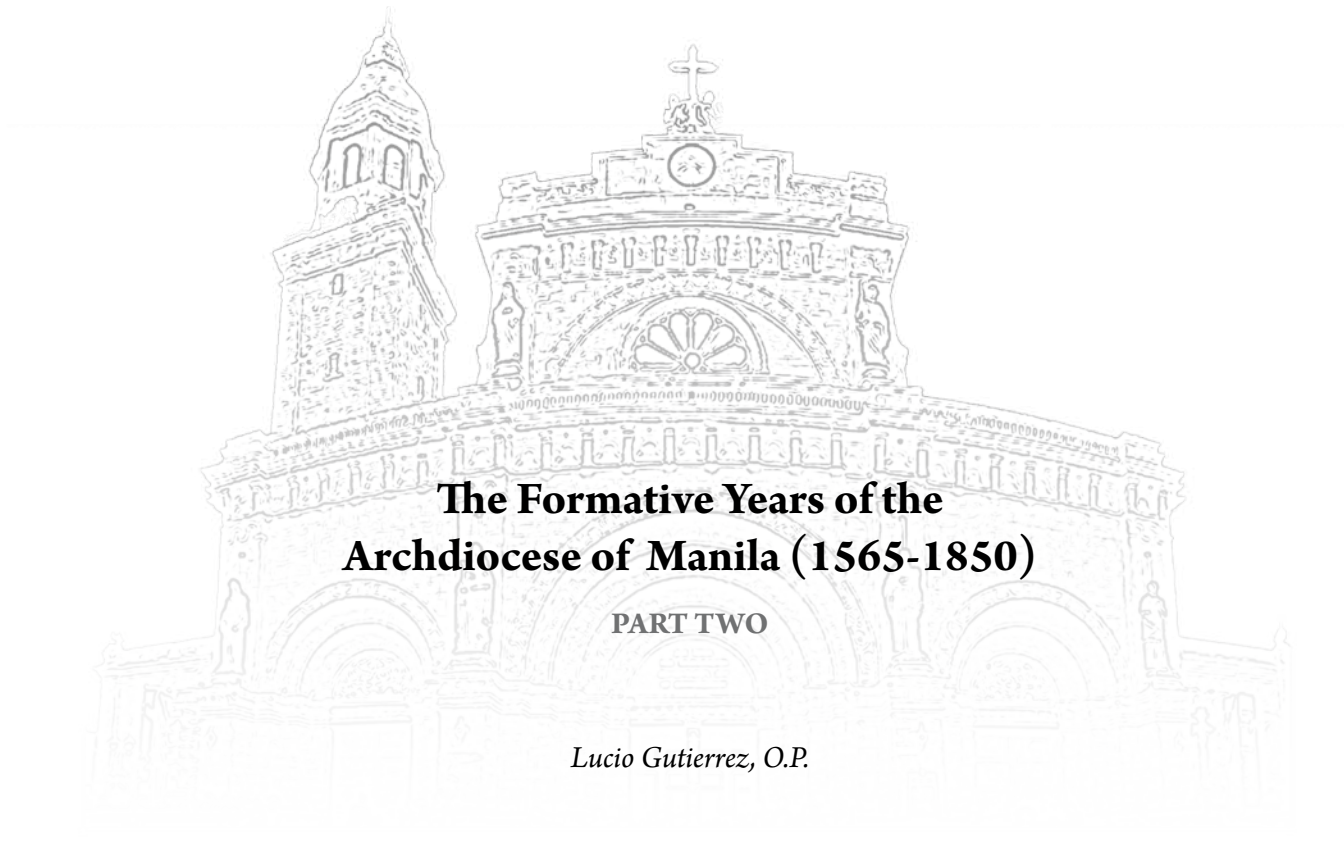




The Formative Years of the Archdiocese of Manila (1565-1850)

PART TWO

Lucio Gutierrez, O.P.

The title of this work, *The Archdiocese of Manila: A Pilgrimage in Time* (1565-1995), is a little misleading. At the outset, I can say that this work is a comprehensive history of the Church in the Philippines because it goes from the very beginning of the Church in the Philippines to practically the end of the Spanish Period (1565-1900), as well as to the arrival of the American Regime.

Part One, entitled *The Formative Years of the Church in the Philippines* (1565-1850), is subdivided into five main topics. I highly recommend the early evangelization, where I study the agents of evangelization in the Philippines and the struggle for justice and humanization, carried out by the missionaries during the early Spanish Period. In simple terms, it was the struggle for human rights for the native Filipinos carried out by the missionaries.

I recommend also in this Part One, Chapter D: *Methods of Evangelization and Sacramental Life* (1565-1700) and Chapter E: *Christianity and Religious Life: Response of the Filipino People to the Challenge of Christianity*. The two of them give some original responses by the Filipino People to the Challenge of Evangelization.

Part Two, *The Established Church: Period of Consolidation* (1620-1768), includes 4 main topics.

A: *The Church and Education in the Philippines* (1565-1768) is a review of the great work done by the Jesuits and the Dominicans in the field of education. The University of Santo Tomas has celebrated its 4th Centennial. Here is the background and the contribution in history.

The Jesuits were expelled from the Spanish Dominions in the Philippines in 1768. The losses were great in all fields, including education.

In Social Services of the Church in the Philippines (1565-1700), the impact of the church on social services is enormous. Still today, some of the most famous institutions of social service are in the hands of the Church for the service of the poor and abandoned.

The third part, The Secular Clergy of the Archdiocese of Manila tackles the late emergence of the Filipino clergy. The creation of the native Filipino clergy in the 18th and 19th centuries formulates some answers to late questions.

