazar "I was reared in the doctrine of the bishop of Chiapas".

The Dominican Miguel de Benavides wrote to his confreres in the Philippines from Madrid, when he was in the presence of Philip II and Council of Indies:

For the natives we have obtained, through God's mercy, many things. It must be understood that love not the lash must achieve God's work... You know very well that the Order of St. Dominic has always been the protector of the natives. We should end our lives in imitation of our forefathers.⁵¹

2. The Augustinians and the Struggle for Justice

The first Augustinian missionaries had a long list of complaints against their fellow Spaniards. Mention is made of destructions, robberies, enslavement and deaths. In the opinion of the religious the Spaniards did not distinguish between friend and foe. They went about fully armed, without telling the Filipinos the reasons for their arrival. They demanded tributes and submission before preaching to the natives about God and the blessings of the Spanish dominion.

A quick reading of Martin de Rada's *Parecer* to governor Lavezaris and Diego de Herrera's *Memorial* show that the abuses were serious. The Filipinos, on some occasions, had been compelled to revolt against Spain. The Augustinians laid the responsibility squarely at the feet of the Spaniards.⁵²

⁵¹ Cfr. J. GAYO, *op.cit.*, 254. Cfr. *Unitas*, 21 1948, 155-156.

⁵² Cfr. *Parecer* in BRPI, III 253-259. Original Spanish in I. RODRIGUEZ,

The *encomenderos* and Spanish officials denied the claims of the Augustinians. In their opinion, the missionaries, though motivated by zeal for God and king, by justice and love for the Filipinos, exaggerate the abuses and forgot entirely the tremendous benefits the conquest had brought to the Filipinos. The Spaniards protected the people from enemies, curbed piracy, thus keeping sea and inland travel open, stopped the perpetual wars of extermination common among them before the Spanish arrival and prepared the way for evangelization.⁶³ They accepted that many times they abused the Filipinos. Poverty forced them to do so. The soldiers went permanently hungry. Hence their confusion of mind and spiritual anxiety. We read:

... We have been forced to rob them [natives] and impose them in other ways, burdening our consciences in this order to subsist. We thus have a heavy load on our souls which we are unable to shake off by reason of our great poverty.⁶⁴

3. Salazar Struggle against Slavery.

One of the most serious problems Salazar was confronted with in the Philippines was that of slavery. The Augustinians who travelled with him from Mexico to Manila in 1581 brought with them a Royal Decree, in which the Spanish king granted absolute freedom to Filipino slaves in the hands of Spanish conquistadores.

On October 16, 1581, just a month after Salazar's arrival to the Philippines, he convoked the most prominent people to a meeting wherein the problem of slavery was once and for all to be discussed and solved. The solution for the missionaries was clear: the emancipation of Filipino slaves in the hands of Spaniards could not be denied nor even deferred. It was in accordance with the demands of justice and divine law. The slaves had to be declared free immediately.

The resolutions were personally taken by Salazar to the governor general, Gonzalo Ronquillo de Peñalosa. The bishop told the governor

Historia, XIV, 186-193. The *Memorial* is in BRPI, XXXIV, 273-285. Original Spanish in RODRIGUEZ, *Historia*, XIV, 162-172.

⁶³ Cfr. *Reply to Martin de Rada's Opinion*, Manila, 1574, in BRPI, III, 260-271.

⁶⁴ *Letter of Diego de Aguilar to Philip II*, July 18, 1581, as quoted by H. DE LA COSTA, *Asia in the Philippines. Collected Historical Papers*, Manila, 1967, 26.

that he expected him to put them into execution immediately, as it was the will of the king, as expressed in the royal decree, and also it was the will of the people who had gathered in that special meeting.⁵⁵

That Salazar's decision shocked the Spanish colony cannot be denied. There was a general outcry not only from the part of the owners of slaves but also from the Spanish officials. Bishop Salazar and the religious agreed that their decisions should be brought to the knowledge of the people through the means of the pulpit. In case of disobedience the owners of slaves should be denied sacramental absolution, a terrible punishment for a Spaniard of the XVI century.

If the bishop and the religious of the Philippines had not spoken against the abuses of their fellow Spaniards regarding slavery and other abuses, if they had closed their eyes to the misdeeds of the conquistadores and encomenderos, would things have changed in the Philippines?

