

Prelude to Filipino Catholicism The Hispanization of the Christian Mission (15th to 16th Centuries)

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Abstract: This article presents the two most influential factors in the Hispanization of the Christian Mission in the Philippines during the 15th and 16th centuries: (1) the Spanish Catholicism; and (2) Spanish Royal Patronage.

The Spanish Catholicism emerged from the much earlier Catholic Reform in Spain, which antedated the Ecumenical Council of Trent (1545 – 63), and the vitality coming from the Spanish Reconquest of the last Muslim Emirate (1492) in the Iberian Peninsula. These elements had animated and forged the Catholic identity in Spain, wherein the newly -formed nation and its people identified their destiny with the Catholic faith. Thus, both the Spanish conquistadores and the Spanish friars conducted their military conquest and missionary expansion, respectively, in the sense of “messianic mission.”

The Spanish Royal Patronage was the result of papal concessions, through a series of papal bulls, to the Spanish Crowns in the evangelization of the lands of America and Asia. In these concessions, the Supreme Pontiffs granted the Spanish Monarchs ecclesiastical privileges and rights in the conquered non-Christian lands in return for their patronage of the missionary enterprise, thus, yielding complete control of the Christian mission in these territories. The consequences of this patronage to the lands mentioned above resulted in much fiery debate in its legitimacy.

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Both of which equally determined the kind of Catholicism that reached the shores of the Philippine Islands.

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Introduction

The Philippines,¹ as it is known today, came into existence as a result of a new phenomenon in continental Europe. The breaking up of the Mongol Empire in the 14th century, which was followed by the rise of the Ottoman Empire that culminated in the fall of Constantinople in 1453, created new circumstances in Europe. It resulted in the loss of the silk road, which stimulated the Europeans to search for new routes for the spice trade.² There were diverse reasons for this pursuit, be it commerce, the spread of religion, political expansion, and for some, the simple but scientific curiosity of the shape of the world.³

¹ Before the Spanish colonization, there was no Filipino nation *per se*. There was an archipelago that was home to the diverse ethnicity of people grouped into small social clans called *barangays*. What greatly influenced the social order in these *barangays* was a kinship that was tied to marriage and economic status. Thus, blood ties were of utmost importance, for they guaranteed fidelity to the *barangay*, as it mostly composed of an extended family. Most *barangays* consisted of thirty to a hundred families, except for Manila, Cebu, and the sultanates in Sulu and Mindanao, which were comparably larger. They were situationally located near bodies of water, like rivers, lakes, or seas, which also served as their social and economic networks. The *barangays* were land-based settlements, in which the primary livelihood was agriculture, fishing, and hunting. Their economic activities were tailored according to their needs or inter-island commerce. These *barangays* benefited as well from the pre-Spanish international trade, which brought foreign goods coming from China, Borneo, Burma, and Champa (Vietnam). Since the social order of their economy was based on extended family, the notion of private ownership was irrelevant as each member of the *barangay* was theoretically shareholder in the produce of the lands. Slavery was in existence; as a result, either of the inability to pay off debts or inter-*barangay* raids or conflicts. Slaves from the former category could buy their freedom and still considered as part of the household, thus, were treated benignly. The latter class of slaves, since they were outsiders of the clan, faced potentially grim fates. Each *barangay* was politically independent headed by a *datu*, whose authority rested on his abilities to combat, which secured him slaves, wealth, and followers. Alliances were formed occasionally among them through a blood compact called *sandugo*, where each *datu* involved would drink wine mingled with each other's blood. However, most of the time, they were hostile to each other. See Luis Francia, *A History of the Philippines: From Indios Bravos to Filipinos* (New York, The Overlook Press, 2010), 28-37; Lucio Gutierrez, *The Archdiocese of Manila: A Pilgrimage in Time (1565-1999)*, vol. I (Manila, The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Manila, 1999), 2-5; John Leddy Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines: Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses 1565 - 1700* (Madison-Milwaukee-London, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), 15-28.

²M. Delgado, *Catholicism in Spain, Portugal, and their Empires*, in J. Schjorring N. Hjelm (ed.), *History of Global Christianity, European and Global Christianity, ca. 1500-1789*, vol. I (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2017), 17.

³ Delgado, *Catholicism in Spain*, 17.

The conquest of America, beginning in 1492, opened the world into the new order on the relationship between the conqueror and conquered, whether it be political, economic, or religious.

By the 16th century, the old order was breaking up. Religion, which took the unifying role during most of the period, became the most contested and divisive factor in the society. The once unified Europe under one faith, though existed in the diversity of cultures, faced the unprecedented confessional division resulting in bloody religious wars and schisms. Its unifying element of identity, the Catholic faith, had become the source of conflicts and the seat of controversies. As the Protestants claimed to restore the true Catholic Christianity, the events somehow underpinned the differences between Catholicism and Protestantism as it encouraged the faithful to see them as equally valid.⁴ However, from these ashes of confusion and the late Medieval endeavors for religious renewal, the Catholic Reform drew its strength.⁵ The Church, as in the past, needed to face the ever-changing culture and society.

This epoch also witnessed how the global expansion of the world powers in the Iberian peninsula brought the development of the Christian mission to new territories. In assessing the three centuries of Christian expansion (1500-1800), the American historian Kenneth Scott Latourette observed: “Never had any religion spread so widely. Never had any faith so great an effect upon so large a proportion of mankind.”⁶ It was during this time when the Catholic faith reached the shores of an archipelago, the Philippine Islands. Two factors determined the Philippine mission – the Spanish Catholicism and the Spanish Royal Patronage.

Spanish Catholicism

Studies on Philippine Church history began with the drastic movements happening in Spain, both political and religious, that led Spain and the Spanish Christianity to the Indies and eventually to the Philippines.⁷ This movement

⁴ M. Jones, *The Counter Reformation Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 64.