Part Three: The Philippines: Center for Missionary Expansion in the East.

The Philippines has been, and is still today, a center of missionary irradiation in the east. During the Spanish Period, thousands of missionaries sailed from the Philippines on their way to China, Cochinchina, Siam, Cambodia, the Moluccas Islands, the Marianas Islands, Palau and other smaller islands of the Pacific. These missions would not have subsisted without the support from the Philippines. They were an irradiation center of missionary expansion.

Keywords: *Evangelization, (Early Missionaries: Augustinians, Franciscans, Jesuits, Dominicans, Recollects), Pre-Catechetical Formation, Catechetical Formation, Methodology of Mission, Education, Social Service, Filipino Clergy, The Church as Peace Maker, Culture and Mission*

6. The Creation of the Diocese of Manila (1579)

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 the first bishop of the country.¹

The Spaniards of the Philippines had written on a number of occasions to the king requesting that Manila be erected into a diocese or an archdiocese. They even were more precise, asking the king in 1575 to erect Manila as a diocese and appoint Diego de Herrera, an Augustinian missionary in the Philippines, as the first bishop.

¹ Cfr. *Original Consultation of the Council of Indies to King Philip II proposing Domingo Salazar, O.P. as First Bishop of the Philippines*, Madrid, July 18, 1578, *Indiferente General* 789, ramo 3, 9.

In their view the man had the qualities demanded. Together with him a large number of missionaries and secular priests would be sent to the islands.²

Diego de 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 those recommending him, he was “a man of letters, of good life, and has worked much in the conversion of the natives.” The king did not accept the recommendation. Herrera died in 1576 in the shipwreck of the galleon *Espiritu Santo* against the coasts of Catanduanes.

The Council of Indies recommended in 1578 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.³ The bull *Illius Fulti Praesidio* separated Manila from the church of Mexico and thus became an independent diocese. The cathedral church took the name of the Conception of Mary, changing the name of San Pedro, the original name it had from the very beginning.⁴

Salazar was probably 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. Most of the Dominicans died during the crossing or soon after their arrival in Mexico.⁵ After a short stay in Mexico City, Salazar started the difficult inland trip to the seaport of Acapulco. Beyond laid the awesome and unknown expanse of the Pacific. On March 29, 1581 the galleon *San Martin*, 400 tons, put out to sea for the long haul across the Pacific. He had with him only one Dominican, Cristobal 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.⁶

After four months of sea travel, towards the end of July, the galleon San Martin crossed the *embocadero*, or San Bernardino Strait, and headed for Manila.

² Cfr. *Letter of Juan Pacheco Maldonado to Philip II about the population of Luzon*, Manila, 1575, in Archivo Histórico Hispano-Augustiniano (AHHA), XXIV, El Escorial, 1925, 220. BRPI, 3, 300-301. Isacio R. Rodriguez, O.S.A., *Historia*, vol. I, *Bibliografía*, I, Manila, 1965, 228-230.

³ *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, 4, 119-124.

⁴ Cfr. BRPI, 4, 119-124.

⁵ Cfr. AGI, Contratación 5538, Lib. I, ff. 170-170; fol. 263; Lib. II, fol. 15.

⁶ Cfr. *Letter of Domingo de Salazar to Philip II*, Manila, March 14, 1582, AGI, Filipinas 74. Cfr. *Letter of the Viceroy of Mexico*, Mexico, April 1, 1581, AGI, Mexico, 20.

Unable to make any headway because of contrary winds, since it was the season of the *vendabales*, or southwest 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 Seville in June 1580 and two months of overland journey from Sorsogon to Manila. He was heartily welcomed by the people.⁷

As soon as Salazar arrived in the Philippines, he had to come to grips with the situation. The first thing he did was to gather a synod to study in depth the problems facing the people. On December 21, 1581 he erected his church.⁸ 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 kingdoms. The limits of the diocese were immense and unknown for even in that age of great exploratory feats, when so many new lands were brought into the knowledge of Europe, it was not known, nor could it be known, the vast expanse of the Philippine archipelago and the extent of the diocese of Manila.

In September of 1581, the very month and year of Salazar's arrival, the Church in the Philippines had only eleven 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. Given the extreme poverty of the diocese and church he instituted only two dignities, that of dean and chantre, and two canons, the only ones the king had promised to pay from the royal treasury.⁹ But Salazar had as collaborators in the evangelization of the Philippines, the Augustinians, Franciscans and Jesuits. Soon his own brothers, the Dominicans, would be added to the laborers in the field.

When Salazar arrived in Manila the cathedral church was dilapidated, practically in shambles. There was no sacristy. It looked more like a stable 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 worse, a devastating fire, which occurred on February 28, 1583, razed the 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 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

⁷ Cfr. *Letter of Don Gonzalo Ronquillo de Peñalosa to Philip II*, Manila, June 25, 1582, BRPI, v., 9.

⁸ Cfr. *Pastoral Letter of Domingo de Salazar erecting his Diocese*, Manila, 21 of December, 1581, AGI, Filipinas 74. Cfr. P. Fernandez, O.P., "The Constitution of the Manila Cathedral Chapter (1581)," *Philippiniana Sacra*, v. XXVII n. 77 (May- August 1991), 291-323.

