



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

– CONTINUATION OF PART TWO

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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 of mine is a comprehensive history of the Church in the Philippines. It is a comprehensive study 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> 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.

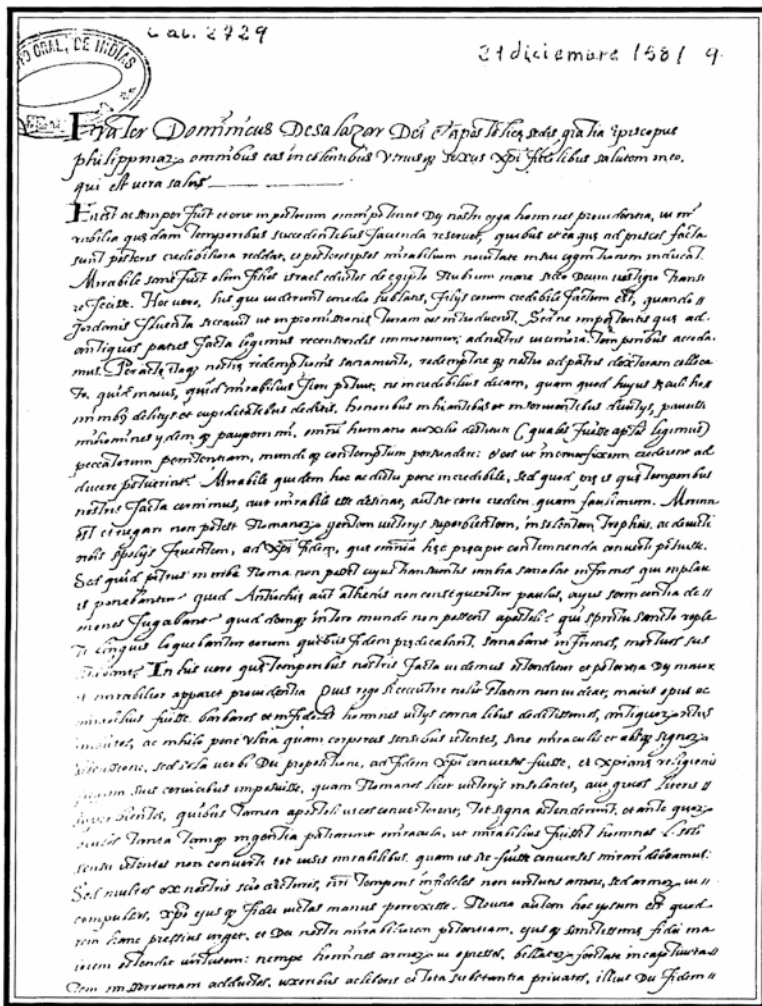
**Keywords:** *Evangelization, (Early Missionaries: Augustinians, Franciscans, Jesuits, Dominicans, Recollects), Pre-Catechetical Formation, Catechetical Formation, Methodology of Mission, Education, Social Service, Filipino Clergy, The Church as Peace Maker, Culture and Mission*

## C. The Creation of the Archdiocese of Manila

### 1. Growth of Christianity in the Philippines in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century

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

During the episcopacy of Salazar, the number of missionaries grew greatly. In 1575 there were only thirteen.<sup>47</sup> Ten years later there were ninety-four. If we were to accept the testimony of Alonso Sanchez, extraordinary ambassador of all the segments of society in the Philippines to the courts of Madrid and Rome, the number of Christians in the Philippines in 1586 ascended to around 250,000.<sup>48</sup> Juan Gonzalez de Mendoza, according to the reports he gathered from missionaries in the field, says in his *Historia* that the number baptized that same year swelled up to 400,000.<sup>49</sup>

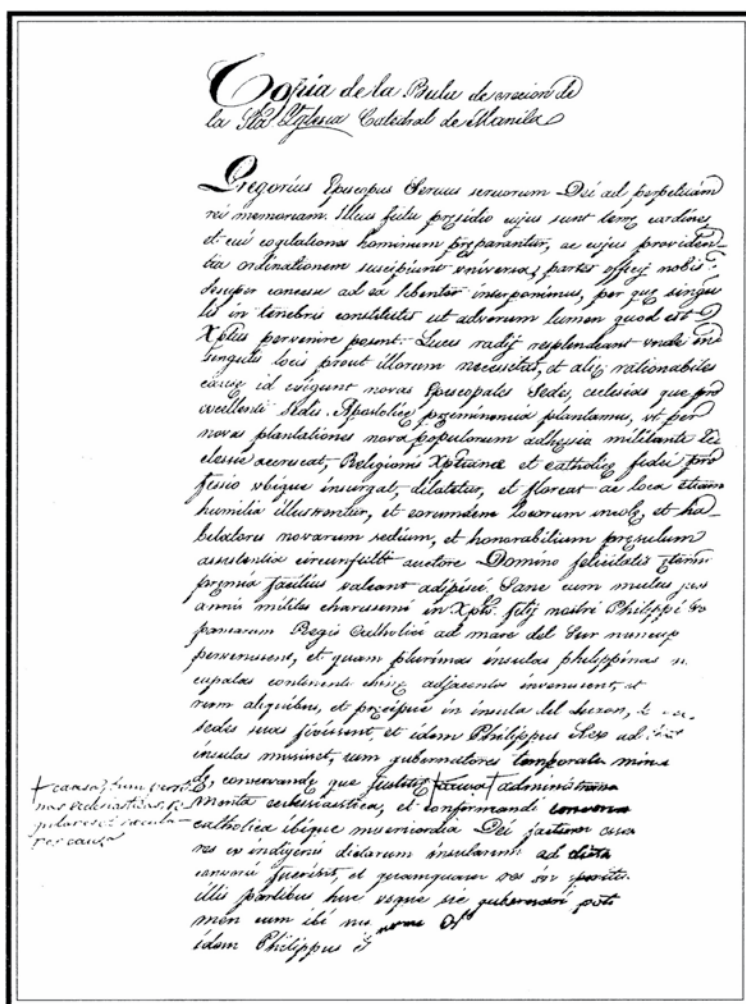


Erection of the Cathedral Church of Manila by Domingo de Salazar, December 21, 1581.