⁵ E. Iserloh, et al., *Reformation and Counter Reformation*, H. Jedin-J. Dolan (ed.), *History of the Church*, vol. V (London: Burns and Oats, 1980), 433.

⁶ K. S. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity: Three Centuries of Advance: A.D. 1500-1800*, vol. III (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1939), 2.

⁷ J. Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History* (Quezon City: Loyola School of Theology, 1979), 1. This work of the Jesuit John Schumacher is another significant work in understanding the history of the Church in the Philippines. In making his narrative, he incorporated selective readings found in different sources, and most of the time, these were direct quotations from the primary sources he gathered from various archives, which are not readily available. He also made use of the translations of Blair and Robertson; however, on many occasions, he would give historical commentaries or make his reductions at these translations. His historical analyses open many doors of interpretations.

received its vitality and energy from the success of the Spanish Reconquest after centuries-long crusades against the Muslim overlords with the fall of the last Muslim emirate, Granada, in the Iberian Peninsula in 1492. In the same year, under the unified kingdoms of King Fernando II of Aragon (1452-1516) and Queen Isabel of Castile (1451-1504), Christian Spain began its overseas enterprise into the New World with a similar motivation and spirit that completed the crusades against Islam. What animated the conquest of Granada (i.e., for the glory of God and Spain) was also evident in the conquest of America and the Philippines.

The 16th century ushered the Golden Age of Spanish history. Under the successors of King Fernando II and Queen Isabel, King Carlos I (1500-58), who was also Emperor Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire, and King Felipe II (1527-98), Spain became a leading world military and maritime power. With its Catholic identity forged in the Reconquest, Spain identified its destiny with Catholicism, thus, becoming the champion of Catholicism against those considered enemies of the faith. An American Jesuit historian based in the Philippines, Fr. John Schumacher, noted that “for the 16th century Spaniard, be he conquistador or friar, Spain was God’s providential instrument for the salvation of Europe, of the Indies, and of the world.”⁸ It was within this mind frame, the sense of “messianic mission,” that both the military conquest of the Spanish conquistadores and the missionary expansion of the Spanish friars were carried out.⁹

In the 16th century, Spain also witnessed the intimate part played by the Spanish Church in the life of the nation, which for better or worse, has significantly influenced the delivery of the Christian message to the America and Asia. First, it was a reformed Church. Long before the Council of Trent (1545-63) convened, an agreement on eight reform proposals had already been reached between Catholic kings and bishops at the National Council of Sevilla (1478), under the presidency of Cardinal Pedro González de Mendoza (1428-95), the Archbishop of Toledo (1482-95) and the Primate of Spain. The agreement entrusted to the Crown and the episcopate the promotion of the reform of the Spanish Church and the prevention of any possible foreign interference.¹⁰ Both served the common goal (i.e., the creation of a homogeneous community on the basis of the Catholic faith, first in Spain and then, ... as a global empire).¹¹ The close collaboration between the religious and secular powers instituted farsighted organizational measures within

⁸ Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 1.

⁹ Mananzan, *Shadows of Light: Philippine Church History under Spain: A People’s Perspective* (Quezon City: Claretian Communications Foundation, Inc., 2016), 24; Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines*, 4.

¹⁰ Iserloh, et al., *Reformation and Counter Reformation*, 443.

¹¹ Delgado, *Catholicism in Spain, Portugal, and their Empires*, 38.

the Spanish Church. Zealous for reform, efficient prelates were appointed to several Catholic sees, including the spiritual director of Queen Isabel, Don Hernando Talavera (1428-1507). He became the first Archbishop of the reconquered Granada (1493-1507), whose apostolic activity was a direct forerunner and model of the Catholic Reform. His instituted reforms included the preaching on all Sundays and holy days, “the founding of a seminary for future priests, the houses for converts and orphans, and (...) a ‘Breve Doctrina’ for popular instruction.”¹²

Another prominent figure of a Spanish Catholic reformer-Bishop, whose activity had a far-reaching influence, was Cardinal Francisco Ximénes de Cisneros (1436-1517). In 1494, upon the recommendation of Cardinal Mendoza, he became the confessor of Queen Isabel, who later promoted him to primate dignity as the Archbishop of Toledo (1495-1517) upon the death of Cardinal Mendoza in the following year. His reforms in the Franciscan Order while he was the Minister Provincial (1494-95) were extended to the other mendicant orders in 1498, which were met with intense opposition. Around 1507, the reform of the orders was concluded. Among the Spanish Dominicans, the influence of the prophetic spirituality of the Italian Dominican Fray Girolamo Savonarola (1452-98) could not be underestimated.¹³ Likewise, the assignment of the Dominican theologian, Fray Francisco de Vitoria (1483-1546), to the University of Salamanca renewed Scholastic Theology, and his treatises on the pressing questions of colonial ethics and international law based on Thomistic concepts became phenomenally influential and widespread.¹⁴ The reform of the mendicant orders created the precondition for the Spanish evangelization in America and, consequently, in the Philippines. With a firm hand, Cardinal Cisneros also enforced the reform of the secular clergy. The successes of the reform, though, were rather moderate in comparison to the reform of the regulars (friars). Some of these reforms included obligatory clerical celibacy, mandatory preaching on Sundays, and the permanent residency in parishes to administer sacraments.¹⁵ His most outstanding accomplishment was the foundation

¹² Iserloh et al., *Reformation and Counter Reformation*, 443.

¹³ Iserloh et al., *Reformation and Counter Reformation*, 445.

¹⁴ See U. Horst, *The Dominicans and the Pope. Papal Teaching Authority in the Medieval and Early Modern Thomist Tradition*, translated by James Mixson (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 44-47.