⁹ Cfr. *Letter of Domingo Salazar to the King*, Manila, June 18, 1582, AGI, Filipinas, 74.

of a cathedral. It lacked everything, to the shame of the Christians who lived there, and the scandal of the pagans, mainly Chinese, who could not understand, in the view of Salazar, how the Christian temples could be so uncared for and unkept.¹⁰

Towards the year 1590 the church had not been finished. In one word, during the time of Salazar's stay in the Philippines (1581-1591) the cathedral church of Manila was an old, rickety and dilapidated church. Only due to the entreaties of Salazar himself, and the arrival of the energetic governor Gomez Perez Dasmariñas (1590-1593), a good governor and a man of vision, did the cathedral church start to be built in stone and of large proportions.

7. The Synod of Manila: 1581-1586

The Synod of Manila is one of the great achievements of the first bishop of the Philippines, Domingo de Salazar. He convoked it, presided over and was the spirit behind it. When Salazar arrived in Manila in 1581, he was a missionary of large experience for he had spent 23 years in Mexico. He was a disciple of Bartolome de las Casas, the fiery defender of the Amerindians. It was the same Salazar who wrote:

I was reared in the doctrine of the bishop of Chiapas [Las Casas].¹¹

a. Pastoral Character of the Synod

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 the 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 practical, touching the lives and consciences of all the segments of society. Religious and lay people found themselves in total disagreement to the scandal of the new Filipino Christians. And what was worse, in the religious world of the sixteenth century, the consciences of many people both lay and religious were tormented by these problems.

¹⁰ Cfr. *Letter of Domingo de Salazar to the King*, Manila, March 14, 1582, AGI, Filipinas 74. Cfr. *Memorial General*, F. Colin- P. Pastels, S.J., *Labor*, I, 415.

¹¹ Cfr. *Letter of Domingo Salazar to Philip II*, Manila, June 18, 1583, AGI, Patronato 25, ramo 8.

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.¹² 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 were denied absolution in confession by strict confessors unless they restituted the evils inflicted during the conquest. Was this the reward they deserved for having left the family, the motherland, conquered the Philippines for Spain and helped in the Christianization of the Filipinos?¹³

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

What those present at the Synod expected to achieve was to put a check if not a stop to the injustices committed by the *encomenderos* and set the conquest along Christian principles. They would thus be able to dedicate themselves energetically and without anxiety to the difficult task of evangelization. After all, that was the main reason why they had come to the Philippines.

*b. Doctrine of the Synod Regarding the Legitimacy
of the Spanish Conquest in 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 power of the Spaniards with just title.¹⁴

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

¹² 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., Hereinafter *Catálogo*.

¹³ Cfr. *Letter of Diego de Aguilar and others to Philip II*, Manila, June 18, 1581, *Labor*, I, 263.

¹⁴ Cfr. *Opinion of Martin de Rada on Tributes*, San Pablo, Manila, June 21, 1574, BRPI, 3, 254.

tremendous. If the Spanish king had no legal title to the Philippines it followed that everything done up to then was unjust and immoral. Taxation was no more than robbery. The conquest a mere spoliation. All those who took part in the conquest 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 he the sovereign *de iure*? The Synod declared that the Spanish king had not come to rule the Philippines by inheritance nor by donation or just war.

The first point was clear. The second is a confirmation of the teachings of Victoria and Soto who denied any legal basis on 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. He could not donate what did not belong to him.

If we were to take the third reason as it 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 power of 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 the Spanish theologian Francisco de Victoria. In the opinion of the theologian and the Synod, the Christian has the grave duty to preach the Gospel to all the world. It was Christ’s command to go and preach to all people. 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 or right 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, 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 enable 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 anyone of what rightly belongs to him.¹⁵

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

1. Protection to 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 new 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 dispossessed, so that this end can be assured.¹⁶

Was this the case in the Philippines? Had their rulers opposed the preaching of the Gospel? The Augustinians were witnesses that in the Philippines the rulers did not oppose the Gospel, but rather the imposition of tributes. If this were the case, was not the conquest unjust and mere spoliation?¹⁷

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 the political set up to insure this spiritual end.

There were three essential conditions to facilitate and insure the faith:

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

¹⁵ Cfr. Valentin Marin, *Ensayo de una síntesis de los trabajos realizados por las corporaciones religiosas de Filipinas*, 2 vols., Manila, 1901, vol. I, 197. Hereinafter *Ensayo*. Cfr. Francisco de Victoria, *Relectio de Indis o Libertad de los Indios*, ed. L. Perena 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. Hereinafter *De Indis*.

¹⁶ Cfr. Marin, *Ensayo*, I, 198; *De Indis*, I, 8, 3, 11, 89.

¹⁷ Cfr. *Opinion of M. de Rada*, Manila, 21 June, 1574, BRPI, 3, 254-255.

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 they 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 dispose the rulers as the Gospel perfects and liberates man. To take away the government and let the Spaniards takeover 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 to be found. The government of the chieftains of the Philippines, in the view of the theologians of the Synod, was imperfect. The progress of the Christian faith was seriously hindered if power would be returned to them. Furthermore, there was the danger of a negative reaction that could destroy the advance of Christianity if there would be a devolution of power. The laws by which the people were governed were tyrannical and at times against nature. 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 imperative then to impose a new government that would protect the missionaries and the Christians.

The conclusion was that the Spanish king possessed political dominion over the Philippines in *ordine ad finem spiritualem*, in order to achieve the spiritual end, the conversion of the natives to the Christian religion which would otherwise be unattainable.¹⁸

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. Francisco de Victoria in his often quoted *Relectiones de Indis*,¹⁹ had written about the possibility of justifying the conquest of America due to the low level of culture of the natives. Yet he considered this a very dubious title.

¹⁸ Cfr. Marín, *Ensayo*, I, 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.