The bishop and the religious were not afraid of any possible consequences. And threats they had. On one occasion a Spanish conquistador told bishop Salazar that he could hit his miter with his arquebus from a distance of fifty meters. Even governor Ronquillo de Peñalosa reminded Salazar that he was a descendant of Spanish cavaliers who had no scruples to send bishops to the gibbet.⁵⁶ Salazar remained undaunted. The fight for justice and against slavery was to continue.

In 1586, in a general gathering of all the states of the Philippines, it was proposed to the king the abolition of slavery both in the hands of the Spaniards and in the hands of Filipino datus. From now on it would be an all-out war against slavery. Regarding the complex problem of slavery among the Filipinos, these were the recommendations:

1. No person under the Spanish dominions in the Philippines shall make any more slaves in the future.
2. Children of slave parents shall be born free.

⁵⁵ Cfr. *Opinión of Domingo de Salazar and of the Religious about the Problem of Slavery in the Philippines*, Manila, October 16, 1581, AGI, Filipinas 84.

⁵⁶ Cfr. D. ADUARTE, *op. cit.*, Madrid, 1962, 288. Cfr. TORRES, LANZAS-PASTELLS, *Catálogo*, vol II, CV.

3. Slaves over ten years of age shall serve up to twenty. Those above twenty years of age shall serve for another five years. Afterwards they shall be free.

4. Those ready to buy their liberty shall be free to do so. The bishop and the governor shall fix the price to be paid for their munumission.

These decisions approved by Philip II were given in 1589 to Dasmariñas, the new governor of the Philippines. They formed part of the *General Instructions* to be taken to the Philippines and executed as soon as he arrived to his new post. To support the stand of the king and of the bishop against slavery, Pope Gregory XIV prohibited the Spaniards in 1591, under penalty of excommunication, the holding of slaves. Granting freedom to the slaves became a duty. Holding of slaves meant excommunication.⁵⁷

With the application of these royal decrees a mortal blow was given to the slavery of Filipinos at the hands of the Spaniards and also, though with less success, to slavery of Filipinos at the hands of Filipino *datus*. The slaves cried out of joy. Salazar and the religious had helped efficaciously in the triumph of justice.

The proscription of slavery is one of the most outstanding achievements of the first missionaries and the Spaniards of the Philippines. Philip II was seriously worried to free his subjects who were slaves and his decisive efforts to support the emancipation of slaves in the Philippines, under the leadership of the missionaries, gave his seal to a universal yearning in his dominions. It was a gigantic step in the direction of justice and humanization. Chirino, in 1605, summed up the effects of this struggle:

A large number of slaves have been freed, on the one hand by pious persons who not without difficulty have paid the ransoms, and by the enslaved who clamor for liberty and have provided remedies for their release, and on the other hand by the mercy of God our Lord, who has moved many hearts in baptism and confession.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Cfr. *Instruction of Philip II to Dasmariñas*, San Lorenzo, August 9, 1589, COLIN-PASTELIS, *Labor*, II, 741-750. Cfr. Ibidem, BRPI, VII, 171, *Liberty of the Indians in the Philippines by Gregory XIV*, Rome, 18 April 1591, BRPI, VII, 70-71.

⁵⁸ P. CHIRINO, S.J., *Relación de las Islas Filipinas. The Philippines in 1600*, Manila, 1969, 364;121.

We can speak of the disappearance of slavery in Spanish dominions of the Philippines towards the beginning of the XVIII century. Francisco de San Antonio writes:

Now there is absolutely no vestige of slavery among the Filipinos, in accordance with the Apostolic Briefs, supported by various royal decrees of our Catholic Monarchs. In this way, we are all soldiers of a same Divine Lord, soldiers under the Holy Cross, which is our Catholic flag and all are citizens and sharers of the celestial Jerusalem, which is our Kingdom. Thus in these islands both the Spaniards and the Filipinos live all as subjects of one and the same Catholic Monarch in regard to human matters.⁵⁹

In regions outside the sphere of the Spanish political influence, like in some regions of Mindanao and the Mountain Province, slavery continued up to the end of the XIX century.