¹⁵ The practice of concubinage in the secular clergy remained to be widespread, especially overseas. Moreover, despite Cardinal Cisneros’ great efforts and the other Catholic reformers, there was much to be desired in the theological education and spiritual formation of the secular clergy. Many of these clerics preferred to study civil or ecclesiastical law to build up their careers in both State and Church administration. They preferred to work in cities where there were many benefices, thus, leaving the rural works to the religious orders. Although they were hard-working ministers of the sacraments and promoters of popular piety, their solid theological foundation and profoundly spiritual experience remained to be wanting. See Delgado, *Catholicism in Spain, Portugal, and their Empires*, 39.

of the University of Alcalá at his own expense, where he created a center for Humanism and Positive Theology leading to the publication of the Complutensian Polyglot Bible (1514-17), the first multilingual printed edition of the Bible, considered as the supreme achievement of the times. Cardinal Cisneros also edited and published the first printed editions of the Mozarabic Rite missal (1500) and breviary (1502). At his suggestion, the famous devotional book of Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471), *The Imitation of Christ*, was translated into Spanish.

However, the height of this union between the State and Church and the more known traditional image of this Spanish Catholicism and Catholic Reform was the inquisition, a draconian measure to curb heresy, which was seen as a contagion that needed "drastic surgery if its spread was to be halted."¹⁶ It was the most effective institution controlled by the Spanish kings in their Counter-Reformation campaigns, which systematically put Protestantism out of existence.¹⁷ The Inquisition was, however, already in place even before the Protestant Reformation, but it received institutional longevity only in 1483 when the papacy conceded the jurisdiction to the Catholic sovereigns. In Spain, the Inquisition was established to handle the cases of the *limpieza de sangre* statutes.¹⁸ The Protestant Reformation apparently gave a new lease of life to the said Spanish institution. In Emperor Charles V's letter to his daughter, Princess Juana, who was then serving as Regent of Spain in her brother's stead King Felipe II in 1588, the emperor stressed out the importance of Inquisition to combat the inherent danger of Protestantism in "the service of Our Lord and the good and preservation of these realms."¹⁹ Anything or anyone that threatened the created homogeneous community based on the Catholic faith was considered as an enemy of the State. Those who were unwilling to convert or assimilate were prosecuted, expelled, or suppressed. The Spanish Inquisition had pursued first the Alumbrados²⁰ and the followers of Erasmus, whom the Spanish State

¹⁶ Jones, *The Counter Reformation Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe*, 135.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 138. See also R. P. Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 49.

¹⁸ The *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood) statutes were a juridical instrument, partly approved by the Holy See and the Crown, that established the prerequisites of having non-Jewish, non-Muslim genealogies to those who would hold ecclesiastical and public positions. Later on, those punished by the Inquisition were also included in the prohibitions as they were as well regarded without honor and not constant in the faith. The burden of proof laid on any candidate to civil and ecclesiastical offices as they were to show that they had no ancestors from any groups of persons in question. Thus, these statutes created the mechanism that nominally excluded the minority from full participation in civic and religious life, though in practice, they were often circumvented by false genealogies and extensive intermarriages. See Delgado, *Catholicism in Spain, Portugal, and their Empires*, 43; Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770*, 49.

¹⁹ Jones, *The Counter Reformation Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe*, 139.

²⁰ The Alumbrados were adherents of a mystical movement in Spain during the 16th and 17th centuries, more popularly known in their Italian counterparts, the Illuminati (Enlightened Ones).

considered as embryonic Lutherans. Throughout the 16th century, it prosecuted under 400 alleged Protestants, most of which were foreigners, thus, creating an incipient suspicion and all-consuming paranoia of anything foreign as mediums of Protestantism.

The Inquisition itself was popular in Castile that it became the symbol of Castilian domination in the rest of the Spanish empire. It was intertwined in “all affairs, regardless of rank or status” and promoted the twin causes of royal centralism and Catholic orthodoxy.²¹ King Felipe II was an excellent example of a true Spanish Catholic King who used the Inquisition to strengthen his grip of the State and kept it heresy-free. He assumed the role of a pope-king as the papacy conceded to him the most far-ranging rights of any Catholic monarch.²² King Felipe II convened provincial and diocesan councils to carry out the Tridentine decrees, supported his bishops in the execution of any Catholic reform, and, with Spanish money and arms, defended the frontiers of Catholicism against Protestants and Muslims. A deeply pious man, he passionately promoted devotional practices and veneration of saints. He built a palace for himself that was both monastery and mausoleum, where he kept a community of Hieronymite monks that celebrated perpetual Mass for his soul and the souls of the Habsburgs. His death had been described as an “elaborate royal cult of death” that “symbolized both the grandeur of a divinely ordained Catholic monarchy that drew legitimacy from Catholic faith, as well as the humiliation of all earthly powers before Death and God.”²³

As part of the measures of the Inquisition, between the theological and ideological war among Catholics and Protestants, both the Spanish State and Church employed censorship of books as ideas were likewise taken as dangerous as heresy itself.²⁴ The Spanish Index of 1559 was never intended to rival the 1559 Index *librorum prohibitorum* of Pope Paul IV (1476-1559). Instead, it should be taken as the culmination of a “thirty years’ work to keep the country orthodox,” likewise, as a specific response to the discovery of two Protestant “cells” in 1557-58 in Valladolid

After having attained a certain degree of perfection, its followers claimed that the human soul entered into a state where it could receive a divine vision and revelation. From this enlightened state, the soul could neither advance nor retrogress, thus, rendering all exterior forms and practices of religious life unnecessary for those who had received the “light,” i.e., participation in the liturgy, good works, and religious observances. The Alumbrados were primarily coming from among the reformed Franciscans and Jesuits but later spread among all people. Their extravagant claims of divine visions and revelations resulted in their relentless persecutions during the Spanish Inquisition on three occasions (1568, 1574, and 1623). See *Alumbrado* in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Alumbrado> [Retrieved: 22 June 2021].

²¹ See R. P. Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770*, 49.

²² R. P. Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770*, 48.

²³ R. P. Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770*, 49.