¹⁹ Cfr. *De Indis*, I, 3, 17, 97-98.

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 back 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, a 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 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.²⁰

c. The Preaching of the Gospel to Pagans

This was another burning issue the Synod discussed at length. The Christian in general, and the missionary in particular have the grave task of preaching the Gospel to all people. This task has been received from Christ. The distinctive mark of a Christian must be this inner dynamism which compels him to bring the Good News of salvation to all people.

What about the methods to be used in preaching the Gospel? What should be the attitude of the Christians when confronted with persecution in primitive societies, or in kingdoms entirely opposed to the entrance of missionaries? Were they duty-bound to face danger, even death while preaching? Could they invite soldiers as guardians against danger and as deterrent against the persecutors? The debate then was about how to preach the Gospel.

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

²⁰ *Reply to Rada's Opinion*, BRPI, 3, 264-265.

Philippines. Which was the attitude of the primitive Church? Could the apostolic way be applied *ad pedem litterae* literally, 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 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 and 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 agoras and fora of the Greco-Roman World. No hindrance was presented to them. The freedom of religion and speech was incredible. People yearned for religion and mystical experiences. Christianity found the way prepared. The social, political, cultural and religious set up of the Greco-Roman World would serve 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 headhunters, 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 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.*²¹ 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 might abandon the faith or might not even receive it. To have soldiers as protectors 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 people in which the primitive Church was born.²²

We have to stress the fact that the fathers present at the Synod did not defend the doctrine of military conquest, but only the need for soldiers to go with them as protectors, guardians and deterrent if pagan rulers did not give the missionaries the chance to preach to those who were ready to listen to them. The soldiers would simply facilitate the way for the Gospel to be preached.

d. The Encomienda in the Philippines

The Synod of Manila discussed other burning problems directly connected with the evangelization of the Philippines and the government of the islands. One of the problems that worried the fathers most was the conduct of the *alcaldes mayores* or governors of the provinces in their relation to the Filipino people.

Great attention, was also paid by the fathers of the Synod to the conduct of the *encomenderos*. The *encomienda* was a pivotal unit in the Spanish overseas administration. It was not a donation of land as not rarely some historians tell us. It was the right to collect taxes from a determined number of people in a region with the subsequent duties of taking care of them.

²¹ Preach the Gospel... tender my sheep and I have other sheep which do not belong to the flock, etc.

²² Marin, *Ensayo*, I, 209.

The theologians of the Synod reminded the *encomenderos* of these concrete duties, basis for their right to collect the tribute. The fundamental reason to grant an *encomienda* was not a reward for the services rendered during the conquest but rather as a means to discharge the royal conscience.²³

In the language of the times the conscience of the king was “charged” — *cargada*— and burdened with serious duties towards his subjects, above all in the Indies. Since the king was unable to govern the people directly, he “discharged” —*descargada*—his conscience through his governors to whom he entrusted his duties, with the right in turn to collect tribute. The governors, in turn, divided the land into *encomiendas*, discharging the king’s conscience and their own through the *encomenderos*, who were charged with that particular duty. The duty of the *encomenderos* was double: first, the defense of the people through the administration of justice; the second, the teaching of the Christian doctrine. In Spanish terminology this was the double duty of *administración de justicia* and *predicación de la doctrina*. Only if these duties were rendered were the *encomenderos* allowed to collect the stipulated taxes or tributes.

The missionaries in the Americas had thundered against the abuses of the *encomenderos*. Bartolome de las Casas, called the “Father of America,” had always rejected the *encomienda* as a diabolical institution, repressive and oppressive, unjust and unevangelical. Yet in a way, he was a voice crying in the wilderness because, in spite of the abuses of many *encomenderos*, the Spanish Crown, Spanish officials in the Indies, included bishops and religious superiors, defended the necessity of the *encomienda*. Even famous missionaries, great defenders of the Indians, who spent their whole lives in the fields of America, defended the justice and the validity of the *encomienda*. In the Philippines the Augustinians and the Franciscans had valiantly denounced the abuses of the *encomenderos*. The Synod went step by step reviewing the duties and rights of the *encomenderos*, denouncing the abuses committed against the natives of the islands. It was not the right to collect tribute that was at stake but the way of collecting it. It is true that some fathers thought that, given the poverty of the natives, the tribute was too excessive, but in the opinion of the majority the problem lied in the abusive way of collecting tributes. Once a year the *encomenderos* went to their *encomiendas*, armed to the teeth, and with threats and at times with deaths, collected the tributes. Oftentimes the *encomenderos* did not go personally to their *encomiendas*. They sent pitiless overseers, supported by hungry soldiers who committed serious excesses.

The fathers of the Synod knew the facts very well. They had seen them with their own eyes. The very bishop of the Philippines, Domingo de Salazar,

²³ Cfr. Marin, *Ensayo* I, 274.

in his *Memorial* of 1582, denounced with courage the abuses committed by the *encomenderos* and royal officials.²⁴

If the *encomenderos* failed in their duties of administering justice and of preaching the doctrine they could not in conscience collect anything. What had been collected had been mere spoliation. Thus they were obliged to restitute in full under penalty of mortal sin. In the regions not yet pacified the government could grant *encomiendas*, but the *encomendero* was obliged to personally go there and pacify the region and bring the people to peace and justice. Only when the people had been pacified, and the inhabitants had become Christians in their majority, could the *encomendero* collect the tribute in full. The tribute had to be collected both from the Christians and from the non-Christians for, quoting St. Gregory the Great,

the infidels must not be favored through their infidelity more than the faithful, for if as an unbeliever he is excused from paying tributes, he would never become a believer so as not to pay. On the contrary, the infidels must be levied more than the believers, so that they may embrace Christianity.²⁵