<sup>47</sup> Cfr. Letter of Governor Francisco Sande to Philip II, Manila, June 7, 1576, BRPI, 4, 87.

<sup>48</sup> Cfr. BRPI, 4, 185-186.

<sup>49</sup> Cfr. BRPI, 4, 148.



First page of *Bull Illius Fulti Praesidio*, of Gregory XIII (1572-1585), creating the Cathedral Church of Manila, Rome, February 6, 1579.

In May of 1591, the year of Salazar's departure for Spain, there were 140 missionaries in the country. In order to serve well the people and impart the Christian doctrine to those who eagerly sought it, there was a need for 161 more missionaries.<sup>50</sup>

In 1594 the Augustinian Francisco de Ortega, in a Memorial presented to the King in Madrid, said that in the Philippines there were 300,000 Christians and 267 missionaries; 229 more were needed.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Cfr. *Relation of the Encomiendas of the Philippines*, Manila, May 31, 1591, I. Rodriguez, *Historia*, I, 313-314; BRPI, 8, 140-141.

<sup>51</sup> Cfr. *Memorial* in I. Rodriguez, *Historia*, I, 341. Cfr. J. L. Phelan, "Pre-Baptismal Instruction...", 15-16.

The news of the great harvest obtained in the Philippines for Christ came to the knowledge of the Pope through the lips of one of the protagonists in the process, the Jesuit Alonso Sanchez. The Pope, Clement VIII (1592-1606) congratulated the bishop, the man most responsible for the success, the missionaries who had played a major role in the process, the royal officials who had supported the missionaries, and all the faithful of the country who had contributed through their labors to the conversion of the new Christians.<sup>52</sup>

## 2. Division of the Missionary Field among the Orders

One of the causes that accelerated even more the evangelization process was the division of the missionary field among the different religious orders working at that time in the Philippines. On April 27, 1594, the King wrote to the Governor<sup>53</sup> to see to it how the division could be carried out. The division was done along geoethnic lines. This brought about in the long run tremendous spiritual and pastoral benefices. The religious would not be compelled to learn an innumerable number of languages. With two or three they could give themselves body and soul to the task of evangelization.

All the religious orders received ministries in the Tagalog region, but it was the Augustinians and Franciscans who received the best part. The Dominicans accepted in Manila the ministry of the Chinese. The Jesuits were also given some ministries in Manila and nearby provinces. The Augustinians received Pampanga and the Ilocos in Luzon. Pampanga was the richest province in the country and the granary of Manila. It was one of the most populated provinces. The Franciscans took charge of the Bikol region, also in Luzon. To the Dominicans were given the provinces of Bataan, Pangasinan and the vast Cagayan Valley. The Visayan Islands were divided along linguistic and geographical lines among the Augustinians and Jesuits. Cebu and Panay went to the Augustinians. Samar, Leyte and Bohol to the Jesuits. Mindanao was still an unconquered island. Only the eastern part, called Caraga, and the north-east part of the island were under the influence of Spain. The hinterlands were still *terra ignota*. The regions of the north-west and the west of the island were under the Muslims. The regions of the Augustinians and Franciscans were the most populated and homogenous. The missions of the Dominicans and Jesuits were more isolated, less populated, and consequently, poorer. The Recollects, the last of the major religious orders to arrive to the Philippines, when the division

<sup>52</sup> Cfr. *Letter of Congratulations of Pope Clement VIII to Salazar, the Clergy and the People*, Rome, March 25, 1592, BRPI, 8, 234-235.

<sup>53</sup> The Cedula is found in Spanish in Francisco de Santa Ines, *Crónica*, 2, 607. Cfr. Schumacher, *Readings*, 17.

had already been done, received scattered islands and missions in the immense archipelago. They were found in the more outlying areas, like Zambales in Luzon, Palawan, the Calamianes, Romblon and parts of eastern Mindanao. They were open to the piratical raids of the Moros and were by far the poorest. Phelan, an expert on the matter, describes briefly and precisely the point under discussion:

The outstanding practical advantage resulting from this partition was that it enabled each order to concentrate its linguistic studies in not more than four different languages. Only thus could the religious hope to train sufficiently competent linguists in the wide variety of Philippine languages, for a maxim of Spanish missionary policy was that converts should be indoctrinated in their own tongues. It was thought that the natives would respond more readily if the Faith were not preached in an alien language.<sup>54</sup>

### 3. Manila as an Archdiocese (1595)

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

At various times I have informed your majesty how difficult it is for one bishop to govern a bishopric like the one I have now. I think two bishoprics for this island of Luzon are necessary. Even three would not be enough. What I now humbly beg your majesty is to create a see for the Islands of *Pintados* with its seat in the city of Cebu, for as your majesty will know, through the report I am sending, two bishops would not be enough [for the country]. I tell you honestly that with me alone your majesty does not fulfill your royal conscience, and I, for the security of my own, would not dare say otherwise.<sup>55</sup>

In 1591 Salazar left the Philippines for Spain to discuss personally with the King burning problems affecting the lives of the people. One of them, no doubt, was the defense of the Filipinos against the abuses of the Spanish officials and the exactions of the government. Another was, as he had pointed out before, the division of the country into various ecclesiastical provinces. Salazar was convinced that for an efficient administration of his vast diocese of the Philippines, and for the temporal and spiritual advantage of the people, the division into more ecclesiastical provinces was a necessity. This was more so in the Philippines, because his metropolitan see, Mexico, was thousands of kilometers away. This was not yet the most serious problem. There was the need to cross the biggest and most dangerous ocean of the universe,

<sup>54</sup> *The Hispanization*, 50-51.