²⁴ Jones, *The Counter Reformation Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe*, 136.

(the royal capital) and Sevilla (the most prominent port).²⁵ Though short-lived, this discovery alarmed the profoundly Catholic country that sharper directives were given to hunt for Protestants, which had culminated in the arrest of the Dominican Archbishop of Toledo, Fray Bartolomé Carranza (1503-76).

Fray Carranza represented a fascinating personality on any study of Spanish Inquisition. Before being nominated to the Primate See of Toledo in 1557 by King Felipe II, he was a member of the Spanish delegation of bishops and religious to the Council of Trent (1546-47 and 1551-52). In his discourse, *De necessaria residentia personali*, he argued that the residency of bishops and priests in their benefices was a Divine Law, which caused such a remark in the Council. Fray Carranza taught at the University of Valladolid while concurrently serving as a censor in the Spanish Inquisition on books and heretical doctrines. He was a close associate of Cardinal Reginald Pole (1500-58), the Papal Legate to England during the reign of Queen Mary (1516-58). However, some of his teachings and activities aroused suspicion at home. His emphasis on faith, the publication of his catechism in the vernacular, the *Comentarios sobre el catecismo* (1558), and his presence in the heresy-infected Flanders, where rumors alleged him to have led Emperor Charles V to heresy in his deathbed, in a way, summed up the accusations against him.²⁶ When he returned to Spain in 1558, a year after his election to the See of Toledo, with the permission of King Felipe II, the Grand Inquisitor, Don Fernando de Valdés (1483-1568) arrested him at Torrelaguna and brought him to prison at Valladolid. His main accusers were two of his fellow Dominicans, the theologians Fray Melchor Cano (1509-60) and Fray Domingo de Soto (1494-1560), who condemned his catechism for Lutheran heresy and *alumbrada*.²⁷ The inquisitorial process of the Archbishop represented a dramatic conflict between the Iberian Dominicans on many theological points, which may have contributed to the reforms started at the University of Salamanca.²⁸ The news of his arrest reached Rome, and the papacy negotiated his release. When the Council of Trent reconvened in 1562, the fate of Fray Carranza was very much in the mind of the Council fathers, most of whom considered his catechism as orthodox. King Felipe II repeatedly refused the pleas for his release until his case was transferred to the Roman Inquisition in 1566. He remained in seclusion for ten years at the Dominican Convento di Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome until he was found not guilty seven days before his death. His case showed the intense desire to ward off any Protestant influence on Spain. According to R. Po-Chia Hsia, in his book *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770*:

²⁵ Jones, *The Counter Reformation Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe*, 135-136.

²⁶ Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770*, 48. See also L. Willaert, *Storia della Chiesa*, vol. XVIII, translated by C. Capodimonte-A. Poggio Cancelli (Torino: Editrice S.A.I.E., 1979), 300.

²⁷ M. C. Giannini, *I Domenicani*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2016, 132.

²⁸ M. C. Giannini, *I Domenicani*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2016, 132-133.

The fate of Archbishop Carranza reflected the three major characteristics of Spanish Catholicism: firstly, the immense authority and elevated self-image of the Spanish monarchy, which considered itself the staunchest defender of the faith; secondly, the reach of the Inquisition, the power of which spared no rank or estate; and thirdly, the legitimacy of both institutions, which remained unchallenged by the majority of the population who came to identify Hispanicity as the most perfect form of Catholicism.²⁹

The hardening of the Catholic position came earlier in Spain than anywhere else. Hsia likewise pointed out the contrasting description of the Catholic Reform happening between Italy and Spain. He noted that while it was the greater devotion to charity that inspired the Italian reform, there seemed to be a hardening of the boundaries of faith in Spain. The Inquisition was the distinguishing mark of the Spanish Catholicism to weather down those considered enemies of the faith. Hsia further added that this uncompromising feature of Catholicism “existed alongside the many expressions of religious fervor that characterized the Catholic renewal.”³⁰

Spanish Royal Patronage

When Constantinople fell, the Turks closed the doorway of Europe to Asia. The Portuguese were first to probe for an eastward passage around the tip of Africa. The Portuguese expeditions initiated the age of European exploration and conquest. Nonetheless, what gave moral justification to such European enterprise began with the papal bull of Pope Nicholas V (1397-1455) on 18 June 1452, *Dum diversas*, that granted King Alfonso V (1432-81) of Portugal, upon his request, the full authority to subjugate the Saracens, pagans, infidels, and other enemies of Christ in the name of the Catholic religion.³¹ The same bull likewise authorized the Portuguese King

²⁹ Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770*, 48.

³⁰ Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770*, 43.

³¹ “Sane sicut ex pio christianoque desiderio tuo procedere conspicimus tu Christi inimicos, Sarracenos videlicet, subjugare ac ad Christi fidem potenti manu redigere intendis, si ad id tibi Apostolicae Sedis suffragetur auctoritas (...) in hujusmodi sanctissimo proposito confovere merito cupientes, tibi Sarracenos, et Paganos, aliosque infideles, et Christi inimicos quoscunque, et ubicunque constitutos Regna, Ducatus, Comitatus, Principatus, aliaque Dominia, Terras, Loca, Villas, Castra, et quaecumque alia possessiones, bona mobilia, et immobilia in quibuscumque rebus consistentia, et quocunque nomine censeantur, per eosdem Sarracenos, Paganos, infideles, et Christi inimicos detenta, et possessa, etiam cujuscunque, seu quorumcunque Regis, seu Principis, aut Regum, vel Principum Regna, Ducatus, Comitatus, Principatus, aliaque Dominia, Terrae, Loca, Villae, Castra, possessiones, et bona hujusmodi fuerint, invadendi, conquerendi, expugnandi, et subjugandi, illorumque personas in perpetuam servitutem redigendi, regna quoque, Ducatus, Comitatus, Principatus, aliaque Dominia, possessiones, et bona hujusmodi, tibi et successoribus tuis Regibus Portugalliae, perpetuo applicandi, et appropriandi, ac in tuos, et eorundem successorum usus, et utilitates convertendi plenam, et liberam, auctoritate Apostolica, tenore praesentium concedimus facultatem (...)” Nicolas V, *Dum diversas*, 18 June 1452, in L. M. Jordao (ed.), *Bullarium Patronatos Portugalle Regum in Ecclesiis Africae, Asiae atque Oceaniae, Bullas, Brevia, Epistolas, Decreta Actaque Sanctae Sedis ab Alexandro III ut ad hoc usque tempus amplectens, 1171-1600*, vol. I (Olisipone, Typographia Nationali, 1868), 22.