4. The Creation of the Archdiocese of Manila (1595)

a. Growth of Christianity in the Philippines in the XVI Century

The arrival of the Franciscans in 1578, the Jesuits in 1581 and the Dominicans in 1587 accelerated the process of Christianization. But perhaps nothing pushed it forward as the coming of the first bishop of the Philippines, Domingo de Salazar, O.P. In the decade between 1581 and 1591, the years of his stay in the country, the number of Christians grew by leaps and bounds. The first fifteen years of the evangelization of the Philippines were relatively poor. This was not due to lack of apostolic zeal of the Augustinians or Franciscans, but rather to the initial difficulties of pioneering efforts. When Salazar arrived to the country in 1581 the Augustinians and Franciscans had laid the ground for their efforts to bear fruit. Things would be easier for Salazar than they were for Urdaneta, Herrera, Rada, Plasencia and other missionaries of the first hour.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ *Crónicas de la Apostólica Provincia de San Gregorio de Religiosos Descalzos de N.P. San Francisco en las Islas Filipinas China, Japón*, 3 vols., Manila, 1738-1744, I, 163. Cfr. BRPI, XL, 355.

⁶⁰ Cfr. *Letter of Governor Francisco Sande to Philip II*, Manila, June 7, 1576, in BRPI, IV, 87.

During the episcopacy of Salazar the number of missionaries grew greatly. In 1575 they were only thirteen. In 1585 there were ninety four. If we were to accept the testimony of Alonso Sánchez, extraordinary ambassador of all the segments of society in the Philippines to the court of Madrid and Rome, the number of Christians in the Philippines in 1586 ascended to around 250.000.⁶¹ Juan González de Mendoza tells us his *Historia* that the number of baptized that same year swelled up to 400.000.⁶²

In May of 1591, the year of Salazar's departure for Spain, there were 140 missionaries in the country. In order to serve well the people and impart the Christian doctrine to those who eagerly sought it there was a need for 161 more missionaries.⁶³

In 1594 the Augustinian Francisco de Ortega, in a *Memorial* presented to the king in Madrid, says that in the Philippines there were 300.000 Christians and 267 missionaries; 229 more were needed.⁶⁴

The news of the great harvest obtained in the Philippines for Christ came to the knowledge of the pope through the lips of one of the protagonists in the process, the Jesuit Alonso Sánchez. Clement VIII (1592-1605) congratulated the bishop, the man most responsible for the success, the missionaries who had played a major role in the process, the royal officials, who had supported the missionaries and all the faithful of the country who had contributed through their labors to the conversion of the new Christians.⁶⁵

b. Division of the Missionary Field among the Orders

One of the causes that accelerated still more the evangelization process was the division of the missionary field among the different

⁶¹ BRPI, VI, 185-186.

⁶² Cfr. BRPI, VI, 148.

⁶³ Cfr. *Relation of the Encomiendas of the Philippines*, Manila, May 31, 1591, I. RODRIGUEZ, *Historia*, I, 313-314; BRPI, VIII, 140-141.

⁶⁴ Cfr. *Memorial* in I. RODRIGUEZ, *Historia* I, 341. Cfr. J.L. PHELAN, "Pre-Baptismal Instruction and the Administration of Baptism in the Philippines during the Sixteenth Century." Reprint from *The Americas*, vol. XII, July 1955, 15-16.

⁶⁵ Cfr. *Letter of Congratulations of Pope Clement VIII to Salazar, the Clergy and the People*, Rome, March 25, 1592, in BRPI, VIII, 234-235.

religious orders working at that time in the Philippines. On April 27, 1594, the King wrote to the governor⁶⁶ to see to it how the divisions could be carried out. The division was done along geoethnic lines. This brought about, in the long run, tremendous spiritual and pastoral benefices. The religious would not be compelled to learn an innumerable number of languages. With two or three they could give themselves body and soul to the tasks of evangelization. Also the causes for friction among the religious orders were removed.

All the religious orders received ministries in the Tagalog region, but it was the Augustinians and Franciscans who received the best part. The Dominicans accepted in Manila the ministry of the Chinese. The Jesuits were also given some ministries in Manila and nearby provinces. The Augustinians received Pampanga and the Ilocos in Luzon. Pampanga was the richest province of the country and the granary of Manila. It was one of the most populated. The Franciscans took charge of Bikol region, also in Luzon. To the Dominicans were given the provinces of Bataan, Pangasinan and the vast region of Cagayan Valley. The Visayan Islands were divided along linguistic and geographical lines among the Augustinians and Jesuits. Cebu, Panay went to the Augustinians. Samar, Leyte and Bohol to the Jesuits. Mindanao was still unconquered land. Only the eastern part called Caraga and the northeaster part of the island were under the influence of Spain. The hinterlands were still *terra ignota* except the regions of the northwest and west of the island, that were under the Moslems.