<sup>55</sup> *Letter of Domingo de Salazar to Philip II, Manila, June 27, 1588, AGI, Filipinas 74.*



the Pacific Ocean. Salazar as suffragan to the bishop of Mexico could not attend the councils of the metropolitan see of Mexico due to the dangers of navigation and the forced abandonment of his flock. This had already happened to him in 1585 when he was unable to assist the III Mexican Council. On the other hand, the territory of the Philippines was so vast, and the navigation of the internal seas so dangerous that one single bishop could not in any way attend well to his flock. Salazar knew what he was talking about for no more than one occasion he was shipwrecked and almost got drowned.



**1571: THE CHURCH PRIOR TO THE CATHEDRAL** under the patronage of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception was established in 1571 after Miguel Lopez de Legaspi took possession of Manila.







**1581: THE CHURCH OF MANILA WAS ELEVATED TO A CATHEDRAL**, the first episcopal seat in the entire Philippine archipelago, on December 21, 1581 by a Bull of His Holiness, Pope Gregory XIII.



**1583: THE WOODEN CATHEDRAL WAS DESTROYED IN THE FIRE OF 1583.** During the funeral mass of Gov. Gen. Gonzalo Ronquillo de Peñalosa at San Agustin Church, a candle fell on the catafalque, burning it and the church.



**1595: A UNIQUE AND COSTLY STRUCTURE AT THE SIDE OF THE MANILA CATHEDRAL** was built to house sacred relics from 155 martyrs, 20 popes, and from the bodies of saints Polycarp and Potenciana brought to Manila by Fray Alonso Sanchez.

<p><b>1605: THE CATHEDRAL SERVED AS A SANCTUARY FOR PRIESTS:</b> Buried here were Archbishop Benavides and Fr. Juan Fernandez de Leon, founder of Casa de la Misericordia and called 'saint' for his singular and fruitful life.</p>	
<p><b>1620: THE CATHEDRAL - A VICTIM OF NATURAL DISASTERS &amp; THEFT:</b> At the time of Archbishop Serrano, a precious gold lunette (Viril) with the Blessed Sacrament was stolen. The Archbishop performed severe forms of penance for the sacrilegious act.</p>	
<p><b>1662: THE BEAUTIFULLY RECONSTRUCTED CATHEDRAL</b> was formally opened by Archbishop Poblete on June 7, 1662, feast of Corpus Christi. Built of quarried stone, lime and gravel, it had an imposing tower with a huge bell in it.</p>	
<p><b>1663: ADORRED FOR MASS AND SERMONS,</b> the feasts of the Immaculate Conception and Sts. Peter &amp; Paul were celebrated to patch up animosity between the Cathedral Chapter and the Religious Orders during the time of Archbishop Poblete.</p>	

Illustrations in the *Anales Ecclesiasticos de Philipinas*, 1574-1682

On June 17, 1595 Philip II, through a letter addressed to his ambassador in Rome, asked him to petition the Pope to divide the diocese of the Philippines.<sup>56</sup> In the consistory of August 14, 1595 Pope Clement VIII erected Manila as an archdiocese with three suffragan sees, Nueva Segovia and Caceres, in Luzon and *Santisimo Nombre de Jesús* in Cebu. In a second consistory on August 30, 1595 the Pope named the respective bishops. Ignacio de Santibañez, Franciscan, for the

<sup>56</sup> Cfr. *Reales despachos sobre las Indias*, 1591-1595, Archivo de España ante la Santa Sede, leg. 12, fol. 49. In English in BRPI, 9, 150-153. Cfr. Domingo Abella, *Bikol Annals* (Manila, 1954), 305-308. Abella presents the documents of the erection of the dioceses on 305-315.



metropolitan of Manila; Miguel de Benavides, Dominican, for Nueva Segovia; Pedro de Agurto, Augustinian, for Cebu and Luis Maldonado, Franciscan, for Caceres. The reason they were not presented during the first consistory was due to the fact that the representative of the Spanish King had not yet prepared all the necessary papers. The formal presentation was left for the second consistory on August 30, 1595. The Pope accepted in the bull of erection the reasons presented by the King in his letter of petition who in turn had accepted the reasons for the division given to him by Salazar.

Historians mention the fact that the King presented Salazar as first archbishop of Manila. We do not know what would have happened had he been alive at the time of the creation of the archdiocese. Without any doubt he was the promoter of the division of the diocese, but the documents sent to Rome do not and could not mention Salazar as a candidate for the archbishopric. The letter of the King is dated June 17, 1595. Salazar had died over six months before. To be precise, on December 4, 1594. There is no reason than to believe that he was presented by the King. Furthermore we know that Salazar on his way to Spain from Mexico became seriously sick. In the opinion of some historians, he was a walking skeleton. In Madrid well before his death, he was also seriously ill. There is no probability for the King to have chosen him as archbishop. Whether the King thought of it or not, it is true that Salazar is the prime mover for the creation of Manila as an archdiocese. It would carry the official title of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary.<sup>57</sup>

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

#### **4. The Diocese of Nueva Segovia (1595)**

In the bull of erection, the second diocese mentioned after Manila is that of Nueva Segovia, in the northernmost part of the island of Luzon. It was erected on August 14, 1595, together with the other dioceses of the Philippines and was confirmed in the second consistory on August 30, 1595. The see was established in the town of Nueva Segovia, known locally with the name of Lal-lo in the actual geographical province of Cagayan. The official title of the church would be the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the invocation of the first diocese of the Philippines.<sup>58</sup> As first bishop of the diocese, the King presented and the Pope

<sup>57</sup> Please see the next footnote.

