

# The Participation of Native Filipinos in the Liturgical Celebration of Sundays and Holy Days in Franciscan Pueblos\*

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The culmination of the formation of the ecclesial community and liturgical assembly is the communal celebration of the Holy Eucharist—the apex of all the Church's activities—on the Day of the Lord, Sunday. The Franciscan missionaries made use of the talents of the boys of the *Escuelas* and of their graduates in order to enhance the solemnity of liturgical functions in their far-flung pueblos on Sundays and holy days of three crosses with active participation of native lay ministers.

The Franciscans took pains to solemnize the Sunday and holy day liturgy in their pueblos, as they would do in their own monasteries, for some sentimental reason: they considered the pueblos, under their care part of their Order. For, to perform the Divine Praises and Worship in the most perfect manner possible was one of the principal aims of the reformed religious Orders after the Council of Trent.

Whereas in the pre-Christian past the native Filipinos attended the festive *Pag-aanito* without any link to other communities, the pueblo community of the Filipino Indios (gathered as liturgical assembly) celebrated the Day of the Lord as part of the bigger spiritual family of the religious Order to which their *doctrineros* or *Ministros de*

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\* See Balquiedra's two previous studies "The Liturgical Principles Used by the Missionaries and the Missionary Background to the Christianization of the Philippines" in *Philippiniana Sacra*, 88 (Jan.-April, 1995), pp. 5-79; and "The New Order of Worship of the Native Filipinos" in *Philippiniana Sacra*, 89 (May-August, 1995), pp. 185-250.

*Indios* belonged. They even entered into communion with the Universal Christian Church.

In the following pages we will see: (1) how the native Filipinos participated in the liturgical celebration of Sundays and holy days; (2) how the pueblo community celebrated the *Misa Mayor* on these days; and (3) the monastic pattern of the celebration of Sundays and holy days in Franciscan Filipino pueblos.

### **The Participation of Native Filipinos in the Liturgical Celebration of Sundays and Holy Days**

The congregational participation of the whole assembly as it is nowadays envisioned —particularly by the Vatican Council II— was of course out question at that time. But the native Filipinos participated actively in the Sunday Mass and other liturgical acts through the *maestro cantor* with his *cantores reservados* and the *tiples* of the school, the *sacristán mayor* with his *sacristanes acólitos*, and the *Fiscal mayor* together with the *fiscalillos* and bunch of *dalagas* and *bagontaos* of the pueblo under his responsibility.

The offices exercised by these three groups of Filipinos were veritable ecclesial and ecclesiastical ministries rendered in the name of the community during the celebration, which in the early years of the Church could easily have been turned into ecclesiastical minor orders. The *fiscal mayor*, the *maestro cantor* and the *sacristán mayor* were the key representatives of the community at liturgical functions who rendered their services to solemnize them.

#### *The Fiscal Mayor and Fiscalillos*

As introduced above, the ministry rendered by the *fiscal mayor* and the *fiscalillos* pertained to the environmental aspect of the celebration. They managed the faithful observance of Christian duties in the pueblos. As 'keepers of the liturgical environment' during the actual celebration, the fiscals had also important task. First, they supervised that people take their proper seats: all women at one side of the church, all men at the other, while the town officials occupied the front seats and their wives at an exclusive chapel or corner of the nave near the sanctuary. The fiscals themselves had the front seats at the Epistles

side and their wives and the wives of the town officials. Then, they had to look out that people's behavior was according to propriety.

In processions their services were very much needed. The *Franciscan Báculo de Ministros* had this to say:

In processions the *fiscales* must pay special care that the people, men as well as women, conduct themselves with attention and reverence in the church, not talking to one another nor masticating *buyos* [betel nuts]. To this effect they are to be posted at different points in the aisle of the church which must be kept always unobstructed.<sup>1</sup>

The *Fiscal mayor* preceded the sacristans during the sprinkling of holy water over the people while the *Asperges* or *Vidi aquam* was being sung at the beginning of the *Misa Mayor* and when the *Ministro* at the end of the Mass went to sit himself at the *silla* (the presidential chair) in the middle of the sanctuary to give the *plática* (sermon or exhortation), the *Fiscal mayor* or the *fiscal menor más viejo* in his absence preceded the *Ministro* to the place and stayed at his side. Afterwards, the *Fiscal mayor* also announced to the assembly the forthcoming holy days, *vigilias* (days of fasting and abstinence) and marriage banns. Although according to the *Franciscan Constituciones* this function belonged to the *Ministro* himself, that was a practice (the *fiscal* doing the announcement) actually followed in many of their *pueblos*. At this point, especially when there was no scheduled *plática*, he took charge of announcing to the people anything that the *Ministro* wanted him to.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes he read a prepared *plática* or spiritual

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<sup>1</sup> *Báculo*, cap.6, par.13: "...y en las processiones han de tener especial cuidado los Fiscales, de que la gente assi hombres, como mugeres estén con toda atención, y reverencia en la Iglesia sin hablar los unos con los otros ni mascar buyos. Para lo qual, se repartirán por la calle de la Iglesia, que ha de estar desembarazada siempre."

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, cap. 19, par.1: "Todos los Domingos ha de tener cuidado el Ministro de prevenir y avisar al Fiscal mayor de los días de Fiestas, que huviere en la semana, que fueren fiestas de Indios, y de los días de témporas, y Vigilias por que assi está en costumbre, no obstante que nuestra Constitución diga, que todo esto le toca al Ministro, pues muchas vezes, o porque el Ministro no es bastante en la lengua para predicar en la Silla o por otras ocupaciones, o funciones, que se ofrecen no baxa el Ministro a la Iglesia después de Missa y parece que salir solo a echar las fiestas y días de ayuno no le es decente."

exhortation from a book, when the *Ministro* was prevented from delivering one himself.<sup>3</sup>

We have to admit that the fiscals in Franciscan pueblos were already acting in the capacity of the post-Vatican Council II lay ministers.