What the fathers demanded from the *encomenderos* was to place in their *encomiendas* a missionary to teach the Christian doctrine to the unbelievers and instruct more thoroughly the newly converted people. A small church had to be constructed at the expense of the *encomendero*, of the crown and of the natives themselves.²⁶

It is difficult to imagine what the fathers of the Synod thought were the duty of the *encomenderos* and the role they fulfilled in the evangelization of the Philippines. The Acts, after denouncing their abuses and laying down their duties, pass on to say that the *encomendero* is the defender of the people. He is a coadjutor of the Gospel. He is a father. He must defend the people in court, succor them in their calamities and emergencies and take care of the poor and the abandoned, the elderly, the sick and all those in need of help. They had to lead the natives to what the Spaniards called *policia*, reduce them to live in the villages and towns, together with other citizens.

e. Evangelization and Native Languages

²⁴ Cfr. L. Gutierrez, O.P., "The Struggle for Justice and Humanization in the Conquest of the Philippines," *Philippiniana Sacra*, 62 (1986): 444-483.

²⁵ Cfr. J. L. G. Porras, *El Sínodo de Manila de 1582. Estudio Introductorio, Glosa y Transcripción de los Textos Sinodales*, Madrid, 1988, 346. There is an English translation of this work under the title *General History of the Philippines*, Part I, Vol. 4; *The Synod of Manila of 1582*, Historical Conservation Society, Manila, 1990.

²⁶ It is what is known in history as building by the three segments of society, 1. *encomendero* 2. the crown 3. the natives. In Spanish *por tercias partes*.

Modern and ancient historians mention that one of the great resolutions 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 historians this was transcendental, for it meant that the natives were to be instructed in their own language. In this way, they might easily understand the Christian message. Juan de Plasencia, an expert in the language and customs of the Tagalogs, had composed a Grammar and a Vocabulary. Finally he put in Tagalog the Catechism, or what later came to be known as the *Doctrina Christiana*.

In the Acts, no mention whatsoever is made 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 may have been discussed during the sessions. The Acts, as they have come down to us, are only a *Suma* of the meeting. They are a resume of the many things treated and discussed in the Synod. The Acts are meant to be a kind of *Vademecum* for the 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. Thus the silence of the Acts about the adoption of the native languages as a means of evangelization transpired. But mention is made of this problem in other sources.

Without any doubt the adoption of the native languages was important for the rapid growth of Christianity. From the linguistic 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 of revolutionary in the missiological pedagogy of Spain. 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. The first books printed in America, 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*, or *Gramática*.

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. One of them, the Franciscan Juan de Ayora, had written the *Arte de la lengua mejicana* and a *Vocabulario español-mejicano*. There is nothing extraordinary then when the members of the Synod decided that the evangelical preaching should be done in the local languages.

In the light of the “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.²⁷

f. 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 virtue 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 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 more reasons for the celebration of the Synod than against. It was necessary that people once and for all, would come to know what it meant to live according to reason and what theology had to say in matters of justice and law. The Spaniards and the Filipino *datus* 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 think that they could get away with their abuses, the spirits might become numb to justice, not differentiating evil from good, justice from injustice. 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.

²⁷ Cfr. Porras, *op. cit.*, 146.

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. They could not, given the commitment of the Synod for justice and liberation. The easiest thing would have been to remain quiet, to let the *conquistadores*, the *encomenderos* and *datus* follow their ways. But the fathers opted for justice and helped it to 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. And a good example too for the civil rulers of the nation. The Church must continue to be prophetic and the state must accept this prophetic role of the Church as a service to man's total liberation.

8. Domingo de Salazar and the Struggle for Justice and Humanization in the Conquest of the Philippines

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 sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The possibility was given to people 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.

a. The Struggle for Justice: A Problem of Human Rights

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.²⁸

Since history demands justice and fairness, we have to say that that statement is totally false. From the very beginning of the discovery and conquest of the Philippines, the struggle for justice was carried out valiantly by the first missionaries and royal officials. It could not happen 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 oppressions 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

²⁸ 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.

the Order of Preachers, Domingo de Guzmán and has its juridical and theological foundation in the teachings of Tomas Aquinas. The school was even much older for it found its meaning in the Gospel of Christ, in the Sermon on the Mountain. From the beginning of the conquest of America, the Dominicans protested against the abuses of the their fellow Spaniards and the local elite. Montesinos, Minaya, Córdoba, Victoria 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 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.²⁹

Salazar was a classmate of Bartolome de Medina and Domingo Bañez, student of Domingo de Soto and Melchor Cano in Salamanca and disciple of Francisco de Victoria and Bartolome de las Casas.

The Acts of the Synod are a reflection of Victoria's teaching. Through the Augustinians and the Dominicans, Victoria and Las Casas came to the Philippines and their ideas exercised a strong influence.