The regions of the Augustinians and the Franciscans were more populated and homogeneous. The missions of the Dominicans and Jesuits were more isolated, less populated and, consequently, the poorest. The Recollects, the last of the major religious orders to arrive to the Philippines, when the division had already been done, received scattered islands and missions in the immense Philippine Archipelago. They were found in the more outlying areas, like Zambales in Luzon, Palawan, the Calamianes, Romblon and parts of eastern Mindanao. They were open to the piratical raids of the Moros and by far were the poorest missions.

⁶⁶ The Cédula is found in Spanish in FRANCISCO DE SANTA INES, *Crónica*, 2, p.607. Cfr. J. SCHUMACHER, *Readings*, p.17.

J. L. Phelan describes briefly the point under discussion:

The outstanding practical advantage resulting from this partition was that it enabled each order to concentrate its linguistic studies in not more than four different languages. Only thus could the religious hope to train sufficiently competent linguists in the wide variety of Philippine languages, for a maxim of Spanish missionary policy was that converts should be indoctrinated in their own tongues. It was thought that the natives would respond more readily if the Faith were not preached in an alien language.⁶⁷

c. Manila as an Archdiocese

During his stay in the Philippines Salazar wrote more than once to the king about the need to divide his diocese of the Philippines into various ecclesiastical provinces. He says in a letter:

At various times I have informed your majesty how difficult it is for one bishop to govern a bishopric like the one I have now. I think two bishoprics for this island of Luzon are necessary. And even three would not be enough. What I now humbly beg your majesty is to create a See for the Islands of Pintados with its seat in the city of Cebu, for as your majesty will know, through the report I am sending, two bishops would not be enough [for the country]. I tell you honestly that with me alone your majesty does not fulfil your duty [royal conscience], and I, for the security of my own, would not dare say otherwise.⁶⁸

In 1591 Salazar left the Philippines for Spain to discuss personally with the king burning problems affecting the lives of the people. One of them, no doubt, was the defense of the Filipinos against the abuses of the Spanish officials and the exactions of the government. Another was, as he had pointed out before, the division of the country into various ecclesiastical provinces. Salazar was convinced that for an efficient administration of his vast diocese of the Philippines, and for the temporal and spiritual welfare of the people, the division into more ecclesiastical provinces was a necessity. This was more so in the

⁶⁷ *The Hispanization*, 50-51.

⁶⁸ *Letter of Domingo de Salazar to Philip II*, Manila, June 27, 1588, in AGI, Filipinas 74.

Philippines, because his metropolitan see, Mexico, was more than five thousand kilometers away. This was not yet the most serious problem. There was the need to cross the biggest and most dangerous ocean of the universe, the Pacific Ocean. Salazar, as suffragan to the bishop of Mexico, could not attend the councils of the metropolitan see of Mexico due to the dangers of navigation and the forced abandonment of his flock. This had already happened to him in 1585, when he was unable to attend the III Mexican Council. On the other hand, the territory of the Philippines was so vast, and the navigation of the internal sees so dangerous, that one single bishop in no way could attend to his flock. Salazar knew what he was talking about for on more than one occasion he was shipwrecked and almost drowned.

On June 17, 1595 Philip II, through a letter addressed to his ambassador in Rome, asked him to petition the pope to divide the diocese of the Philippines.⁶⁹ In the consistory of August 14, 1595 pope Clement VIII erected Manila as an archdiocese with three suffragan sees, Nueva Segovia and Cáceres, in Luzon and the Most Holy Name of Jesus in Cebu. On a second consistory on August 30, 1595 the pope named the respective bishops: Ignacio de Santibáñez, Franciscan, for the metropolitan of Manila; Miguel de Benavides, Dominican, for Nueva Segovia; Pedro de Agurto, Augustinian, for Cebu and Luis Maldonado, Franciscan, for Cáceres. The reason why they were not presented during the first consistory was due to the fact that the representative of the king had not yet prepared all the necessary papers. The formal presentation was left for the second consistory of August 30, 1595. The pope accepted in the bull of erection the reasons presented by the king in his letter of petition who in turn had accepted the reasons for the division given to him by Salazar.