<sup>58</sup> This is the invocation that appears in the letter of the Spanish King to his ambassador in Rome on June 17, 1595 and in the bulls of erection of all the dioceses of the Philippines in 1595. My opinion is that in Spain people were confused as to the titles of each church. Rome followed the petition of the Spanish authorities. From the beginning, Manila, as we said, had

confirm the Dominican Miguel de Benavides, a missionary of long experience in the Philippines and an expert in the Chinese language. From his arrival to the islands with the first Dominican mission in 1587, Benavides had exercised his ministry among the *sangleyes*, as the Chinese residents of the Philippines were called. In 1590 he went to China with the Dominican provincial Juan de Castro. Benavides was taken as a companion by Domingo de Salazar on his trip to Spain in 1591.

The episcopal see of Nueva Segovia remained in Lal-lo, Cagayan for almost two hundred years. In 1758 the Spanish king Ferdinand VI (1746-1759), through a Royal letter decreed that the see be transferred to Vigan, in the Ilocos region. The transfer became definitive in 1762 through the efforts of the bishop-elect of Nueva Segovia, Bernardo Ustariz.<sup>59</sup>

The extension of the dioceses was not agreed at the time of the erection. The bishops of the different dioceses reached their own agreement to the best of their ability. Nueva Segovia included the actual geographical provinces of Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Isabela, Cagayan, Kalinga, Apayao, Mountain Province, Ifugao, and Benguet, the zone of missionary activity of the Dominicans. On the western part of northern Luzon, it included the actual provinces of Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, and Abra — provinces of missionary activity of the Augustinians. It extended all the way down to the big province of Pangasinan and the northern part of the province of Tarlac, regions administered by the Dominicans. This explains, to a great extent, why the majority of the bishops of the diocese were Dominicans, followed closely by the Augustinians.<sup>60</sup>

## 5. The Diocese of the Santísimo Nombre de Jesús of Cebu (1595)

This diocese was erected in the town of *Santísimo Nombre de Jesus*, as the Spaniards called it, or in the city of Cebu, the local name that has continued to prevail up to the present age. The patron of the cathedral would be the *Angel Custodio* the Guardian Angel, as the king had requested his ambassador in Rome. Pope Clement VIII (1592-1605) issued the bull *Super Specula Militantis Ecclesiae*, on August 14, 1595, as he had done with the other dioceses that included the metropolitan of Manila. As first bishop, he appointed the Augustinian Pedro de Agurto, an excellent theologian and a missionary of wide experience in Mexico.

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the invocation of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as it appears in the bull *Mills Fulti Praesidio*, erecting Manila as a diocese on February 6, 1579. Why now in the official documents Manila receives the official name of the Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary and the cathedral of Nueva Segovia that of the Conception of the Virgin Mary must simply be attributed to confusion in Spain and in Rome.

<sup>59</sup> Cfr. P Fernandez, *op. cit.*, 36-37.

<sup>60</sup> Cfr. Manuel G. Pola, O.P., "Episcopologio Dominicano de la Diócesis de Nueva Segovia," *Philippiniana Sacra*, 72 (1989), 219-261. Cfr. *Ibidem*, *Obispos dominicos en Filipinas* (Madrid, 1991), 20-48.

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

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

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

Cebu has been and is still today a city second only to Manila. It has a cardinal and it shines as a great center of Christian life in the archipelago. The majority of the bishops from this diocese have been taken from the Augustinian Order, because they have been the most numerous in the Visayas, although we could find other bishops belonging to the other religious orders, especially Dominicans, Franciscans and Recollects. None of them were Jesuits, for the simple reason that the Jesuits at that time were prohibited by their own constitutions to accept the office of bishop.

## **6. Diocese of Caceres in Naga (1595)**

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

The Royal Letter of Philip II to his ambassador in Rome on June 17, 1595 and the bull of erection on August 14, 1595, did not mention the word “Nueva,” referring to Caceres. Simple mention was made in the letter of the city of Caceres, in the land of Camarines, *tierra de Camarines*. The patron of the church would be *San Juan Evangelista*, St. John the Evangelist, as the King had requested the ambassador. The first bishop was the Franciscan Luis Maldonado, lector from Salamanca, commissary of the Franciscans in the Philippines and missionary here from 1593. At the moment of his appointment he was in the Philippines. He died before receiving the bull of appointment.

The Filipino scholar Abella denies that San Pedro Bautista, protomartyr of Japan, was preconized as bishop of Caceres. Francisco de Ortega, an Augustinian and a missionary who stayed long in Mexico and the Philippines, was the second one appointed as bishop of Caceres in 1599. He was ordained bishop in Mexico. He died there in 1600, on his way to the Philippines.<sup>61</sup>

We said before that the bull of erection of the dioceses does not mention the concrete boundaries. Caceres included the region of Bikol, today’s provinces of Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay and Sorsogon and the two island-provinces of Catanduanes and Masbate, with their smaller adjacent islands. Following the Pacific coast of Luzon to the north, it reached Palanan in Isabela, including the districts the Spaniards called later on *Infanta* and *Principe*, and the actual provinces of Quezon (Tayabas) and Aurora, in honor of the first president of the Philippine Commonwealth, Manuel L. Quezon and his wife Doña Aurora. It was the smallest of the four of them. It presented a greater homogeneity and cultural and linguistic unity than the other dioceses of the archipelago.<sup>62</sup>

## 7. The Diocese of Jaro, Iloilo (1865)

We know that to discuss here the diocese of Jaro brings us too far from the original scope of this work of ours, but since we are trying to present the history of the evangelization of the Philippines, and how the diocese of Manila was divided into different dioceses, we think that in order to complete the whole picture it is good to present here, though in a summary way, the creation of the last diocese during the Spanish period, the diocese of Jaro.