to consign the conquered people into perpetual slavery. This recourse of King Alfonso V to Pope Nicholas V was adjunct to the prevailing view among the jurists and theologians of those times on the universal lordship of the Pope over the world, which they believed that the Pope's "authority extended to the non-Christians and that he could therefore, in a given case, appropriate, transfer, and assign, quite legally, political dominion over their lands to Christian princes."³² Though the papal bull did not stipulate the geographic extent of such concession, as it was only a response to Alfonso's appeal to justify his slave trade monopoly in Africa,³³ his successive papal bull *Romanus Pontifex* (8 January 1454), and that of Pope Callixtus III (1378-1458) *Inter Caetera* (13 March 1456) granted Portugal the exclusive right to explore and conquer all lands on the route eastward to the Indies around the coast of Africa, in view of propagating the faith, thus, establishing Catholicism in these lands.³⁴ With the issuance of these papal bulls, what was only left to Spain, consequently, was the westward course to Asia, which Spain could claim as outside the scope granted exclusively to Portugal. By this time, Spain was a rising power in Europe after the success of the Reconquest.

Spain entered into competition with Portugal with the expedition of the Genoese navigator and explorer Cristoforo Colombo (1451-1506), which discovered new lands in the Caribbean on 12 October 1492, which he claimed for Spain and presumed to be part of Asia.³⁵ Hence, they were called the West Indies, in contrast to the East Indies of Portugal. To counter any Portuguese claim to the new lands under Spain, the Spanish royal couples, King Fernando II and Queen Isabel, immediately secured the recognition of their right to these lands from Pope Alexander VI (1431-1503). On 4 May 1493, the Pope published the famous papal bull *Inter Caetera*³⁶ that literary divided the world into two partitions by

³² J. G. Aragon, *The Controversy over Justification of Spanish Rule in the Philippines*, in G. Anderson (ed.), *Studies in Philippine Church History* (Ithaca-London: Cornell University Press, 1969), 4.

³³ By the mid of the 15th century, Portugal was the leading power with its nobility, enjoying the prestige and luxury from the benefits of its enterprises overseas in Africa, in particular the slave trade. It was within the psychological framework that the expansionist aspiration was part of the ideals of chivalric honor and crusade. This mindset became more defined during the reign of Alfonso V when he appealed to Nicolas V for the justification of the Portuguese slave enterprise in Africa, which the Pope obliged as a token for Portugal's aid against the Turks in 1453. With the Pope conceding to the appeal, "such enterprises were accepted as self-justifying crusades for religion, chivalry, and honor." See S. Payne, *A History of Spain and Portugal*, vol. I, chap. 10, 195, <https://libro.uca.edu/payne1/payne10.pdf> [Retrieved: 14 April 2020].

³⁴ Joaquin, *Culture and History*, 143; Delgado, *Catholicism in Spain, Portugal, and their Empires*, 17.

³⁵ It was years later, after the reports of Italian explorer Amerigo Vespucci (1454-1512), that there was a realization that the islands belong to a separate continent between Europe and Asia. See Joaquin, *Culture and History*, 144; Delgado, *Catholicism in Spain, Portugal, and their Empires*, 17; Iserloh et al., *Reformation and Counter Reformation*, 576.

³⁶ Alexander VI, *Inter caetera*, 4 May 1493, in A. Tomassetti et al. (ed.), *Bullarum diplomatum et privilegiorum sanctorum romanorum Pontificum*, vol. V, Augustae Taurinorum, Seb. Franco, H. Fory et Henrico Dalmazzo editoribus, 1860, 360-364.

drawing an invisible line of demarcation running from north to south 100 leagues west of the Azores and the Cape Verde Islands.³⁷ It determined that the east side of the line was for Portugal, while the west side of the line was for Spain. In effect, the Pope recognized retroactively the Spanish claim in the regions discovered by Genoese explorer in 1492.³⁸ The papal bull tried to avert the war between the two rival empires by limiting their respective domains for conquest. In the Treaty of Tordesillas on 7 June 1494, to resolve the protest of Portugal, the demarcation line was further extended to some 370 leagues to the west of the Azores in favor of Portugal, which explained why Brazil was included in the Portuguese side. However, the division in Asia, where the line of demarcation lies, was never clarified. The expedition of the Portuguese explorer Fernão de Magalhães (1480-1521),³⁹