*The Sacristán Mayor, Sacristanes and Mayordomo de la Iglesia*

The desired solemnity of liturgical functions in Franciscan pueblos would not be fulfilled without the ministries or services of the *sacristán mayor* with his *sacristanes* and the *mayordomo de la Iglesia*. The *Ministro* would be at a lost, if he were to take into consideration by himself alone all the things required by the rubrics. Liturgical articles had to be prepared beforehand. To carry out all the ritual requirements the *Ministro* needed minor ministers.

We have seen how the Franciscans ingeniously established the *Escuela de niños* in every pueblo of their administration, where the young boys were trained to become *cantores* and *sacristanes*. Talented ones received a particular training in the rubrics of the Holy Mass, Divine Office, the sacraments and other liturgical and paraliturgical functions in order to assume the office of *sacristanes mayores*.

Upon the *sacristán mayor* and his little *sacristanes* fell the charge of giving services needed for the exact executing of ritual requirements.

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<sup>3</sup> *Estatutos 1730*, pp. 123-24: "Declárase y adviértese que el Ministro que no pudiese predicar a los Indios en su Idioma, por lo menos les lea, o haga leer en algún libro de explicación de Doctrina, y Sacramentos, lo que le pareciere que más necessitan de entender, y saber; supliendo por este medio la falta de predicación, en algún tiempo o días, y cumpliendo con una obligacion tan precisa. Qualquiera que fuere defectuoso en el cumplimiento de lo que por razón de *Ministro* tiene obligación a hazer, le castigará Nuestro Ch. H. Provincial según fuere el defecto, y si fuere notable y, avisado, no se emmendare, no podrá ser *Ministro de Indios* en tres años; y el que assi castigado, volviere a reincidir, sea privado para siempre de poder ser Ministro."

The *Fiscal mayor* was the person best prepared to do this job of reading some prepared talks to the assembly in the name of the *Ministro*.

In Franciscan pueblos the ministry of deacon was never availed of in order to enhance the solemnity of the feasts.<sup>4</sup> But the solemnity of the celebration was usually marked by the large number of boys at the altar acting as *acólitos*. Being trained in rubrics the *sacristán mayor* had a variety of functions.<sup>5</sup> The most important was that of the master of ceremonies, directing the *sacristanes* in the function of acolytes.

The *sacristanes* rendered the common services of acolytes. Their services were needed, for instance, during the processional rites: they carried the cross and the *ciriales*, *incensario*, *azetre*, etc. During the Mass they had to carry the Missal; ring the bells; serve wine, water and wafer; accompany the celebrant during communion rite with paten and palmatoria; act as escorts of the celebrant to emphasize his dignity. In non-sacramental liturgical functions such as benediction with the Blessed Sacrament, the *renovación del Santísimo*, were also indispensable. Most importantly, they had to answer the greetings and invitations of the celebrant in the name of the assembly.

In Franciscan pueblos the *sacristans* also performed the task of the modern sexton. But such tasks were principally the charge of the *sacristán mayor* who share it with the little *sacristans*. The sacred vessels and utensils, the right vestments for every type of feast, the altar linen, the correct number of candles, the position of the chair of the main celebrant, the wine and water for the Mass, the holy water for aspersion, the burning censer and incense cup — all had to be ready for the corresponding liturgical act. He had sometimes to supervise the changing of the gold-embroidered vestments of the statues of the saints and determine their places in the church nave.

The *sacristán mayor* coordinated with the *Mayordomo de la Iglesia* in the performance of his duties. Like other church officials,

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.23: "Ni usen de Diáconos con Dalmáticas, o sin ellas, assi en los Conventos de Comunidad, como en las Doctrinas, y Convento de Nuestra Madre Santa Clara; y el que lo contrario hiciere, o permitiere, sea castigado con rigor."

<sup>5</sup> Throughout the CRR-Tor the rites and ceremonies which need the services of the *sacristanes* were marked conveniently with large asterisks at the margins of the book. The author said he had compiled all these services in a Tagalog Manual for the use of the *sacristanes mayores* in Franciscan pueblos. We lament that our research work in the different archives did not bring to light any extant copy of it.

the *Mayordomo* was selected by the *Ministro* of the pueblo.<sup>6</sup> He had an office of trust and was in charge principally of keeping and recording all the alms —either in money or in kind— that the people donated for the upkeep of the church. Among his more common duties in relation to liturgy were the following:<sup>7</sup>

1. To keep in safety all the precious ornaments of the church.
2. To air them from time to time, especially the golden or silver-embroidered vestments, under the sun, to prevent decay.
3. To manage the washing of the altar linens.
4. To check the timber and woodwork of the church building and convento, the altar table, the *retablos*, wooden images, the drawers and boxes of the sacristy, the *insignias* of the Holy Week, etc., making sure that *anay* (termites) do not consume them.
5. To keep a constant supply of candles for solemn feasts and for the use of the faithful.

The *sacristanes mayores* and the *mayordomos* made a very good team-work in the preparation as well as in the actual liturgical celebration.

### *The Maestro Cantor, Tiples and Cantores Reservados*

While the ministry of the sacristans concerned the realm of liturgical signs insofar as seen, for 'the optical elements of celebration', the ministry of the *cantores* pertained to the liturgical signs insofar as heard, or 'the acoustical elements of celebration'.