We have mentioned that some bishops of Cebu, all through history, protested energetically to the Spanish authorities for the negative attitude to divide the vast diocese of Cebu. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the petitions for a division were more accelerated, since it was clear that with one ecclesiastical province the people

<sup>61</sup> Cfr. Abella, op. cit., 36-38.

<sup>62</sup> Cfr. Ibidem, 13-14.

could not be well attended to Santos Gomez Marañon, bishop of Cebu, solicited from the Spanish King the division, but to no avail. In Spain they did not listen to his petition. Finally the Dominican bishop of Cebu, Romualdo Jimeno, who governed the diocese for 23 years and the first one to visit pastorally his diocese, obtained from the Spanish King what his predecessors never did. The new diocese of Jaro was created on January 17, 1865; under the patronage of Saint Elizabeth, *Santa Isabel*, the namesake of Queen Isabel II of Spain. Pope Pius IX, by the brief *Qui ab initio* on May 27 on the same year, recognized the action of the Spanish government.<sup>63</sup>

The first bishop of Jaro was the Dominican Mariano Cuartero, helper of bishop Romualdo for many years and rector of the College of Ocaña, in Spain at the time of his appointment. He was named on November 30, 1867, taking possession of his see in 1868. As soon as he arrived to his diocese he started the construction of the cathedral, finally blessed on February 1, of 1874. Cuartero did not forget the conciliar seminary dedicated to his own brother Saint Vincent Ferrer and finished it in 1874. What Cuartero achieved in a few years was astonishing. When he was appointed bishop he had nothing and in less than six years he had completed the cathedral, the palace, the seminary and a thorough revision of the pastoral needs of his diocese. The seminary was entrusted to the Congregation of the Mission from Spain, popularly known in Spanish circles as the *Paules*, and ordinarily today as the Vincentians.

The new diocese included the whole island of Panay, with today's provinces of Iloilo, Capiz, Aklan and Antique, the immense island of Negros, with the provinces of Negros Oriental and Negros Occidental and with four dioceses today, Palawan and the peninsula of Zamboanga in southwestern Mindanao. It also included, though it may sound strange, the territory of *Nueva Guipúzcoa*, at that time an unknown land, but today covering the three provinces of Davao. It was still a "wild" land, covered with impenetrable forests and inhabited by unknown native races. It was quite unexplored.

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

A point worthy of note is that the sees of the Philippines were without shepherds for long periods of time. Some bishops never occupied their sees, as they died before their episcopal ordination, others entered into the government of their dioceses, with special permission from the Spanish Royal Patronato, and died before

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<sup>63</sup> Cfr. Fidel Villarroel, O.P., "The Making of a Diocese in the Philippines, Jaro, 1865," *Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas*, 435, (1965): 538-555. Cfr. P. Fernandez, O.P., op. cit., 36.

receiving their bulls of appointment. It cannot be denied that such long periods of vacancy could not but bring about serious setbacks to the growth of Christianity and arrested the deepening of the Christian faith in the minds of the Filipino people. But this is pastoral theology not history. Thus we shall not discuss it here.

## 8. The Chinese in the Philippines: Their Initial Evangelization

The presence of the Chinese in the Philippines antedates the arrival of the Spaniards. Archaeological finds and other historical information prove that the Chinese touched the shores of the Philippines well before Spain came to the East. Some Chinese had settled down in the country. The presence of Chinese in pre-Hispanic Philippines, however, was minimal. They had hardly touched the life of the early Filipinos. When Legazpi entered Manila in 1571, he found a group of 40 Chinese living peacefully among the natives.<sup>64</sup>

Historians tend to exaggerate the influence of the Chinese upon Filipino culture in pre-Hispanic times. The Chinese impact upon the Filipino culture is fundamentally and chronologically Hispanic. The Chinese started to arrive in large numbers to the Philippines once Spain had conquered the archipelago. Some of them decided to settle down in Manila and its environs. It was the silver of Mexico and the possibility of commerce and trade that brought thousands of Chinese into the Philippines. A study of the Chinese influence on the language, on cuisine and popular culture shows that this influence passed through the process of Hispanization.<sup>65</sup>

Since the possibilities of trade were many and the chances for quick profit immense, many Chinese came from continental China. Not a few decided to stay behind and take abode among the natives of the Philippines. It is then that the history of the Chinese in the Philippines properly begins.

The Church did not forget her duty to take spiritual care of these Chinese. In fact, one of the main reasons if not the main for the coming of the missionaries to the East was the hope to enter China. The dream of opening the doors of the Grand Cathay to the Gospel was the moving spirit behind the Augustinians', Franciscans', and Dominicans' desire to come to the East. Once in the Philippines, unable to enter the mysterious land of Marco Polo, while waiting for the chance to go in, the missionaries started to work among the Chinese in the Philippines.

The first missionaries to take care of the Chinese in Manila were the Augustinians. But how much they did for them and how effective their apostolate was is difficult to ascertain. From historical records we know that before the coming

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<sup>64</sup> Cfr. *Voyage to Luzon*, BRPI, 3,101.