Historians mention the fact that the king presented Salazar as first archbishop of Manila. We do not know what would have happened had he been alive at the time of the creation of the archdiocese. Without any doubt he was the promoter of the division of the diocese, but the documents sent to Rome do not mention, and could not mention, Salazar as candidate for the archbishopric. The letter of the king is

⁶⁹ Cfr. *Reales despachos sobre las Indias, 1591-1595*, Archivo de España ante la Santa Sede, leg. 12, fol. 49. In English in BRPI, IX, 150-153. Cfr. DOMINGO ABELLA, *Bikol Annals*, Manila, 1954, 305-308. Abella presents the documents of the erection of the diocese pp. 305-315.

dated June 17, 1595. Salazar had died over six months before, to be precise, on December 4, 1594. There is no reason then to believe that he was presented by the king. Furthermore we know that Salazar, on his way to the Spain from Mexico, on his trip to Spain, was seriously sick. In the opinion of some historians he was a walking skeleton. In Madrid, well before his death, he was also seriously ill. There is no probability for the king to have chosen him as archbishop. Whether the king thought on him or not, it is true that Salazar is the prime mover for the creation of Manila as an archdiocese. It would carry the official title of the *Assumption of the Virgin Mary*.

The archdiocese of Manila included the actual provinces of Rizal, Bataan, Pampanga, Bulacan, Zambales, Nueva Ecija, Laguna, Batangas, Cavite and the islands of Marinduque and Mindoro. Manila was the center of the political, cultural and religious life. The dominant language was Tagalog.

d. The Diocese of Nueva Segovia 1595

In the bull of erection, the second diocese mentioned after Manila is that of Nueva Segovia, in the northernmost part of the island of Luzon. It was erected on August 14, 1595, together with the other dioceses of the Philippines, and was confirmed in the second consistory of August 30, 1595. The see was established in the town of Nueva Segovia, known locally with the name of Lal-loc, in the actual province of Cagayan. The official title of the church would be the *Conception of the Blessed Virgin*, the invocation of the first diocese of the Philippines.⁷⁰ As first bishop of the diocese the king presented, and the pope confirmed, the Dominican Miguel de Benavides, a missionary of long experience in the Philippines and an expert in the Chinese language.

⁷⁰ This is the invocation that appears in the letters of the Spanish King to his ambassador in Rome of June 17, 1595 and in the bulls of erection of all the dioceses of the Philippines in 1595. My opinion is that in Spain people were confused as to the titles of each church. Rome followed the petition of the Spanish authorities. From the beginning Manila, as we said, had the invocation of the *Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, as it appears in the bull *Illius Fulti Praesidio* erecting Manila as a diocese on February 6, 1579. Why now in the official documents Manila receives the official name of the *Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary* and the cathedral of Nueva Segovia that of the *Conception of the Virgin Mary* must simply be attributed to confusion in Spain and Rome.

From his arrival to the islands with the first Dominican mission in 1587 he had exercised his ministry among the *sangleyes* as the Chinese residents of the Philippines were called. In 1590 he went to China with the Dominican provincial Juan de Castro. Benavides was taken as a companion by Domingo Salazar on his trip to Spain in 1591. He became the second archbishop of Manila in 1603 and is the man most responsible for the foundation of the University of Santo Tomas.

The episcopal see of Nueva Segovia remained in Lal-loc, Cagayan, for almost two hundred years. In 1758 Ferdinand VI (1746-1759), decreed that the see be transferred to Vigan, in the Ilocos region. The transfer became definitive in 1762 through the efforts of the bishop-elect of Nueva Segovia Bernardo Ustariz.⁷¹

The extension of the diocese was not agreed at the time of the erection. The bishops of the different dioceses reached their own agreement to the best of their ability. Nueva Segovia included the actual geographical provinces of Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Isabela, Cagayan, Kalinga, Apayao, Mountain Province, Ifugao, Benguet, the zone of missionary activity of the Dominicans. On the western part of northern Luzon it included the actual provinces of Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Abra, provinces of missionary activity of the Augustinians. It extended all the way down to the big province of Pangasinan and the northern part of the province of Tarlac, regions administered by the Dominicans. This explains, to a great extent, why the majority of the bishops of the diocese were Dominicans, followed closely by the Augustinians.⁷²

e. Diocese of the Most Holy Name of Jesus of Cebu (1595)

This diocese was erected in the town of *Santísimo Nombre de Jesús*, as the Spaniards called it, or in the city of Cebu, under the patronage of the *Angel Custodio*, the Guardian Angel. Pope Clement VIII (1592-1605) issued the bull *Super Specula Militantis Ecclesiae*, of August 14, 1595, as he had done with the other dioceses, including the metropolitan of Manila. As first bishop he appointed the Augustinian

⁷¹ Cfr. P. FERNANDEZ, *op. cit.*, 36-37.