The ministry or service of the sacristans was complimentary to the ministry of the ordained minister inasmuch as he was the principal visible sign of Christ's presence in the mystery being celebrated. On the other hand the *cantores* shared in the ministry of the ordained minister with regard to the verbal signs or the proclamation of the

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Báculo*, cap.7: 'De el Mayordomo de la Iglessia y cómo se ha de haver con él el Ministro.'

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

Word of God. Action (optic) and word (acoustic) were the two most important signs used as means of communication during the ritualistic celebration of the Christian mysteries.<sup>8</sup> And the native Filipinos in their pueblos did not only contribute their services in regard to the actualization of the visible signs of the persons of the sacristans, but also in regard to the execution of the audible signs of celebration in the persons of the cantors.

Music has been from time immemorial the one means used by all peoples to solemnize their religious celebrations. Again in this respect the contribution of the native Filipinos came from the boys of the *Escuela* and its graduates—the cantores reservados—in every pueblo. We have seen how they were trained in the school and how within a short time, not only the indigenous inhabitants but also the missionaries themselves, admired the musical contribution of those cantors. “With the sweetness of the music it seems that the whole glory of God is descending upon [the church]” —exclaimed the chronicler— “since the inclination of the Indios to both European instruments and singing was very singular.”<sup>9</sup> And the inclination came together with exceptional learning skill. For the rest we need not repeat what has been said above; but more shall be said about their services when we discuss particular ceremonies below.

The *sacristanes* and cantores cooperated hand in hand in making the liturgical celebrations in Filipino pueblos on Sundays, holy days and other feasts of saints on a par with the solemn functions in Europe:

The celebration of the Divine Office was admired because it was performed with devotion and solemnity. This is a manifestation of the personal dedication of some *sacristanes* well instructed

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<sup>8</sup> The ministries or services required during the liturgical celebration can be classified into these two categories: (1) ministries which have relation to the realm of words (= acoustic element), and (2) ministries related to the realm of symbols (= optic element). The services of the sacristans pertain to the optic element; those of cantors, to the acoustic element. The services of the fiscals embraced the two elements. For the two elements of liturgical celebration, cf. Reifenberg, *Fundamental Liturgie*, I: 264-76.

<sup>9</sup> *Chronicas S. Greg*, 2:16: “...y con dulzura de la Música parece que baja a él [i.e. templo] toda la Gloria de Dios, siendo en el Indio singularísima la inclinación assi a los Instrumentos Europeos como al cantar, en que he conocido a algunos de destreza superior.”

in the practice of Ritual and to the dexterity of musical voices in which the *cantores* are trained from childhood.<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, the Franciscan themselves admitted that these services of the sacristans and cantors were the decisive factor that "made Christianity, as regards the celebration of Divine Office and solemn cult of the true God, truly plausible."<sup>11</sup>

### **The *Misa Mayor* on Sundays and Feasts of Three Crosses**

The participation of the native Filipinos in liturgical services was expressed in the celebration of the *Misa Mayor* on Sundays and feasts of three crosses or *Fiestas de Indios* in a particular way. There were two main liturgical functions on these days for which the frailes made use of the services of the native Filipinos: the *Misa Mayor* in the morning and *Visperas* in the afternoon. The whole community, however, had no obligation to be present at the church for the *Visperas*, although on big feasts of saints—not necessarily holy days of three crosses—the *Visperas*, especially the First Vespers, were usually well attended by the people. We shall deal with this in another place. On ordinary Sundays and feasts of three crosses the Sung Vespers were intended to be attended only by the sacristans, official cantor, *tiples* and some devout and pious souls. On ordinary Sundays and feasts of three crosses, therefore, the *Misa Mayor* was the main liturgical function which the entire community of the pueblo attended. It was here that the sacristans, the official cantors, *tiples* and fiscals with the *mayordomo* de la iglesia contributed their services to solemnize the celebration.

The *Misa Mayor* according to the Franciscan rules of life must always be a Sung Mass,<sup>12</sup> during which the choir sang the following

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:14: "Assi se admiran celebrados los Divinos Oficios con la devoción, y solemnidad, que corresponde al servicio personal de unos Sachristanes bien informados en la práctica del Ritual, y a la destreza de voces músicas, en que se exercitan los Cantores desde su niñez."

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p.17: "...lo que Nuestro Fr. Juan de Plasencia en las Escuelas de niños principió es la que ha podido hacer tan plausible esta Christiandad, en la celebración de los Divinos Oficios y Culto solemne del verdadero Dios."

<sup>12</sup> *Estatutos 1730*, p.23: "La Missa...cánta[se] los Domingos, Fiestas de guardar, y las principales de nuestra Orden."

parts: Introit, Kyrie, Gloria, Gradual-Alleluia, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus, Communion antiphon and the dialogical parts.<sup>13</sup> These parts were sung in *canto llano* or plain chant according to the tradition of the Order, although *cantos de órgano* were also used on big and more solemn feasts.<sup>14</sup>

The *frailes* tried to strictly observe the Roman Ceremonial of the Council of Trent, but they did not hesitate to introduce little adaptations which did not go in conflict with the rubrics and which made the ceremonies more solemn, dignified and impressive. Precisely for this purpose they needed the services of the sacristans, official cantors, fiscals and *tiples*. With these little creative touches we must deal here, because for the rest the missionaries followed the Roman Rite faithfully. This creativity was seen particularly in the peripheral parts of the liturgical celebration.