<sup>65</sup> Cfr. Nick Joaquin, *Culture and History* (Manila, 1989), 27-28.



of Salazar, the first bishop of the Philippines, the Chinese were abandoned. In the very words of bishop Salazar:

When I came to these islands, the *Sangleyes* [Chinese] were totally forgotten and abandoned. Nothing was done for their conversion, since no one was found able to learn their language. No one was ready to learn it due to its great difficulty and also because the religious present here were fully engaged in the ministry of the natives.<sup>66</sup>

Salazar tried to give this ministry of the Chinese to the Jesuits. For a while Hernan Suarez and Francisco Almerique, two Jesuit missionaries of the first hour, worked with them. They had some conversions.<sup>67</sup> But what they did was little and only for a while. Salazar writes:

I felt an extreme pain that [so illustrious] a people as the Chinese lacked ministers who in their own language could teach and instruct them. I tried with D. Gonzalo Ronquillo to place them in a special place and that there they be given ministers who could learn their own language and in it instruct them.<sup>68</sup>

The Chinese were placed in what is known in history as the *Parian*, a special place, half-town, half-market where they could sell their wares and at the same time be controlled by the Spaniards. It was only with the arrival of the Dominicans in 1587, that Salazar saw a solution to the problem. He immediately gave them the ministry of the Chinese. To be precise, in July of 1588, just a year after their arrival, the Dominicans took charge formally of the apostolate among the *Sangleyes* of Manila and its environs.<sup>69</sup> Two Dominicans started in earnest to study the language. They were Miguel de Benavides and Juan Cobo. The Dominicans from now on took very seriously the ministry of the Chinese. They built a church in the *Parian*. Years later, still with Cobo and Benavides, they erected another church in Baybay, on the right bank of the Pasig river, in what today is the district of San Nicolas. Their ministry was not purely spiritual, but it touched the very lives of the *Sangleyes*. Many of these Chinese were also poor and abandoned. In the Chinese tradition no health institutions existed. So Benavides, with the help of a brother called Pedro Rodriguez, established near the *Parian*, and near Intramuros, a little hospital called San Gabriel. Towards the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the Chinese were settling in larger numbers in Binondo, the Dominicans transferred the hospital to that district. For two hundred years, until 1772 or so, San Gabriel served the Chinese community, both in the body and in the spirit.

<sup>66</sup> *Letter of Domingo de Salazar to Philip II, Manila, June 24, 1590, AGI, Filipinas 74.*

<sup>67</sup> Cfr. H. De La Costa, *The Jesuits*, 68-69.

<sup>68</sup> *Letter of Domingo de Salazar to Philip II, Manila, June 24, 1590, AGI, Filipinas 74.*

<sup>69</sup> Cfr. *Certification of Salazar Granting the Dominicans the Administration of the Sangleys*, Manila, June 17, 1588, Archives of the University of Santo Tomas (AUST), Sección Libros, 69, No. 6, Fol. 12.

Towards the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century there were more than twenty thousand Chinese in the Philippines, a ratio of 40 Chinese to one Spaniard. The Chinese had become indispensable for the very survival of the colony, but their sheer numbers put fear in the hearts of the Spaniards. Thus, due to misunderstanding from both sides we have some revolts of the Chinese which ended in a terrible loss of human lives. In 1603, 1639 and in 1662 thousands of Chinese perished at the hands of the Spaniards and Filipinos – a massacre of great proportions.

Did the Chinese respond to the invitation of the Church? Did they embrace Christianity as readily as the Filipinos did? The missionaries had come with the dream of entering China and bringing that vast and highly civilized nation into the fold of the Gospel. Unfortunately their dreams were shattered. But in the Philippines some good conversions took place. The Chinese did not respond to the Good News of Salvation as the Filipinos did. All through the whole Spanish period the number of conversions was small. In the opinion of the Governor of the Philippines, Don Santiago de Vera, one of the reasons for the lack of conversions among the Chinese at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century was Salazar's policy of cutting off the queues of the Chinese. At that time in history, both in China and in the Philippines, the Chinese took an extreme pride in carrying a long pigtail. Salazar decided to compel the Chinese who wanted to embrace Christianity to have it cut. The Spanish authorities, and later on the King, severely criticized the bishop. He was told that for the Chinese to have a long queue was a simple custom. Salazar insisted on his condition that any Chinese who wanted to embrace Christianity had to have his queue cut off. For him it was not believed that the queue was a superstition. Well did Salazar know that it was a simple custom. But the bishop wanted to test the sincerity of the Chinese in their desire to embrace Christianity. He had come to know that some Chinese Christians, baptized in the Philippines, and residents of some years in the country, once they returned home, denied their faith. They fell into apostasy. Far away from the protective atmosphere of Manila, in their own land, where Christianity was unknown and even held under suspicion as a foreign religion, despised by their own families, the Chinese converts apostatized and returned to their ancient religious practices. Furthermore, Salazar had heard that some Chinese maintained two wives, one in Manila and the other in China. For Salazar it was a test to prove the sincerity of their conversion.

How many Chinese Christians were to be found at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century in the Philippines is difficult to know. That the Church exerted great and sincere efforts to bring them to the knowledge of the Gospel is clear. The Dominicans, to whom the apostolate of the Chinese had been given officially by the bishop, always dedicated a group of missionaries to live and work among them. In 1593 they published the *Doctrina Christiana en letra y lengua China*. Together with the *Doctrina Christiana en lengua española y tagala*, they are the first books published in the country. The *Doctrina*, as we know, is a simple catechism of the most basic Christian doctrines. That a special one was written and published for the Chinese bespeaks of

the dedication of the early missionaries to the task of conversion and evangelization. According to Salazar, in 1590 four Dominicans were engaged in the ministry with the Chinese who, at that time, numbered among the residents and merchants more than six thousand.<sup>70</sup>

Unfortunately this apostolate of the Dominicans with the Chinese, always sincere and intensive, did not bear similar fruits to the apostolate among the Filipinos. The conversions among the Chinese were few and the Chinese community in the Philippines felt itself like a stranger in a foreign land. Fear seized them many times. Envy and hatred was sometimes the response of Filipinos and Spaniards, as the revolts and the subsequent massacres clearly show. Why did the Chinese not respond as the Filipinos did? Could different methods have been used to evangelize them? The questions are valid. But the answers do not belong to history but to pastoral and theology of mission. Hence they do not belong to this place.