The Dominican Miguel de Benavides wrote to his *confreres* in the Philippines from Madrid, in 1596, when he was in the presence of Philip II and the Council of Indies:

For the natives we have obtained, through God's mercy, many things. It must be understood that love and not the lash must obtain 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.³⁰

b. The Augustinians and the Struggle for Justice

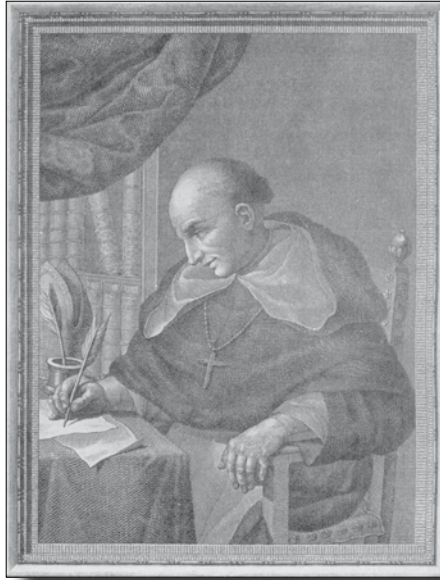
The first Augustinian missionaries had a long list of complaints against their fellow Spaniards. Mention is made of destructions, robberies, enslavement and deaths. In the opinion of the religious, the Spaniards did not distinguish between friend and foe. They went about fully armed, without telling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

The missionaries felt a deep love for their people. Their denunciation led to nothing. Legazpi and the other royal officials seemed to be deaf to their pleas. A quick

²⁹ Cfr. Venancio Carro, O.P., *La teología y los teólogos juristas españoles ante la conquista de América*, Salamanca, 1951, 7-8.

³⁰ Cfr. J. Gayo, *op. cit.*, 254. Cfr. *Unitas*, 21 (1948):, 155-156.

reading of Martin de Rada's *Parecer* — Opinion— to governor Lavezaris and Diego de Herrera's *Memorial* show that the abuses were serious. The Augustinians laid the responsibility squarely at the feet of the Spaniards.³¹



Bartolome de las Casas, O.P. Bishop of Chiapas, great defender of the natives of the New World. Also called “Father of America.”

The *encomenderos* and Spanish officials denied the claims of the Augustinians. In their opinion, the missionaries, though motivated by zeal for God, king, justice and love for the Filipinos, exaggerated the abuses and forgot entirely the tremendous benefits the conquest had brought to the Filipinos. They protected the people from enemies, curbed piracy, thus keeping sea and the inland travel open, stopped the perpetual wars of extermination common among them before the Spanish arrival and prepared the way for evangelization.³² They accepted that many times they had abused the Filipinos, but what else could they do? Poverty forced them to do so. The soldiers went permanently hungry and most of them were penniless. Hence their confusion of mind and spiritual anxiety. We read:

... We have been forced to rob them [natives] and impose upon them in other ways, burdening our consciences in this in 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.³³

³¹ Cfr. *Parecer*, BRPI, 3, 253-259. Original Spanish in I. Rodriguez, *Historia*, XIV, 186-193. *The Memorial* is in BRPI, 34, 273-285. Original Spanish in Rodriguez, *Historia*, XIV, 162-172.

³² Cfr. *Reply to Martin de Rada's Opinion*, Manila, June, 1574, BRPI, 3, 260-271.

³³ *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.

c. Salazar's Struggle Against Slavery in the Philippines

One of the most serious problems Salazar was confronted with in the Philippines was that of slavery. The Augustinians who traveled 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 the Spaniards. As soon as the Augustinians arrived in Manila, they set things in motion to find a solution to the already long and protracted battle for the abolition of slavery.

On October 16, 1581, just a month after Salazar's arrival to the Philippines, he convoked the most prominent people of the country to a meeting wherein the problem of slavery was to be, once and for all, discussed and solved. The missionaries decided that the emancipation of Filipino slaves in the hands of Spaniards could not be denied nor even differed. 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 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 the will of the people who had gathered in that special meeting.³⁴

That Salazar's decisions 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. In the opinion of the latter, the immediate emancipation of slaves could be dangerous to the very existence of the Philippines. Bishop Salazar and the religious agreed that their decisions had to be brought to the knowledge of the people through the means of the pulpit. In case of disobedience they had to be denied sacramental absolution, a terrible punishment for a Spaniard of the sixteenth century.

We cannot but admire the courage of the bishop and religious of the Philippines. If they had not spoken against the abuses of their fellow Spaniards regarding slavery and other abuses, if they dedicated themselves to the only task of baptizing the inhabitants of the Philippines, if they had closed their eyes to the misdeeds of the *conquistadores* and *encomenderos*, would things have changed in the Philippines? Would there have been any friction between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities?

³⁴ Cfr. *Opinion of Domingo de Salazar and of the Religious about the Problem of Slavery in the Philippines*, Manila, October 16, 1581, AGI, Filipinas 84. Cfr. L. Gutierrez, O.P. "Opinion of Fr. Domingo de Salazar, First Bishop of the Philippines and of the Major Religious Superiors Regarding Slaves," *Philippiniana Sacra*, XXII, 64 (1987), 150-165.

The bishop and the religious were not afraid of any possible consequences. And threats they had. On one occasion a Spanish *conquistador* told Salazar that he could hit his miter with his arquebus from a distance of fifty meters. Even Governor Peñalosa reminded Salazar that he was a descendant of Spanish cavaliers who had no scruples to send bishops to the gibbets.³⁵ Salazar remained undaunted. The fight for justice and against slavery was to continue.

In 1586, in a general gathering of all the estates of the Philippines, the abolition of slavery both in the hands of the Spaniards and in the hands of Filipino *datus* was proposed to the king. From now on there will 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.
3. Slaves over ten years of age shall serve as slaves 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 manumission.

These decisions approved by Philip II were given in 1589 to the newly chosen governor of the Philippines, Gomez Perez Dasmariñas. 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 (1590-1591) 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.³⁶

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

³⁵ Cfr. D. Aduarte, *Historia de la Provincia del Santo Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores en Filipinas, Japón y China*, Ed. Manuel Ferrero (2 vols.), I, Madrid, 1962, 288. Cfr. Torres-Lanzas-Pastells, *Catálogo*, vol. II, CV.