#### *Creative Preparatory Rites of the Misa Mayor in Franciscan Filipino Pueblos*

The preparatory rites of the *Misa Mayor* began with the convocation of the assembly when at about eight o'clock in the morning the festive pealings of the bells announced it to the people of the pueblo.<sup>15</sup> Gradually the church's *patio* was turning into a hub of activities. With the help of the fiscal's reminders the entire community went to the church with the exception of a few who had already gone to the early Mass, because they had either domestic obligations to perform (such as care of the sick and babies) or surveillance to do for the pueblo's preservation from fires and other damages that might be inflicted by brigands and outlaws.

The *sacristanes*, official cantors and *tiples* came to the church ahead of the community, because they had to join the *frailes* in the singing Minor Hours of the Divine Office and of the Little Office of the

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Manual-Cantoral*, Misas Clásicas, in AFIO A 6/2.

<sup>14</sup> We reconstructed these preparatory and initial rites of the *Misa Mayor* from two sources: *Estatutos* 1730 (pp.131-33: De la Misa Mayor, y rezo de los Indios), and *Báculo* (cap. 20: De los Domingos).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Báculo*, cap. 20.

Blessed Virgin. But not only for this did they come earlier than the rest of the community. For, when the people began coming while the fiscals were showing them into their designated places and the sacristans were making the final preparations in the sacristy and at the altar with the *mayordomo*, the *tiples* played their *chirimias* and *flautas*.

The initial rites of the *Misa Mayor* consisted in the blessing of the water and the aspersion of the people with the holy water. Donning with the amice, alb, and violet stole, the *preste* (that is, the presiding celebrant) readied himself for the blessing of the water. At the designated place were to be found all the things necessary for the blessing of water. The conspicuous article was the *tinaja* (a large, native earthen jar) filled with water—which must be embellished with flowers (*adornada de flores*)—, a bowl of salt, a tall *atril* or *ambo*, the Missal, two candles and a crucifix. This blessing of water—done every Sunday and holy days or at least every other Sunday, like the aspersion— seemed to be performed before the congregation. The text of the *Báculo de Ministros* which furnished us the rites of blessing of water and aspersion is not explicit in this matter. But what purpose did it serve to adorn the *tinaja* with flowers, if the blessing only took place in the sacristy? At any rate, the embellishment of the water container was already a creative alteration of the simple provision of the Franciscan Ritual: “On Sunday the sacristan prepares in the sacristy the water and salt to be blessed... For the blessing the rubrics do not require anything. Some recommend a cross and candles: to have them is good but not necessary.”<sup>16</sup>

After the blessing of the water the *preste* changed the violet stole with one of the color of the Mass (unless violet was the color of the day) and proceeded to the lowest step of the sanctuary, being accompanied by a number of acolytes two of whom were candlebearers carrying the *ciriales*.<sup>17</sup> He knelt on the lowest step while the two acolytes at his either side knelt on the floor (even in Easter season) and intoned the

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<sup>16</sup> *Ritual S. Greg.*, p.86: “Para esta bendición no pide la Rúbrica otra cosa. Cruz y velas encargan algunos que se pongan: el hazerlo es bueno; pero no necesario.”

<sup>17</sup> In Franciscan pueblos the *ciriales* were used to enhance the solemnity of liturgical celebrations: “Adviertan los Prelados, que la solemnidad de N. Misas consiste en las Candelas de los Altares ... y en los Ciriales, e incienso...” (CRR-Tor, *Trat.III*, p.11).

*Asperges me* or *Vidi aquam*. He received the sprinkler from the acolyte with the right hand. As the choir started to sing, he sprinkled the altar thrice (at the center, the Gospel and Epistle sides), still kneeling. If the Blessed Sacrament was exposed at this time—as on the feast of the pueblo's *Santo Patrón*—<sup>18</sup> the altar was not sprinkled. He then rose up and sprinkled the kneeling acolytes at his sides who also got up to accompany the *preste* in the sprinkling of the assembly *con gravedad*.

The two candlebearers went down as far as the railing in front of the seats of the government officials, from where the *Fiscal Mayor* genuflected towards the altar and went down the aisle, sprinkling the people on the Gospel side up to the rear of the aisle and subsequently the people at the opposite side on the way back to the sanctuary. During the sprinkling the *Fiscal Mayor* preceded the *preste*, while the two acolytes accompanied the *preste* at either side, one of whom was carrying the *azetre*. On a very solemn Sunday, such as the *Pascua de Resurrección* and *Pascua de Pentecostés*, the candlebearers preceded the *preste* and the *Fiscal Mayor*, all the way down the aisle and back to the railings of the front seats. On these solemn occasions the priest also used the pluvial.

At the *Gloria Patri* of the psalm they stopped and made a medium inclination wherever they were in the aisle at its intonation. Then the *preste* went up onto the lowest step of the sanctuary, genuflected and waited for the end of the singing. He then sang the verses and the oration, genuflected toward the Blessed Sacrament and returned to the sacristy. Being vested appropriately for the Mass and within the accompaniment of the acolytes *more solito*, the *preste* went out again to the sanctuary to sing the Mass.

The role played by the *Fiscal Mayor* during the sprinkling of the people appeared to have no other purpose than to make the whole ceremony impressive, dignified and solemn. The *Fiscal Mayor* would be again escorting the *preste* as he delivered his sermon or *plática*. According to the *frailes'* mentality the participation of the sacristans, *tiples*, official cantors and fiscals was the only thing needed to solemnize liturgical celebrations. And in this little adaptations introduced

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<sup>18</sup> The celebration of the feasts of patron saints in Franciscan pueblos was remarkable because the *Misa Mayor* was always carried out before the *Santísimo patente* (CRR-Tor, Trat.III, p.8).

by the missionaries in reference to the Mass but they were meant for more solemn festivities which we shall discuss when we deal with the Sung High Mass on day of the Santo Patrón.