⁷² Cfr. MANUEL G. POLA, O.P., "Episcopologio Dominicano de la Diócesis de Nueva Segovia," *Philippiniana Sacra*, 72 (1989), 219-261. Cfr. *Ibidem*, *Obispos dominicos en Filipinas*, Madrid, 1991, 20-48.

Pedro de Agurto, an excellent theologian and a missionary of wide experience in Mexico.

We must not forget the vast extension of this diocese, bigger than all the other dioceses combined. It included the islands that we called today *The Visayas*, and what the Spaniards called *The Pintados*, that is Cebu, Bohol, Panay, Negros, Samar, Leyte, Romblon, Palawan and some other smaller ones. It included the large island of Mindanao, just a little smaller than the island of Luzon, and at that time practically unconquered. Beyond the boundaries of the Philippines today, it included the *Marianas* and the *Palau Islands*, later given to the Jesuits as their own mission land. All through history this diocese was exposed to the Moro piratical raids. Thousands of Filipinos were violently uprooted from their homes every year and transferred to the land of the Moslems and sold as slaves in the markets of Jolo, Sulu, Makasiar, Borneo and beyond. But the description of these piratical raids belongs to another painful chapter of Philippine history.

It is then not strange that the bishops were not able to visit their vast diocese and that the faithful were thus deprived of the sacrament of confirmation for long periods of time. The dangers of navigation, ever present in the Philippines even today, were not the most dangerous when we compare them with the natural isolation of the islands, the vast distances to be covered, and the ever-present danger of the Moro piratical raids.

History tells us that more than one bishop requested the authorities concerned to divide the vast diocese. Centuries were to elapse before their cries were headed. No one pressed more perhaps than Romualdo Jimeno, bishop of Cebu from 1847 to 1872. He was the first bishop to fulfill his pastoral visit to the Marianas Islands. He also visited the other islands of Visayas and Mindanao. In 1865, exactly three hundred years after the arrival of the Spaniards to the Philippines, the diocese of Cebu was divided, creating a new one dismembered from Cebu with the see in *Jaro*, in the island of Panay.

The majority of the bishops from this diocese have been taken from the Augustinian Order, because they have been the most numerous in the Visayas, although we can find other bishops belonging to the other religious orders, especially Dominicans, Franciscans, and Recollects. None of them were Jesuits, for the simple reason that the Jesuits, at that time, were prohibited by the law to accept the office of bishop.

f. Diocese of "Nueva" Caceres in Naga (1595)

The diocese mentioned last in the bull *Super Specula* of August 14, 1595 is the dioceses of Caceres in the Indies.

The Royal Letter of Philip II to his ambassador in Rome and the bull of erection of August 14, 1595, do not mention the word "Nueva", referring to Caceres. Simple mention is made in the letter of petition of the city of Caceres, in the land of Camarines, *tierra de Camarines*. The patron of the church would be *San Juan Evangelista*. The first bishop was the Franciscan Luis Maldonado, professor from Salamanca University, commissary of the Franciscans in the Philippines and missionary here for some years. He died before receiving the bull of appointment.

Abella denies that San Pedro Bautista, protomartyr of Japan, was preconized as bishop of Caceres. Francisco de Ortega, an Augustinian and a missionary of long stay in Mexico and the Philippines, was the second one appointed as bishop of Caceres in 1599. He was ordained in Mexico. He died there in 1601, on his way to the Philippines.⁷³

The bull of erection of the dioceses does not mention the concrete boundaries. Caceres included the region of *Bikol*, today, provinces of Camarines del Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay and Sorsogon and the two island-provinces of Catanduanes and Masbate, with other smaller adjacent island. Following the Pacific coast of Luzon to the north it reached Palanan in Isabela, including the districts the Spaniards called *Infanta* and *Principe*, and the actual provinces of Quezon and Aurora. It was the smallest of the four dioceses. It presented a greater homogeneity and cultural and linguistic unity than the other dioceses of the Archipelago.⁷⁴

g. Diocese of Jaro, Iloilo (1865)

I know that to discuss here the diocese of Jaro brings me too far from the original scope of this work of mine, but since we are trying to present the history of the evangelization of the Philippines, and how the diocese of Manila was divided into different dioceses, I think that in

⁷³ Cfr. Abella, *Bikol Annals*, 36-38).