³⁶ Cfr. *Instructions of Philip II to Dasmariñas*, San Lorenzo, August 9, 1589, Colin-Pastells, *Labor*, II, 741-750. Cfr. *Ibidem*, BRPI, 7, 171. *Liberty of the Indians in the Philippines by Gregory XIV*, Rome, 18 April, 1591, BRPI, 7, 70-71.

The proscription of slavery is one of the most outstanding achievements of the first missionaries and the Spaniards of the Philippines. In Christian Europe nothing similar could be found. It was logical to enslave non-Christians made prisoners in the so-called “just wars.” 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 sums up in a nutshell 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.³⁷

It has been discussed whether slavery disappeared for good from the Philippines after the legal steps taken against it during the time of Bishop Salazar and Philip II. We know that it still continued even under the Spanish dominions. In the regions influenced by the Moslems slavery was a way of life. But the fight carried out by the missionaries against it and the enlightened legislation of the Spanish Crown meant a mortal blow to it.³⁸

We can speak of the disappearance of slavery in the Spanish dominions of the Philippines towards the beginning of the eighteenth century. The Franciscan historian Francisco de San Antonio writes in his *Crónicas*:

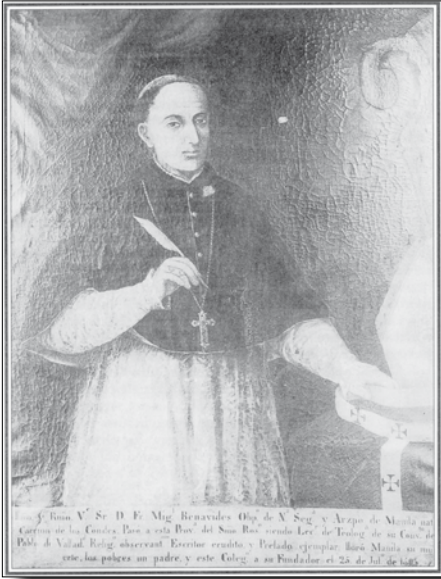
Now there is absolutely no vestige of slavery among the Filipinos, in accordance with the Apostolic Briefs, supported by various royal decrees of our Catholic Monarchs. In this way, we are all soldiers of the same Divine Lord, soldiers under the Holy Cross, which is our Catholic flag and all are citizens 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.³⁹

³⁷ P. Chirino, S.J., *Relación*, 364; 121.

³⁸ Cfr. W. H. Scott, *Slavery in Spanish Philippines*, (Manila: De la Salle Univ. Press, 1991).

³⁹ *Crónicas*, I, 163. Cfr. BRPI, 40, 355.

9. Miguel de Benavides and the Struggle for Justice – Voluntary Submission of the Filipinos.



Miguel de Benavides, O.P. (1552-1605),
First Bishop of Nueva Segovia (1595-1602)
and Second Archbishop of Manila
(1602-1605)

Miguel de Benavides, archbishop of Manila, and considered as the founder of the University of Santo Tomas, is also one of the great fighters for justice and liberation in the Philippines at the end of the sixteenth century. But before I present here his struggle for justice I have to give the background to Benavides' involvement in the struggle.

At the beginning of January of 1591 Salazar published some conclusions where he said that no tribute could be demanded from the unbelievers of the Philippines, since they had received no benefit from the Spaniards. The governor, Gomez Perez Dasmariñas (1590-1593) with the support of the Augustinians and Jesuits, opposed forcefully the bishop. In his opinion, the

Filipinos were subjects of Spain. They had the duty to pay and the Spanish authorities the right to collect from them as from the rightful subjects. The struggle for justice was to continue. In the view of Salazar, the Spanish king had no legitimate title to the Philippines.

The Filipinos were not subjects but only candidates to the faith. Only in so far as the Spaniards ministered to them and taught them the Christian doctrine could they collect something from the Filipinos. But this is not as a tribute, but more so as maintenance for the doctrine and this through persuasion.⁴⁰

The die was cast. The two representatives of the Spanish Crown in the Philippines could not reach any agreement. Salazar left the country in June of 1591. By 1593, after a long and difficult trip across the Pacific from Manila to Acapulco, and the crossing of the whole of Mexico from West to East and the Atlantic, he was in the court of Madrid ready to talk to the king, as Salazar said *barba a barba*, face to face.

⁴⁰ Cfr. L. Gutierrez, O.P., "The Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of the Philippines. Disputes between Domingo Salazar and Governor Gomez Dasmariñas on the Collection of Tributes," *Philippiniana Sacra*, XXVIII, No. 82 (1993): 143-180.

He had brought with him as a companion Miguel de Benavides, one of the founders of the Dominican Order in the Philippines.