*The Festive Catechetical Instruction Joint to Misa Mayor of Sundays and Holy Days*

In Franciscan pueblos the *Misa Mayor* did not only mean the celebration of the community Mass but also the festive indoctrination of the faithful which the frailes inserted into the Sunday and holy day Mass. The missionaries made use of the allotted time for the faithful's fulfillment of the Sunday observance as an opportunity to execute their own duty to preach. When the people were gathered under one roof to celebrate the Mass, it was also time to teach them the *Doctrina cristiana*. This kerygmatic practice became adjunct to the *Misa Mayor*, almost as an integral part of the Sunday (and holy day) morning liturgical function.

This catechetical instruction consisted in the ingenious practice of the communitarian recitation or singing of the *Tocsohan*. The Franciscan *Constitutiones* said:

Taking into account what the Holy Council of Trent disposes concerning the days on which the *Ministro* has to preach to the souls under his charge, we order that on Sundays and feasts [of three crosses], when there would be no formal *plática*, two or four sacristans or *tiples* of the *Escuela* who know the *doctrina* best, donned in surplices, shall go to the center of the church, before the start of the *Misa Mayor* or at end —whenever the *Ministro* thinks there would be more people in the church. And they shall recite aloud —or sing— the prayers of the *doctrina* at one time and at another the *Tocsohan* to be complete, while all those in the church answer. In this way they shall not forget it.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Estatutos 1730*, p.132: “En atencion a lo que el Santo Concilio Tridentino dispone, tratando de los días en que ha de predicar el *Ministro* que tiene a su cargo almas, se ordena que en los Domingos y fiestas en que no tuviere *plática* formal, salgan dos o quatro Sachristanes o Tiples de la escuela, que mejor sepan la *Doctrina*, vestidos con sus Sobrepellizes, al medio de la Iglesia, antes de comenzar la *Missa Mayor*, o al tiempo que se acaba, conforme el *Ministro* viere en que ocasión de las dos

The *Tocsohan* was (as already mentioned in another place) most probably conceived originally by the Franciscan Juan de Plasencia in line with the principle of indoctrination followed in the *Escuela de niños*. It was their policy to make the process of learning pleasant by injecting in it an element of *juego* (play). The first Tagalog catechism, composed by Fray Juan de Plasencia and presented by the Franciscans during the First Synod of Manila (1582) was called *Tocsohan*.<sup>20</sup> ‘*Tocsohan*’ is a Tagalog word, meaning ‘playful teasing’ or ‘teasing game’, in which one party asks questions to be answered by the other party, the questioning and answering roles being reversed alternately after the correct answer has been given. The singing of the *Doctrina cristiana* was precisely performed after this pattern with the difference that the tipples always took the questioning role.

The document continued:

After the Mass and the [recitation or singing of the] prayer, the *Ministro* shall go to the [center of the] church and shall ask the Indios about what they prayed in order to find out how they understand it. He shall teach them briefly what they do not understand, and without being very profound shall explain some points towards the understanding of the said doctrine.<sup>21</sup>

This explanation was part of a series of post-baptismal catechetical instruction which was needed, because the early whole-

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ay más gente junta y rezarán en voz alta, respondiendo todos los que están en la Iglesia, un día las Oraciones de la Doctrina, y otro el Tocsohan, para que estén en todo, y no se olvide.”

<sup>20</sup> It is generally believed that this *Tocsohan*, even if corrected by many hands in subsequent years, is substantially the same as the first *Doctrina Christiana* printed in the Philippines with the following title: *Doctrina Christiana en lengua española y tagala corregida por los Religiosos de la Imprensa con licencia en S. Gabriel de la orden de S. Domingo. En Manila 1593*.

A facsimile of the copy exists: *Doctrina Christiana. The first book printed in the Philippines, Manila 1593*. A facsimile of the copy in the Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, with an introductory essay by Edwin Wolf, 2nd ed. [Washington: Library of Congress, 1947].

<sup>21</sup> *Estatutos 1730*, p.132: “Conclyda la Missa, y dicho rezo, saldrá el Ministro a la Iglesia, y preguntará a los Indios alguna cosa de lo que han rezado, para ver si lo saben y cómo lo entienden, y enseñarles lo que no saben explicándoles en breves palabras, y sin ser demasiadamente pesado, algunos puntos pertenecientes a la inteligencia de dicha Doctrina.”

sale baptisms were often preceded by inadequate doctrinal formation, while later on infant baptism was the rule. The *Escuela de niños*, of course, had greatly improved the doctrinal formation of the native Filipinos. At the same time the *Fiscal Mayor* took charge of the continuous indoctrination of the *dalagas* and *bagongtaos* every Saturday. This was further supplemented by the preparation for the fulfillment of the annual Easter duty that included an examination on the catechism. For without sufficient knowledge of the *Doctrina cristiana* they were not confessed.

This public recitation or singing of the *Tocsohan* was not a simple session of catechetical formation. Planned or unplanned by the missionaries, the communitarian encounter with the Christian message became part of the Sunday (and holy day) morning liturgical celebration. The playful element in it made the whole kerygmatic activity not only instructive but also festive. For game is a natural element of feast.<sup>22</sup> This was a curious case of the whole community's catechetical encounter with the Christian message in the context of celebration. Strain in the assembly was avoided during this kerygmatic activity. It was simply designed so that "in this way they shall not forget" what they had learned and that they have all the time the hold of "the complete doctrine." Even the explanation of the *Ministro* must be "brief" and "not very profound." It was simply celebration time!