³⁷ *“Et ut tanti negotii provinciam apostolicae gratiae largitate donati liberius et audacius assumatis, motu proprio, non ad vestram vel alterius pro vobis super hoc nobis oblatae petitionis instantiam, sed de nostra mera liberalitate et ex certa scientia ac de apostolicae potestatis plenitudine, omnes insulas et terras firmas inventas et inveniendas, detectas et detegendas versus occidentem et meridiem fabricando et construendo unam lineam a polo arctico scilicet septentrione ad polum antarcticum scilicet meridiem, sive terrae firmae et insulae inventae et inveniendae sint versus Indiam aut versus aliam quamcumque partem, que linea distet a qualibet insularum, que vulgariter nuncupantur de los Azores et Cabo Verde, centum leucis versus occidentem et meridiem, ita quod omnes insulae et terrae firmae repertae et reperiendae, detectae et detegendae, a praefata linea versus occidentem et meridiem, per alium regem aut principem Christianum non fuerint actualiter possessae usque ad diem Nativitatis Domini nostri Iesu Christi proxime praeteritum a quo incipit annus praesens millesimus quadringentesimus nonagesimus tertius, quando fuerunt per nuntios et capitaneos vestros inventae alicue praedictarum insularum, auctoritate omnipotentis Dei nobis in beato Petro concessa, ac vicariatus Iesu Christi, qua fungimur in terris, cum omnibus illarum dominiis, civitatibus, castris, locis et villis, iuribusque et iurisdictionibus ac pertinentiis universis, vobis hereditibusque et successoribus vestris, Castellae et Legionis regibus, in perpetuum tenore presentium, donamus, et assignamus, vosque et haeredes ac successores praefatos illarum dominos cum plena, libera, et omnimoda potestate, auctoritate, et iurisdictione, facimus, constituimus, et deputamus.”* Tomassetti et al. (ed.), *Bullarum diplomatum et privilegiorum sanctorum romanorum Pontificum*, 363.

³⁸ Tomassetti et al. (ed.), *Bullarum diplomatum et privilegiorum sanctorum romanorum Pontificum*, 362.

³⁹ The Spaniards renamed him as Hernando de Magallanes. He was a Portuguese navigator who commanded the Spanish fleet of five ships (Trinidad, Victoria, Concepción, Santiago, San Antonio) that sailed westward from Sevilla on 10 August 1519 in search for a passageway to the Moluccas. A crew of 270 men operated the fleet. By the time they crossed the Pacific, they were only three ships left, as the Santiago sunk and the San Antonio secretly sailed back to Spain. On 6 March 1521, after an exhausting crossing of the Pacific, they reached the Ladrões islands group, where they continued southward towards the direction of the Moluccas. By 17 March 1521, they disembarked for the first time on the Philippine shore at one of the smaller islands of Samar, the Suluan Island, where they befriended the natives. They sailed farther southwest and reached the southernmost part of Leyte. On 31 March 1521, after Magalhães struck a pact with the local chief, Rajah Kolambú, the first Mass was celebrated on Philippine soil in the Limasawa island. The fleet entered the port of Cebu on 7 April 1521, where an alliance was made with its chief, Rajah Humabon. Humabon, together with his wife and some 800 subjects, received baptism. He was given the Christian name, Carlos, in honor of the King of Spain, and his wife, Juana, in honor of the king's mother. The Spaniards entered into a local war against one of the local chiefs of the island of Mactan, Rajah Lapu-Lapu, in their desire to help a submissive chief of the same island, Rajah Zula. Magalhães lost his life in this battle on 27 April 1521, and consequent to their catastrophic defeat, the Cebuanos repudiated their alliance with the Spaniards, killing twenty of them on 1 May 1521. After withdrawing from shore, they burned the Concepción since they lacked hand for crewing the ship. The last two remaining ships of the fleet took different routes on its way back to Spain after loading spices in the Moluccas. Trinidad sailed via

which circumnavigated the globe and discovered the Philippine Islands for Spain, broke out this struggle in the Pacific and held great importance in the missionary history of the Far East, not just of the Philippines.⁴⁰ According to Schumacher:

It is doubtful if Alexander foresaw the far-reaching conclusions, which would be drawn from his bull of arbitration between Spain and Portugal. Both its grant of sovereignty over the infidel lands and its Commission to the king to bring the Christian faith to the inhabitants of these lands were destined to become the subjects of bitter controversy between conquistadores and missionaries.⁴¹

The so-called Donatio Alexandrina granted not only exclusive rights to the Catholic kings of Spain to subjugate lands in his respective region of the partition, but also the papacy acceded to them certain rights over the Church in the Indies. The Spanish rulers assumed an obligation to promote the spread of Christianity in the new territories, thereby putting in effect the basis for the royal patronage.⁴² These rights were further extended and explicitly expounded in Alexander's subsequent papal bull *Eximiae devotionis* (16 November 1501), which now included the right to legally and freely levy tithes on the inhabitants and dwellers of the conquered lands to suitably support the establishment of the dioceses therein, the sustenance of the clergy, and the proper celebration of the divine worship.⁴³ However, the universal patronage, where the Church in the Indies was placed entirely under the control of the Spanish Crown, was granted by Pope Alexander's successor Pope Julius II in his bull *Universalis ecclesiae regimini* (28 July 1508).⁴⁴ Therefore, from this mission mandate, Spain deduced its right of conquest and annexation.⁴⁵

Mexico, and Victoria cautiously sailed via the Indian Ocean. The Portuguese captured the Trinidad on its way back to Mexico. It was only the Victoria, under the command of its Captain, Juan Sebastian Elcano (1487-1526), that completed circumnavigating the globe in September 1522. The Victoria anchored at Sevilla after three years, with eighteen European survivors on board. A. Pigafetta, *The Voyage Round the World by Magellan*, translated by Stanley of Alderely, (London, Hakluyt Society, 1874). See also P. Fernandez, *History of the Church in the Philippines (1521-1898)*, (Navotas: National Book Store, Inc., 1979), 10-11; J. Arcilla, *An Introduction to Philippine History* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1994), 3-4.

⁴⁰ Joaquin, *Culture and History*, 145; Iserloh et al., *Reformation and Counter Reformation*, 576.

⁴¹ Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 2.

⁴² Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770*, 48; Iserloh et al., *Reformation and Counter Reformation*, 576-577; Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 7.

⁴³ See Alexander VI, *Eximiae devotionis*, 16 November 1501, in Blair-Robertson (ed.), *The Philippine Islands 1493 - 1898: explorations by early navigators, descriptions of the Islands and their history and records of the Catholic missions, as related in contemporaneous books and manuscripts, showing the political, economic, commercial and religious conditions of those Islands from their earliest relations with European nations to the beginning of the 19th century*, (Ohio: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1903 - 1909), vol. I, 241-245.