⁷⁴ Cfr. Abella, *op. cit.*, 13-14).

order to complete the whole picture it is good to present here, though in summary way, the creation of the last diocese during the Spanish period, the diocese of Jaro.

Some bishops of Cebu, all through history, protested energetically to the Spanish authorities against the negative attitude to divide the vast diocese of Cebu. During the XIX century the petitions for a division were more frequent since it was, clear that with one ecclesiastical province the people could not be well attended. Santos Gómez Marañon bishop of Cebu, solicited from the Holy See and the Spanish king the division, but to no avail. Finally the Dominican bishop of Cebu, Romualdo Jimeno, who governed the diocese for 23 years, and the first one to visit pastorally his diocese, obtained from the Spanish king what his predecessors never did, the division of the diocese. The new diocese of Jaro was created on January 17, 1865, under the patronage of *Sta. Isabel*. Pope Pius IX, by the brief *Qui ab initio*, of May 27, of the same year recognized the action of the Spanish government.⁷⁵

The first bishop of Jaro was the Dominican Mariano Cuartero, a helper of bishop Romualdo for many years, and a rector of the College of Ocana in Spain at the time of his appointment. He was named on November 30, 1867, taking possession of his see in 1868. As soon as he arrived to his diocese in 1869 he started the construction of the cathedral. It was finally blessed on February 1 of 1874. Cuartero did not forget the conciliar seminary, dedicated to his own brother St. Vicent Ferrer and finished in 1874. What Cuartero achieved in a few years is astonishing. The seminary was entrusted to the Congregation of the Mission from Spain, popularly known as the *Paules*.

The new diocese included the island of Panay, with today's provinces of Iloilo, Capiz, Aklan and Antique, the immense island of Negros, with the provinces of Negros Oriental and Negros Occidental and today with the four dioceses of Bacolod, Kabankalan, San Carlos and Dumaguete, Palawan and the peninsula of Zamboanga in south western Mindanao. It also included, though it may sound, strange the territory of Guipuzcoa, at that time an unknown land but today covering the three provinces of Davao, Davao Oriental and Davao del Sur.

⁷⁵ Cfr. FIDEL VILLARROEL, O.P., "The Making of a Diocese in the Philippines, Jaro, 1865," *Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas* 435, (1965), 538-555. Cfr. P. FERNANDEZ, O.P., *op. cit.*, 36.

The conclusion is clear. During the whole Spanish period there were only four dioceses, to wit, the Metropolitan of Manila, Santisimo Nombre de Jesus o Cebu, Nueva Segovia and Caceres. At the end of the Spanish period, when Spain had fulfilled her historic mission, a new one was erected, the diocese of Jaro.

A point worthy of note is that the sees of the Philippines were without shepherds for long periods of time. Some bishops never occupied their sees, as they died before their episcopal ordination. Others entered in the government of their dioceses, with the special permission from the Spanish Royal Patronato, and died before receiving their bulls of appointment. It cannot be denied that such long periods of vacancy could not but bring about serious set backs to the growth of Christianity and retard the deepening of Christian faith in the minds of the Filipino people, but this is pastoral theology not history. Thus we shall not discuss it here.

5. The nature of the Spanish evangelization.

The work of Christianization carried out by the Spanish missionaries in the Philippines has been the object of scorn by the Protestant sects that came to the islands with the Americans at the beginning of this century. This scorn can also be seen in some of the religious orders that have come to the country after the World War II. It is still found in the *Acts* of the PCP-II. Many of the bishops of the land today, and many of the priests, fall into the same deception. Few of them are able to capture what historians call the *Zeit Geist*, a queer phrase invented by the philosophical oriented Germans, but a sentence that opens up for historians a new world.

Only those able to relive the spirit of the times, only those who transport themselves to the age of the protagonists, can understand the depth of the work done by the early missionaries and by all those who, through the centuries, were engaged in the task of evangelization.

The understanding of the historical process, always complex and mysterious, is a difficult task. Even those who played a role in the act might not be able to explain the reasons why they acted as they did. Many historians of Philippine history, and of the evangelization of the country, take the historical becoming as a *totum historicum*. With the stroke of a pen, with a sweeping statement, oftentimes the result of

prejudice and ignorance the dismiss centuries of laborious and fruitful work. Only those who read the sources, and try to understand them, can see the meanderings of history. Three hundred years of evangelizing efforts are many years those years.