We would like to think that this communitarian recitation or singing of the *Doctrina cristiana* was used by the missionaries to compensate for the unintelligibility of the Liturgy of the Word eclipsed by the strange Latin language. But our documents do not bear out this interpretation. On the contrary they indicated that the missionaries could not care less whether the assembly understood the proclamation of the word of God or not. The Sunday and holy day sermon or *plática* required by the Council of Trent was not actually a homily on the Readings but moral talk or explanation of passages of the Tridentine Catechism. The systematic discourses on the commandments, the sacraments, the prayers rather than the homily on the Readings would seem more appropriate for the instruction of the Filipino neophytes.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Hugo Rahner, *L'homo ludens* (Brescia: Paideia, 1969).

<sup>23</sup> This approach was in line with the provision of the Council of Trent in its Session XXIV: *De reformatione*, cap. VII: "Ut fidelis populus ad suscipienda

In fact the *pláticas* of the *Ministro* took place after the Mass according to the early practice of the Franciscans in their *doctrinas* or *pueblos*. Later on they decided to hold it right before the preparation of the gifts, not because of the talk's relationship with the Readings but because of the fact that at the end of the Mass some churchgoers managed to slip off the church immediately without waiting for the *plática*.<sup>24</sup>

In spite of this fact, given the liturgical climate of the period, the Franciscans were still able to turn the *Misa Mayor* —to which the 'festive kerygma' was grafted— into a communitarian or ecclesial affair through the active participation of the *sacristanes*, *tiples*, *cantores*, *fiscales* and *mayordomos*. Practically, the whole morning was spent in the church for the Holy Mass and catechetical instruction. And it was here that the assembly of the *pueblo* became more and more 'ecclesial community' of the Spanish Philippine Local Church, because they encountered the Christian message through communitarian instruction as well as they celebrated as a community the Mystery of Faith.

### *The Monastic Pattern of the Celebration of Sundays and Holy Days in Franciscans Pueblos*

The Franciscans took pains in making the liturgical and other religious functions in the *pueblos* under their care on Sundays and holy days because in a way they felt these acts of worship were also their

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sacrameta majori cum reverentia atque animi devotione accedat, praecipit sancta Synodus episcopis omnibus, ut non solum cum haec per seipsos erunt populo administranda, prius illorum vim & usum pro suscipientium captu explicent, sed etiam lingua vernacula, si opus sit, & commode fieri poterit, servari studeant, juxta formam a sancta synodo in catechesi singulis sacramentis praescibendam; quam episcopi in vulgarem linguam fideliter verti, atque a parochis omnibus populo exponi curabunt: nec non inter missarum sollemnia aut divinorum celebrationem, sacra eloquia & salutis monita eadem vernacula lingua singulis diebus festis vel solemnibus explanent: eademque omnium cordibus, post positos inutilibus quaestionibus, inferere, atque eos in lege domini erudire studeant." (in *Mansi* 33:159).

<sup>24</sup> *Estatutos 1730*, p. 132: "Los días que huviere sermón, que, según determina el Santo Concilio de Trento, son los Domingos y días festivos (en que ha de ser siempre muy cuidadoso y frecuente el buen Ministro, para que estén sus feligreses bien doctrinados), se predicará, aviendo comodidad, al Ofertorio; porque de ordinario, en acabando la Missa, se va mucha gente de la que a ella vino; y por lo mismo, en caso de predicar aviendo concluydo la Missa, se tendrá mucho cuydado para que la gente no salga de la Iglesia."

own. The worship rendered by the native Filipinos fused into a single act of all God's children: from both the native inhabitants and the *Castillas* (as the Spaniards were called by the Filipino Indios); from both the neophytes and their fathers in faith and evangelizers, the *frailes*.

All Christians were giving worship to the one God, but the efficacy of worship depended on the dignity of the person rendering worship. It was the general conviction of the time that those who belonged to the religious Orders —by means of solemn vows— performed a more efficacious act of worship than the ordinary Christians or laymen.<sup>25</sup> This was of course understood not in reference to God but to men themselves who gained merits for their acts of worship. Accordingly even the acts of worship rendered by the Filipino Indios in the pueblos should be in some way united with the acts of worship of the Franciscan *frailes* themselves, who belonged to that state of evangelical perfection. The desire for unification of mankind under one Lord and God that the missionaries, bishops, and even Christian kings carried in their hearts was fulfilled in the Franciscan Filipino pueblos, in a special way during liturgical celebrations on Sundays and holy days. The Filipino Indios on their part shared in the innumerable spiritual benefits which were made available to them through participation in the spiritual activities of the world-wide Franciscan Order.<sup>26</sup>

In view of this mentality and for practical reasons the schedule of liturgical activities in the pueblos for the people was coordinated with the *frailes'* performance of the *Misa Mayor*, which was actually the Conventual Mass of the Franciscans.

Thus, their *Constituciones* said:

We ordered that the conventual Mass be always said at its proper time for the community, and in the doctrinas it shall be

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<sup>25</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, q.88, art.6 and art.7.