⁴⁴ Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 8-9.

⁴⁵ Iserloh et al., *Reformation and Counter Reformation*, 577.

Unlike the Portuguese who first established trade support posts, the Spaniards immediately took an extensive program of colonization, which soon turned into merciless exploitation.⁴⁶ With an appeal to the papal bull of concession of 1493, the first conquistadores did not bother to question if they had the right to occupy the areas of the native inhabitants of Antilles, Mexico, and Peru. They came to accomplish the mandate given them to subjugate the Indios and take possession of their lands, usually by violence. For most of the initial colonization of the America, the conquistadores were as well driven by their desire for gold and quick fortunes by taking the indigenous lands as a royal fief (encomienda) to the detriment of the native population.⁴⁷ The first missionaries, who accompanied and seen these cruelties, being men of their era, usually approved this approach, as “they felt that exotic peoples could become genuine Christians only if their views, customs, and worship were first destroyed (method of the tabula rasa).”⁴⁸ They were not prepared for this kind of encounter with a strange culture. However, it should not be ascertained that the missionaries only knew the compulsory method, as to some extent, both the native languages and population of the Indians still exist to this day in most countries in Latin America.⁴⁹

This method of colonization and Christianization was reconsidered with the arrival of the Dominican friars at the end of 1510 in the Antilles.⁵⁰ Witnessing such enormous cruelties, the friars questioned the whole right of Spain to be there if Spanish occupation meant to be at the cost of human suffering. In an Advent sermon in 1511, the Dominican Fray Ant3nio de Montesino (1475-1540) publicly and strongly denounced the enslavement and harsh treatment of the indigenous people when he issued these questions:

Tell me. By what right, with what justice, do we hold these Indians in such cruel and horrible servitude? By what authority have you made such hideous wars on these peoples? They are living on their own lands in peace and quiet. (...) By what right do you keep them so oppressed and exhausted? (...) The Indians, are they not human beings? (...) Are you not required to love them as you love yourselves?⁵¹

⁴⁶ Delgado, *Catholicism in Spain, Portugal, and their Empires*, 18.

⁴⁷ Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 4.

⁴⁸ Iserloh et al., *Reformation and Counter Reformation*, 577.

⁴⁹ Iserloh et al., *Reformation and Counter Reformation*, 577.

⁵⁰ Delgado, *Catholicism in Spain, Portugal, and their Empires*, 18; Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 4.

⁵¹ “Sermon of Fray Ant3nio de Montesino,” quoted in Delgado, *Catholicism in Spain, Portugal, and their Empires*, 19.

With such a violent protest, the Crown consulted the matter with the Commission charged to ensure good governance, which consisted of experts, lawyers, and theologians. Consultations were made on the laws of Burgos (1512) and Valladolid (1513) that led to the relaxation of the *encomienda* system. However, the Alexandrian bull of 1493 was used to justify the Spanish right of subjugation and annexation since the Pope awarded the Spanish kings the complete jurisdiction over the lands of the infidels in the New World. To answer the indictments of the friars against these cruelties of the Spanish occupation, the so-called *requerimiento* was introduced in 1514, a proclamation supposed to be read to the Indians through interpreters, whereby, under the threat of most severe penalties, the *Indios* were forced to accept Christianity and recognize the dominion of the Spanish King.⁵² The *Indios*' refusal to make their submission was tantamount to a declaration of war over the authority of the Spanish King and, consequently, that of the Pope.⁵³ In the assessment of the Commission, the papal concession and the mission that ensued from it guaranteed this subjection demand.⁵⁴

The cruelties persisted in the conquest notwithstanding the protests of the missionaries. Another Dominican friar, Fray Bartolomé de las Casas (1474-1566), became the most notable defender of the rights of the Indians, both in practice and debate. He crossed the Atlantic Ocean seven times to implore the King to protect the rights of the Indians, and force the theologians and lawyers of his time to settle questions on the "human rights of Indians, the lawfulness of war against the infidels, and Spain's claim to have a legitimate title to the occupation of America."⁵⁵ His denouncement of the Spanish rule in the Indies, through his series of books and treatises, formed "the fertile source for the enemies of Spain and the creators of the 'black legend' of Spanish cruelty in America."⁵⁶ Though undoubtedly, Fray Las Casas exaggerated his accounts of the Spanish exploitations, he, however, remained to be the voice of conscience to the Spanish rulers, which could be summed up in this phrase taken from his work: "What is necessary is not conquest by arms, but persuasion with sweet and divine words, and the examples and works of a holy life (...) This is not to be called conquest, but preaching of the faith."⁵⁷

⁵² "Sermon of Fray António de Montesino," quoted in Delgado, *Catholicism in Spain, Portugal, and their Empires*, 19. See also Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 5; Iserloh et al., *Reformation and Counter Reformation*, 577.

⁵³ Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 5.

⁵⁴ Delgado, *Catholicism in Spain, Portugal, and their Empires*, 19.

⁵⁵ Iserloh et al., *Reformation and Counter Reformation*, 579.

⁵⁶ Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 6. See also Iserloh et al., *Reformation and Counter Reformation*, 579.

⁵⁷ "Representación al Emperador Carlos V," quoted in Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 6.