## 9. Human Settlements in the Philippines: the *Reducciones*

The word *Reducción* will probably bring to mind the famous Jesuit *Reducciones* of Paraguay. They are so famous that they are known even in non-Catholic and non-Hispanic circles. The movie *The Mission* tries to depict more or less precisely the history of that innovative and generous missionary and social experiment carried out by the Jesuits.

But the *Reducciones* of Paraguay belong to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. We are referring now to earlier *Reducciones* that were created in the Philippines. When Spain came to the country, and the missionaries tried to preach the Gospel of Christ, they were faced with the great particularism of Philippine society. Something had to be done if the double purpose of Hispanization and Christianization had to be accomplished. The dispersal of population was not unique to the Philippines.

It was a universal reality in the New World. Before Spain encountered the problem in the Philippine archipelago, she had experienced that problem in New Spain, that is, Mexico, and in the other important vice-royalty of Spanish America, Peru. Spain and the Church had acquired great experience in human settlement in Peru and Mexico. The Mexican experience was a good pedagogue for the Philippine experiment. This we have mentioned before and we shall say it again. But we have to do so because that fact holds the key to the understanding of the evangelization and christianization of the Philippines.

Though the problem in the Philippines was not new, it was unique in many ways. The societal dispersion of the Philippines was much greater than in the Americas. People here lived in thousands of small units, lost in the mountains and

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<sup>70</sup> Cfr. *Letter of Salazar to King Philip II*, Manila, June 24, 1590, AGI, Fil. 74.

in the forests. They lived close to their rice paddies in the places where agriculture existed, or near the seas and the rivers where fish was abundant or in the mountains where hunting was a generous game. We have the witness of the first bishop of the Philippines, Domingo de Salazar, who wrote to the Spanish King:

Your islands are not like Nueva España [Mexico] where there is a chief village and many others subject to it. Here [the Philippines] all are small villages and each one its own head.<sup>71</sup>

The decentralization of Philippine society clashed with Spanish tradition. The Spaniards, heirs of Greek and Roman cultures, always thought of civilization as identified with city life. If not with city life properly speaking, at least with urban living. Man has not only a supernatural vocation to come into communion with God through grace and love, but also to live together with other human beings. Man is a rational animal, a *zoon politikon*, as Aristotle said. He can find his full development and reach the maximum of his potentialities by living together with his fellow human beings. Politeness and civilization come precisely from the Greek word *polis*, and city, from the Latin word *civitas*. The missionaries and the cultured Spaniards who wrote reports to the King and the Council of Indies spoke of the lack of *polity* of the natives of the Philippines. The inhabitants of the archipelago lacked *policía*.

Hence the great need to bring the scattered settlements into greater centers of population. The Filipinos resisted resettlement. From their point of view they could not do otherwise. Their whole life and culture was rooted in their small settlements. Their ancestors had been buried there. Their houses were there. Given the subsistence economy of the country, to abandon their places meant a total disruption of their lives. This explains the great opposition to resettlement by the early Filipinos.

Yet if the Church wanted to achieve her main aim — the evangelization of the people — there was no other option but to gather them into bigger towns to congregate them, “reduce” them as the people of the age used to say. This had to be done with great respect for the customs of the people. But definitely a certain moral compulsion was necessary. Philip II advised Governor Dasmariñas to gather the people into bigger settlements but the elders had to be consulted and their opinions listened to. They had to be told of the blessings of living together. They could be better defended from their enemies, their children could be sent to school, the burden of taxation better distributed. All of them could be better instructed in the Christian religion. How could a few hundred missionaries attend to around 500,000 people scattered over thousands of different islands? There was a need to bring them *bajo la campana*, under the sound of the bell. And this not to destroy their culture but to facilitate the process of Christian teaching and catechetical instruction for a better evangelization and a more humane life.

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<sup>71</sup> *Affairs in the Philippine Islands*, Manila, 1582, AGI, Filipinas 74. Cfr. BRPI, 5, 233. Cfr. L. Gutierrez, O.P. “Domingo de Salazar Memorial of 1582 on the Status of the Philippine Islands,” *Philippiniana Sacra* (1986), No. 62, 214-295.

The process was very slow. Well into the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Filipinos were resistant to the efforts of the Spaniards. The missionaries did their best, especially the Franciscans in their region in Bikol and the Dominicans in the vast Cagayan Valley. An echo of the failure of the process can be seen in a letter of Archbishop Garcia Serrano to the Spanish King in 1622:

Although it is impossible to deny that the natives could be better instructed and would live in more orderly ways if the small villages were to be reduced to the capital [*cabecera* or *poblacion*] making one or two settlements of each benefice, they consider it such an affliction to leave their little houses where they were born and have been reared, their fields, and their other comforts of life, that it could only be attained with difficulty, and little fruit would result from these. Thus has the experience of assembling the people into communities in Nueva España proved, and so has what little of it has been attempted here. However, in the visit that I shall make in this archbishopric, I shall try to reduce them to as few settlements as possible.<sup>72</sup>

The Filipinos resisted the efforts of the Spaniards at resettlement. But in the long run, due to the blessings of town living and other inducements of the missionaries like rituals and celebrations, a new civilization was born in the Philippines. The *poblacion-barrio* pattern that we have today is a carbon copy of the *cabecera-visita* pattern of early Spanish times. Where the *cabecera* was established we find today the town; the municipality, the *poblacion*. Where the *visita* was found we find today the *barrio*. This is a transfer from an ecclesiastical to a civil nomenclature. A visit to a town and a stop in the plaza will immediately tell us that the missionaries on the whole were very successful. The church, the town hall, the *palengke* —a loaned word for market from old Spanish— the school and the houses of the citizens are all clustered around the church. The plaza is the center of the town. *Fiestas*, processions, dances, theater shows, Moro-Moro plays all took place in the plaza right in front of the town church. What has changed today is the stereo music. The *fiesta* continues to revolve around the church and plaza.<sup>73</sup>

## 10. The Nature of the Spanish Evangelization

I want to discuss here the nature of the Spanish evangelization in the Philippines. I might be accused of being apologetic, but since the gratuitous attacks against the evangelization still continue, and people do not seem to go to the sources, I prefer to be attacked than to let the myth be perpetuated in Philippine circles.