From the end of the Spanish Age millions of Filipinos called the Church mother. Did she nourish them as children?

Whenever mention is made of the evangelization the Church in the Philippines is apologetic. We need not be triumphant, but we need not ask forgiveness for failures that belong to other ages and other people. With a few general statements about the oppressions of the *conquistadores* and *encomenderos*, and other denunciations here and there, we pass judgment on more than three hundred years of Christian history. Have later generations, those born after the end of the last century, given Christianity a chance in the Philippines?

Did not each town during the Spanish time have its own large and solid church? Was there any town without a priest and a beautiful convento? Where do we see the new churches in the Philippines? Wherever we go today, along the highways of the Philippines, we see beautiful *Iglesias Ni Cristo*. We find them in the cities. We find them in the barrios. We find Protestant chapels and churches belonging to all different religious groups. Where are the new Catholic churches? Were are the new Catholic parishes?

At the end of the last century there was no town in the Philippines without a church, without a priest and without a convento. Today most of the towns have remained with the same church left behind by the early missionaries. The biggest and most conspicuous place is always the Catholic church. Most often it is the pride of the town.

It is good for the bishops and the priests of the country today to truly start of new wave of evangelization. And to start with the building of the material church, the one made of bricks and stones. That church is a symbol of the zeal and dynamism of the spiritual church that is to be created in the hearts and minds of the Filipinos. The sentence of the Apostle John comes to our mind: "I sent you to reap a harvest you had not worked for. Others worked for it; and you have come into the rewards of their trouble." (*Jn* 4,38)

E. G. Bourne, an expert on Philippine history stresses the positive nature of the evangelization carried out by the Spanish missionaries.

He tells those very Protestants who ridiculed the Spanish missionaries that the pagan customs and superstitions of the Anglo-Saxons and Germanic people in Europe continued until the modern age. He writes:

It is customary, too, for Protestant writers to speak with contempt of Catholic missions, but it must not be forgotten that France and England were converted to Christianity by similar methods. The Protestant ridicules the wholesale baptisms and conversions and a Christianity not even skin-deep, but that was the way in which Christianity was once propagated in what are the ruling Christian nations of today. The Catholic, on the other hand, might ask for some evidence that the early Germans, or Anglo-Saxons would ever have been converted to Christianity by the methods employed by Protestants⁷⁶

At the same time he presents a comment full of wisdom and historical precision, worthy to be noticed by our own bishops and priests:

Christianity has made its real conquest and is kept alive by Christian training, and its progress is the improvement which one generation makes upon another in the observance of its precepts.⁷⁷

What has the modern generation gained in the direction of a deeper Christianity from the earlier generations? What training have the Christians of the Philippines received during this century? Why has the *Iglesia ni Cristo* grown to its present status from nothing? Why is the Church losing millions to the Protestant sects? Where is the new evangelization? Is the ignorance of the people today in Catholic doctrine the effect of the Christianity handed down by the Spanish missionaries?

At the end of the last century there were over seven million Filipinos. Today there are around seventy. Has the instruction, catechesis the building of churches, of schools and colleges kept pace with the demographic and social changes the Philippines has experienced in this century?

To conclude this paragraph let me quote a real expert of Philippine Church history, and a lover of the Filipino nation, John Schumacher:

⁷⁶ BRPI, Introduction, 36.

⁷⁷ Ibidem

Elsewhere I have taken the position that the evangelization undertaken by the Spanish missionaries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was not superficial; that, in fact, it was probably the most thorough and systematic evangelization of a whole people in the history of the Christian missions, at least before the nineteenth century. There were in the Philippines none of the mass baptisms which occurred in early stages of the evangelization of America' the missionaries who came to the Philippines had profited by that experience. If anything, one must call intransigent the attitudes of the missionaries to pre-Hispanic religion, and rigorous the requirements they imposed for baptism, both in matters of doctrine to be known and Christian life and values to be embraced.⁷⁸ □

⁷⁸ Cfr. H. DE LA COSTA, S.J. - JOHN N. SCHUMACHER, S.J., *The Filipino Clergy: Historical Studies and Future Perspectives*, Loyola Papers 12, Manila, 1980, pp. 1-2. Cfr. J. N. SCHUMACHER, S.J., "Syncretism in Philippine Catholicism: its Historical Causes," *Philippiniana Sacra*, SIS, 517 (1984), 401-406.