At home in Spain, his Dominican brother Fray Vitoria at the University of Salamanca provided the theological and philosophical foundation unto which his arguments were based. In his lectures in the 1540s, Fray Vitoria propounded the theological treatises that questioned the papal concession, which was used, as earlier mentioned, as the argument for the subjection demand.⁵⁸ He rejected the universal authority of the Pope. Fray Vitoria argued that the Pope's authority was principally spiritual that his "temporal power being subservient to the spiritual power (...) extended only over believers." Hence, he asserted that "if the barbarians should not be willing to recognize any dominion in the pope, one cannot for that reason make war on them nor seize their goods. This is evident, because such dominion does not exist."⁵⁹

Fray Vitoria further argued that "if the Pope had temporal power over the whole world it would not be alienable."⁶⁰ The Pope could neither permit any secular prince to use this power nor transmit it to them. In the same way, no secular prince could claim such non-alienable power of the Pope by concession. He, instead, stressed out the natural rights of men, including the non-believers. His treatment of the natural rights and the conditions for a just war might come too late for the Indians of America. But for the native inhabitants of the Philippines, the missionaries used these arguments in their defense of the Filipino rights against the Spanish conquistadores. These four propositions summarized Fray Vitoria's theological theses:⁶¹

First proposition: The pope is not the civil or temporal lord of the whole world, speaking of dominion and civil power in a proper sense ...

Second proposition: Even if the pope had such secular power in the whole world, he could not transmit it to secular rulers ...

Third proposition: The pope does have temporal power as referred to spiritual matters; that is, to the extent, it is necessary in order to administer spiritual matters ...

Fourth proposition: The pope has no temporal power over those barbarians nor over other pagans ...

⁵⁸ See J. G. Merrills, Francisco de Vitoria and the Spanish Conquest of the New World, in «*The Irish Jurist*», 3, 1 (Summer 1968): 187-194.

⁵⁹ Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 7.

⁶⁰ J. G. Merrills, *Francisco de Vitoria and the Spanish Conquest of the New World*, 191.

⁶¹ Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 7. See also Merrills, *Francisco de Vitoria and the Spanish Conquest of the New World*, 191-192.

However, how the Church developed in the Indies further amplified the rights and duties conceded to the Spanish kings in reality. This almost divinely ordained and sole right of the Spanish kings over the Church in the Indies was undeniably evident in the mind of King Felipe II, as observed in his decree issued on 1 June 1574. This document provided a peek at what this ecclesiastical patronage was all about. The King was asserting whatever privileges and authority that were justly granted to him by his predecessors' royal endowments and the concessions by the Supreme Pontiffs. He likewise emphasized that no secular or ecclesiastical princes could contest or intrude in this ecclesiastical patronage whether in court or any extrajudicial act, "for whatever cause or reason." The ecclesiastical patronage was a right yielded to the Spanish Crown beyond doubt, "either in whole or in part." His decree read:

Inasmuch as the right of ecclesiastical patronage belongs to us in the whole commonwealth of the Indies, both because we discovered and acquired that New World and built and endowed the churches and monasteries there at our own expense and that of the noble Catholic kings, our predecessors, and because of the bulls by which the sovereign pontiffs of their own initiative granted to us this right for its preservation and out of our just title to it, therefore we command and ordain that this sole right of patronage in the Indies must forever be reserved in its entirety for ourselves and our royal Crown and cannot be separated from us, this Crown, either in whole or in part ... Let no secular person, nor cleric, order, convent, congregation, or community of whatever state, condition, quality, or pre-eminence, whether by plea in court or extrajudicially, for whatever reason or cause, dare to intrude into matters touching this patronage, nor prejudice us in this subject ... And our viceroys, audiencias, and royal justices are to proceed with rigor against those who fail to observe most strictly our right of patronage ...⁶²

Conclusion

The epochal events of the 15th and 16th centuries formed new realities in Europe. Confessional division caused stir in the balance of power and in the realignment of fealty. The Christian unity of Europe was nearing its end. The Church had to face this changing society. In the political realm, it entered into a new age of maritime navigation, leading to the global expansion of world powers. This period ushered the Golden Age of Spanish history, both in the political and religious spheres. While the confessional division buffeted other European kingdoms, Spain emerged from the vitality of the Reconquest of the last Muslim Emirate (1492) in

⁶² "Royal Decree of Felipe II, 1 June 1574," quoted in Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 9.

the Iberian Peninsula and the unification of the Spanish lands under the Catholic faith. The Spanish Catholicism had risen from the much earlier Catholic Reform in Spain, which anteceded the Ecumenical Council of Trent (1545 – 63). These elements of Reconquest and Catholic Reform had animated and forged the Catholic identity in Spain, wherein the new nation and its people identified their destiny with the Catholic faith. Thus, both the Spanish conquistadores and the Spanish friars conducted their military conquest and missionary expansion, respectively, in the sense of “messianic mission.”

As Spain became more powerful globally, it likewise accepted the responsibility to evangelize the people of the newly found non-Christian lands. The Spanish Royal Patronage was the consequence of papal concessions, through a series of papal bulls, to the Spanish Crowns in the evangelization of the lands of America and Asia. In these concessions, the Supreme Pontiffs granted the Spanish Monarchs ecclesiastical privileges and rights in return for their patronage of the missionary enterprise, thus, yielding complete control of the Christian mission in these territories. The consequences of this patronage resulted in much fiery debate in its legitimacy. It is important to note that this exposition did not intend to give a comprehensive study on Spanish Catholicism and Royal Patronage. The primary objective of this paper is to identify the essential factors in what the author considers as the Hispanization of the Christian mission. The personalities and events that were selectively chosen best exemplify how this type of Catholicism determined and made a distinguishing mark on the Christian missionary enterprise in the Philippines. Five factors of the Spanish Catholicism were highlighted in this article:

1. The close union and symbiotic relationship of the State and Church that provided the vitality and energy of the Christian mission, thereby, influencing the expressions of the faith;
2. The extended and conceded prerogatives of the Spanish kings over ecclesiastical affairs and religious matters;
3. The centrality of the role of the ecclesiastics in the Spanish Church reform, particularly the episcopate, rather than the renewals coming from lay movements;
4. The significant part served by the missionary religious in the Christian mission mandate of the Crown; and
5. The predominant theological and political background, and religious fervor that eventually precluded and animated the Christian mission in the Philippines.**PS**

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