The work of Christianization carried out by the Spanish missionaries in the Philippines has been the object of scorn by the Protestant sects that came to the

<sup>72</sup> Letter of Archbishop Miguel Garcia Serrano to the king of Spain, Manila, July 31, 1622, BRPI, 20, 231-232. Cfr. J.L. Phelan, op. cit., 45.

<sup>73</sup> Cfr. J.L. Phelan, op. cit., 44-49. A. Roces, *Fiesta*, published by Vera Reyes, n.p., 1980, 9-16.

islands with the Americans at the beginning of this century. This scorn can also be seen in many of the religious orders that have come to the country after the World War II. It is still found in the Acts of the PCP-II. Many of the bishops of the land today, and many of the priests, fall into the same trap. Few of them are able to capture what historians call the *Zeitgeist*, a queer phrase invented by the philosophically oriented Germans, but a phrase that opens up for historians a new world. Only those able to relive the spirit of the times, only those who transport themselves to the age of the protagonists can truly read with historical, cultural and religious precision the depth of the work realized by the early missionaries and by all those who through the centuries were engaged in the task of evangelization.

To understand the historical process, always complex and mysterious, is a difficult task. Even those who played a role in the act might not be able to explain the reasons why they acted as they did. Many historians of Philippine history and of the evangelization of the country take the historical becoming as a *totum historicum*, as a global period. With the stroke of the pen, with a sweeping statement, oftentimes the result of prejudice and ignorance, they dismiss centuries of laborious and fruitful work. Only those who read the sources and try to understand them can see the meanderings of history. Three hundred years of evangelizing efforts are many years.

What happened after those years? How did the Church respond to the challenge of the Americans from the end of the Spanish Age to the beginning of the World War II? Did the Church address the problem of the explosion of population during the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in relation to the apostolic care of the new millions of Filipinos? Did the Spanish missionaries leave behind an ignorant Christianity as many people assert, or do we find the causes of the posterior failure in the lack of priests to respond to the absence of Spanish missionaries? Or has there been a failure? And if there was failure, and we are ready to accept this, is it found in the foundation built by the Spanish missionaries or in the lack of continuity once that presence disappeared? From the end of the Spanish Age millions of Filipinos called the Church mother. Did she nourish them as children?

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

Who told the present generation that the spiritual state of the nation was before as it is today? Did not each town have its own large and solid church? Was there any town without a priest and a beautiful *convento*?



Where do we see the new churches in the Philippines today? Wherever we go, along the highways of the Philippines, we see marvelous Iglesia ni Cristo. We find them in every *barrio*. We find them in the cities. We find Protestant chapels and churches belonging to different religious groups. Where are the new Catholic churches? Where are the new Catholic parishes?

At the end of the last century most towns in the Philippines had a church and a priest. Today most of the towns have remained with the same church left behind by the early missionaries. The biggest and most conspicuous place is always the Catholic Church. Most often it is the pride of the town.

It is good for the church of the country to accelerate the challenge of evangelization. And start with building of the material church, the one of bricks and stone. That church is a symbol of the zeal and dynamism of the spiritual church that is to be created in the hearts and minds of the Filipinos. The sentence of the apostle John comes to our mind:

I sent you to reap a harvest you had not worked for. Others worked for it; and you have come into the rewards of their trouble (John 4, 38).

The American historian E.G. Bourne, an expert on Philippine history, stresses the positive nature of the evangelization carried out by the Spanish missionaries. He tells those very Protestants who ridiculed the Spanish missionaries that the pagan customs and superstitions of the Anglo-Saxons and Germanic people in Europe continued until the modern age. He writes:

It is customary, too, for Protestant writers to speak with contempt of Catholic missions, but it must not be forgotten that France and England were converted to Christianity by similar methods. The Protestant ridicules the wholesale baptisms and conversions and a Christianity not even skin-deep, but that was the way in which Christianity was once propagated in what are the ruling Christian nations of today. The Catholic, on the other hand, might ask for some evidence that the early Germans, or Anglo-Saxons would ever have been converted to Christianity by the methods employed by the Protestants.<sup>74</sup>

At the same time he presents a comment full of wisdom and historical precision worthy to be noticed by modern critics:

Christianity has made its real conquests and is kept alive by Christian training, and its progress is the improvement which one generation makes upon another in the observance of its precepts.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> BRPI, 1, Introduction, 36.

<sup>75</sup> Ibidem.

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

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

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

Elsewhere I have taken the position that the evangelization undertaken by the Spanish missionaries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was not superficial; that, in fact, it was probably the most thorough and systematic evangelization of a whole people in the history of the Christian missions, at least before the nineteenth century. There were in the Philippines none of the mass baptisms which occurred in early stages of the evangelization of America; the missionaries who came to the Philippines had profited by that experience. If anything, one must call intransigent the attitudes of the missionaries to pre-Hispanic religion, and rigorous the requirements they imposed for baptism, both in matters of doctrine to be known and Christian life and values to be embraced.<sup>76</sup> ■



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<sup>76</sup> Cfr. H. De La Costa, S.J.- John N. Schumacher, S.J., *The Filipino Clergy: Historical Studies and Future Perspectives*, Loyola Papers 12 (Manila, 1980), 1-2. Cfr. J.N. Schumacher, S.J., "Syncretism in Philippine Catholicism: its Historical Causes," *Philippiniana Sacra*, vol. XIX, n. 57 (September-December 1984): 401-406.