We are lucky to still have today a treatise written by Salazar⁴¹ where he defends his principles and gives the reasons for his opposition to the demands of the Spanish authorities in relation to the collection of tributes. Salazar was old and poor. He lacked powerful supporters in the court of Madrid but he dared to challenge the king and the Council of Indies. His theory is very original and peculiar, but it does not belong to this place to explain it for our readers. It would be enough to say that Philip II and the Council of Indies decided against Salazar. A Royal Cedula of 1594 decreed that the Filipinos, whether Christians or not, if had been pacified, had the duty to pay the stipulated tribute. The same is emphasized in the *Instrucciones* to the new governor, Francisco Tello in 1596. Salazar had been totally defeated, but by this time he had passed, as the ancients used to say, to a better life. The king said that his will is “in these things, as in everything else, to proceed with the most complete justification.”⁴²

Salazar’s struggle was continued by his companion, Miguel de Benavides. In 1595, when the new dioceses of the Philippines were erected, he was appointed bishop of Nueva Segovia. From that moment on Benavides fought to see Salazar’s view restored and approved. Endowed with the episcopal dignity, and with his theological and juridical knowledge, Benavides said that he will not leave for the Philippines until everything was studied in the Council of Indies and a just solution given to the problem of the tributes of the infidels in the Philippines. He, like Salazar, believed that the Spanish king is not a legitimate ruler of the Philippines. His title as ruler is justified only and exclusively due to the duty to evangelize the Filipinos.

Benavides presented to Philip II a treatise⁴³, for the good government of the Philippines. Essentially it included his theory about the collection of tributes from the unbelievers —*infieles*— and the way to preach the Gospel to them. Philip II, old as he was though still fresh in mind and spirit, ordered that all memorials and papers sent from the Philippines be collected and studied. He commanded the Council of Indies that, with the assistance of experts in the matter, would come out with a decision. In a personal note addressed to the president of the Council he said that

⁴¹ Cfr. *Tratado acerca de llevar tributos a los infieles*, Biblioteca del Palacio Real, Madrid, Colección Ayala, Ma. 2246, ff. 169-229.

⁴² *Instructions from Philip II to Governor Francisco Tello*, Toledo, May 25, 1596, BRPI, 9, 227; Cfr. Gavo, *op. cit.*, 233.

⁴³ Cfr. *Instrucción para el gobierno de las Filipinas y de cómo los han de regir y gobernar aquella gente*, Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, MS. 3204, published by L. Hanke & L. Millares, *Cuerpo de documentos inéditos del siglo XVI sobre los derechos de España en las Indias y Filipinas*, Mexico, 1943, 195-270.

no other matters should be discussed until the problem at hand would be solved. In a Decree of February 8, 1597 addressed to the governor general of the Philippines, Philip II changed his opinion. He asked his officials in the Philippines to retribute to the Filipinos the evils inflicted during the conquest and the tributes taken unjustly from them. At the same time he requested the missionaries to try to reduce through love all that was done through force and fear.⁴⁴

The king agreed to request the Filipinos to submit themselves on their own free will to Spain. If Salazar could have returned to life, he would not have believed it. Benavides had triumphed at all levels. He returned to the Philippines in 1598 as bishop of Nueva Segovia, carrying with him the Royal Decree known in history as *Cédula de Composición*. The governor of the Philippines, in obedience to the decree, convoked a meeting in Manila on August 4, 1598 and sent orders to the local Spanish authorities in the country to proclaim the king's desire, which was none other than to ask them to submit voluntarily to him after more than thirty years as his subjects.

Perhaps this is the only case in the history of colonization in which a powerful king like Philip II of Spain, on whose dominions the sun never set, requested his subjects to accept him voluntarily as their own king.⁴⁵

The governor, in a letter to the king, said a little cynically that many had abided by the "ceremony." He added that others requested more time to think about their decision. We also are inclined to think that the attempt was no more than mere show, but a reading of the documents of the time incline us to think that the Filipinos submitted themselves to the Spanish king in full freedom. In some provinces the natives took time in submitting and demanded from the *encomenderos* and Spanish officials to be paid for the evils inflicted upon them. These evils they did not want to forgive and forego.

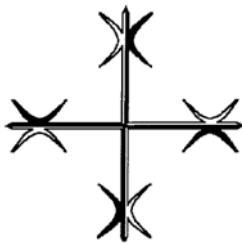
The answer given years later by a native Filipino of the diocese of Nueva Segovia during the episcopacy of another Dominican, Diego de Soria (1601-1613), explains the sincerity of the event. The bishop, in obedience to the decree of the king, gathered the leaders of Cagayan Valley and explained to them the advantages of free submission to the Spanish rule. The king would protect them in peace and in war. The leaders remained silent for some time. When the bishop once more tried to explain the problem and asked them if they realized the seriousness of the situation, precisely at that very moment, a simple Filipino answered:

⁴⁴ Cfr. *Unitas*, 21 (1948), 158. Cfr. Gayo, *op. cit.*, 234.

⁴⁵ The question has been discussed in depth in Gayo, *op.cit.*, 231-240.

We answer that we want the king of Spain to be also our king and ruler because he has sent Spaniards to free us from the tyranny and domination of our own rulers, and also because he has sent us missionary fathers to help us against the Spaniards, ready to defend us against them.⁴⁶

If the Filipinos accepted the Spanish dominion thirty years after the conquest it was due to the influence of the missionaries. Salazar and Benavides were the prime movers of this idea. In the end, their peaceful methods triumphed totally. Worthy examples to the present bishops of the Philippines who, in many ways, face similar oppressive structures and regimes. ■



Fr. Lucio Gutiérrez holds a Doctorate in History from the Gregorian University in Rome. Until recently he was professor of History of the Church and Patrology at the University of Santo Tomas and Don Bosco School of Theology, both in Manila. He has numerous publications particularly on the History of the Church in the Philippines.

⁴⁶ Cfr. J. de Medina, OSA, *Historia de los sucesos de la orden de N. gran P.S. Agustín de estas Islas Filipinas desde que se descubrieron y se poblaron por los españoles, con las noticias memorables*, Manila, 1893, p. 134. The *Historia* was originally written in 1630; Cfr. Schumacher, *Readings*, 37-38.