<sup>26</sup> A special means of participating in the spiritual benefits available to non-members of the Religious Orders was by becoming a member of the Thirds Orders, such as the V.O.T. (*Venerable Orden Tercera*) of the Franciscans. Cf. AF10 281/6, *Ordenaciones desta Sancta Provincia de los descalços de San Gregorio de la Regular Observancia de Nuestro Padre San Francisco destas Islas Philipinas...de 1640, cap. 9: De los hermanos terceros.*

said on Sundays and feasts of three crosses for the people.<sup>27</sup>

Even though the Filipino Indios did not have the obligations of the monks, they were nevertheless encouraged to participate in some devotional and liturgical practices of the *frailes*. The ringing of the bells from the church tower served as indications to the people of what spiritual activities the *frailes* were engaged in at a particular time, so that they too could pray in their own way at home or even in the field.

Let us see how the order of the day in Franciscans pueblos on Sundays, *Fiestas de Indios*, *Fiestas de españoles* (feast of one and two crosses), and *Fiestas clásicas del Orden* was anchored upon the schedule of the *frailes*.<sup>28</sup>

In the dead silence of midnight the *campana mayor* of the church belfry sounded a penetrating *golpe* to announce the *frailes'* getting up from bed to prepare for the recitation of *Maitines* and *Laudes*. The reformed religious Orders were especially strict on the recitation of the Divine Office *a su hora* (at its proper time). In the Franciscan Province of St. Gregory the Great in the Spanish Philippines it was always at midnight!<sup>29</sup> As the *frailes* went to the *Coro* —which was in the rear of the church or at the box *azotea* hanging by the door—, the *campana*

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<sup>27</sup> *Estatutos 1730*, p.23: "Ordénase que la Missa Conventual se diga siempre a su hora, por la Comunidad, y en las Doctrinas se dirá los Domingos y fiestas de tres cruces por el Pueblo."

<sup>28</sup> The description that follows has been based on the provisions of the *Estatutos 1730* from articles: *Del Oficio Divino y distribución del tiempo* (pp. 128-131), and *Del Tocar las Campanas* (pp. 137-139) as well as *Chronicas S. Greg.*, 2: 14-15.

<sup>29</sup> The early *Ordenaciones* were quite strict on this matter. Such was the provision of the document *Constituciones de 1663*, AFIO 344/2, cap.1: "Ordénase que se guarde inviolablemente la loable costumbre de dezir Maytines a media noche, y las demás Horas a sus horas." But in the *Estatutos 1730* there was already a bit of relaxation: "Si por alguna necesidad fuere preciso decir los Maytines fuera de la media noche, por tiempo considerable como en un caso de falta de Religiosos, o de muchas enfermos, calificada la causa, y conocida por N. Ch. H. Provincial, podrá dar licencia para que se digan los Maytines antes o después de la media noche, y assi mismo por quanto tiempo" (p.19). See also, Fray José Miralles, *Observaciones sobre las Constituciones de Provincia impresas en 1730*, in AFIO 289/2-7.

*menor* (or *segunda*) signaled the start of the solitary liturgical hour of spiritual reading, mental prayer and chapter of faults.<sup>30</sup>

If the *Ministro* had an assistant who did not need to go to a nearby *visita* to celebrate the Holy Mass there, the *hebdomadario* (either the Guardian or his assistant, by turn) celebrated the Mass *temprano* —early, that is, if present practice in many rural parishes today is of any indication, it was between five and six o'clock in the morning. To announce this early Mass the *campana menor* was rung. The Guardian or *Ministro de Indios* of the pueblo took care that the nursing mothers attend this Mass so that their babies would not create disturbance if they were to be present at the *Misa Mayor*. Also those who were assigned to watch the pueblo to prevent theft and arson during the *Misa Mayor* must be at this early Mass.

At seven o'clock in the morning the *campana mayor* struck to signal the time of *Prima*, during which the *frailes* said the four Minor Hours of the Divine Office. This was at the same time the signal for the sacristans and tiples of the *Escuela* and the *cantores reservados* to come to the church because, as the frailes ended their prayers, they were to sing the *Te Deum* or the Litany of Our Lady (in Lent). Generally at about eight o'clock —in some pueblos, much later, to give people time to come from distant *visitas*— the bells gave three *repiques* (festive tolling) with due intervals in order to announce the *Misa Mayor*. Sufficient time was given to the people to come to church.

Before the Mass began, when the people were gathered, or after the Mass if the *Ministro* so preferred, the *tiples* and sacristans went to the middle of the aisle and recited aloud or sang the prayers and the *Tocsohan*. As the priest began to put on the sacred vestments, the *campana mayor* sounded the start's signal. During the Mass the *campana mayor* sounded eight or ten *golpes* at the *Sanctus*. It gave another five or six *golpes* while the priest extended his hands over the offerings and traced several crosses over them. At the consecration five or six *golpes* each at the elevation of either Host or chalice. People who were not able to go to Mass for some reason knew exactly through the sounding of the bells at what moment the celebration was and were

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<sup>30</sup> The chapter of faults was done at this time not during the mealtime —the customary time in monasteries— because there were native Filipino boys from the *Escuela* who served them at meal (cf. *Estatutos 1730*, p.28).

able to unite themselves spiritually with the celebrating pueblo through some private prayers.

The midday of Sundays and holy days was again enlivened by joyous *repiques*. It was time to eat lunch. Then at two o'clock in the afternoon the *campana mayor* ended the afternoon rest with two *golpes*. It was time for the boys of the *Escuela* as well as the official cantors to come to church and join the *frailes* in solemnly singing the Vespers of the Sunday or feast and play musical instruments especially the *chirimías* to accompany the singing. The start of the Vespers was announced by joyful *repiques* of the bells. The Filipino Indios were not obliged to attend the singing of the Vespers, but the chroniclers informed us that the people were charmed by the singing of the boys and the playing of musical instrument so that they developed a kind of liking of these sung services.<sup>31</sup> The Hour of Vespers was very well attended in the eve of big feasts.

When it was the season for hearing confession (in Lent), the *Completas* was recited immediately after Vespers, so that confessions could take place until dusk. Otherwise, at around five o'clock the *campana mayor* would again strike twice to give signal for the recitation of the *Completas* which was immediately followed by another installment of mental prayer.

At dusk around six o'clock in the evening the bells pealed joyful *repiques* for the *Ave Marias* and the people left immediately for a couple of minutes whatever they were doing, faced the church and devoutly prayed the *Angelus* or *Regina coeli*. This was also the signal for young men and women and children to clear off the streets and plazas and start going home. At the same time the boys of the *convento* went to close the doors of the church as well as those of the *convento* and the *frailes* went to take their supper.

When darkness had set in at around eight o'clock in the evening the belfry would sound several *dobles* a haunting call to all the faithful to pray for the souls in purgatory. This was immediately followed by eight deep, penetrating *golpes* of the big bell. The *Animas* —as this evening supplication for the souls in purgatory came to be known— was the last-announced prayer of the *frailes* which echoed in every

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<sup>31</sup> *Chronicas S. Greg*, 2: 14: "...se aficionan los Indios a la asistencia de él."

native Filipino home. The *frailes* entered their *celdas* (a monk's quarters) and strict silence was imposed even on those boys who were serving in the *convento*. Nobody was supposed to roam around the pueblo after the last stroke of the bell at the *Animas*. And the *frailes* and the people of the pueblo went until night rest, in God's peace and protection.

This was the general course of a Sunday or *fiesta* in a Franciscan pueblo although there were more activities and a lot more noise and longer evenings in the town plaza and church patio on more solemn and bigger *fiestas*, about which more will be said below. More or less the bells were rung on the same pattern on ordinary days and a lot more *repiques* during the big feasts and processions, and visits of ecclesiastical prelates. On the whole the Filipino Indios in a pueblo followed the course of life of the monks. They joined the monks or *frailes* in fulfilling their Christian duty of worship of the One God.

The pueblo became inevitably an extension-monastery of the religious Order of which its *Ministro* was a professed member, even if at times there was only one *fraile* serving as *doctrinero* there. The people in the pueblo celebrated Sundays and fiestas in the manner prescribed by the rules of the religious Order to which their *Ministro* belonged. The participation of the Filipino Indios in liturgical acts through singing, for instance, and playing musical instruments was actually a contribution of the native Filipinos to the worship being rendered by a religious Order. The Franciscan chronicler San Antonio testified that because of special participation of the boys from the *Escuelas*, "...this Province has always been and still very outstanding in the solemnity of its fiestas and worship of God."<sup>32</sup>

## Conclusion

Having been "reduced" in pueblos, the Filipino Indios were placed in a situation in which they were led to live as members of civilized, Christian communities. But a pueblo was not a simple township; it was principally a local ecclesial community with monastic overtones. The *frailes* monitored the life of the Filipino indios in

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p.17: "...siempre ha sido, y es esta Provincia muy singular en la solemnidad de sus Fiestas, y Culto de Dios." (Underscoring mine.)

Franciscan pueblos after their own monastic way of life. Franciscan pueblos were, as it were, “extension-communities” of their religious Order. The Filipino Indios had to follow the schedule of the monastic life of their *Ministro*. The belfry kept reminding the people of the different Hours of the Divine Office which the *frailes* recited or sang and in which the boys of the *Escuelas* partly participated. On Sundays and holy days of three crosses (*fiestas de Indios*), then no servile works were allowed, the Filipino Indios participated more fully in the monastic schedule, because they had the obligation to attend the *Misa Mayor*, and the leisure to be present at the celebration of the Divine Praises.

The *Misa Mayor* was the Community Mass in the real sense of the word to the Franciscan Filipino pueblo inasmuch the same manner as the Conventional Mass was to a Franciscan monastic community. The whole pueblo community attended and participated in it in an active manner. The native Filipinos themselves provided the altar services through the *sacristanes* and *mayordomos* who also took care of preparing the liturgical utensils, vestments, and books needed for the celebration. The native Filipinos themselves in the persons of the cantors —the *tiples* and *cantores reservados*— provided the singing and instrumental music that enhanced the liturgical celebration. The *fiscales* prepared the liturgical environment, maintained proper order in the assembly during the actual celebration, and served as the “minister of honor” that accompanied the *preste* at some of his presidential acts and, occasionally, as special lay ministers by reading announcements and canned spiritual or moral exhortations. The Filipino Indios’ participation in the celebration of the *Misa Mayor* was the fullest that would be done in the framework of the Tridentine liturgy.

The *Misa Mayor* with the adjunct festive catechetical instruction—in likeness of the Conventual Mass in monasteries—was the central activity of Sunday and holy days for the Filipino Indios, as a people or as an ecclesial community and liturgical assembly. At this Community Mass the Filipino Indios of the pueblo manifested themselves as a “local Church” or an ecclesial community by expressing one faith in, and one act of worship of, the One God—in union with the Franciscan Order and the Universal Church—and by receiving doctrinal and moral nourishment from their *Ministro de Indios* and *frailes*—the official representative of the Church’s teaching authority. The *Misa Mayor* on Sundays and holy days was truly the apex and center of the ecclesial and liturgical activities of the Filipino Indios in Franciscan pueblos. □